

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

# The Mountain Path

Vol. V

JULY 1968

No. 3

SRI RAMANASRAMAM. TIRUVANNAMALAI

# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Edited by **ARTHUR OSBORNE**

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Shine as my Guru,  
making me free from  
faults and worthy of Thy  
Grace, Oh Arunachala!

— *The Marital Garland  
of Letters*, verse 19.

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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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

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*The Mountain Path*

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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**THE MOUNTAIN PATH**  
is dedicated to  
**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**

### Grace in Words

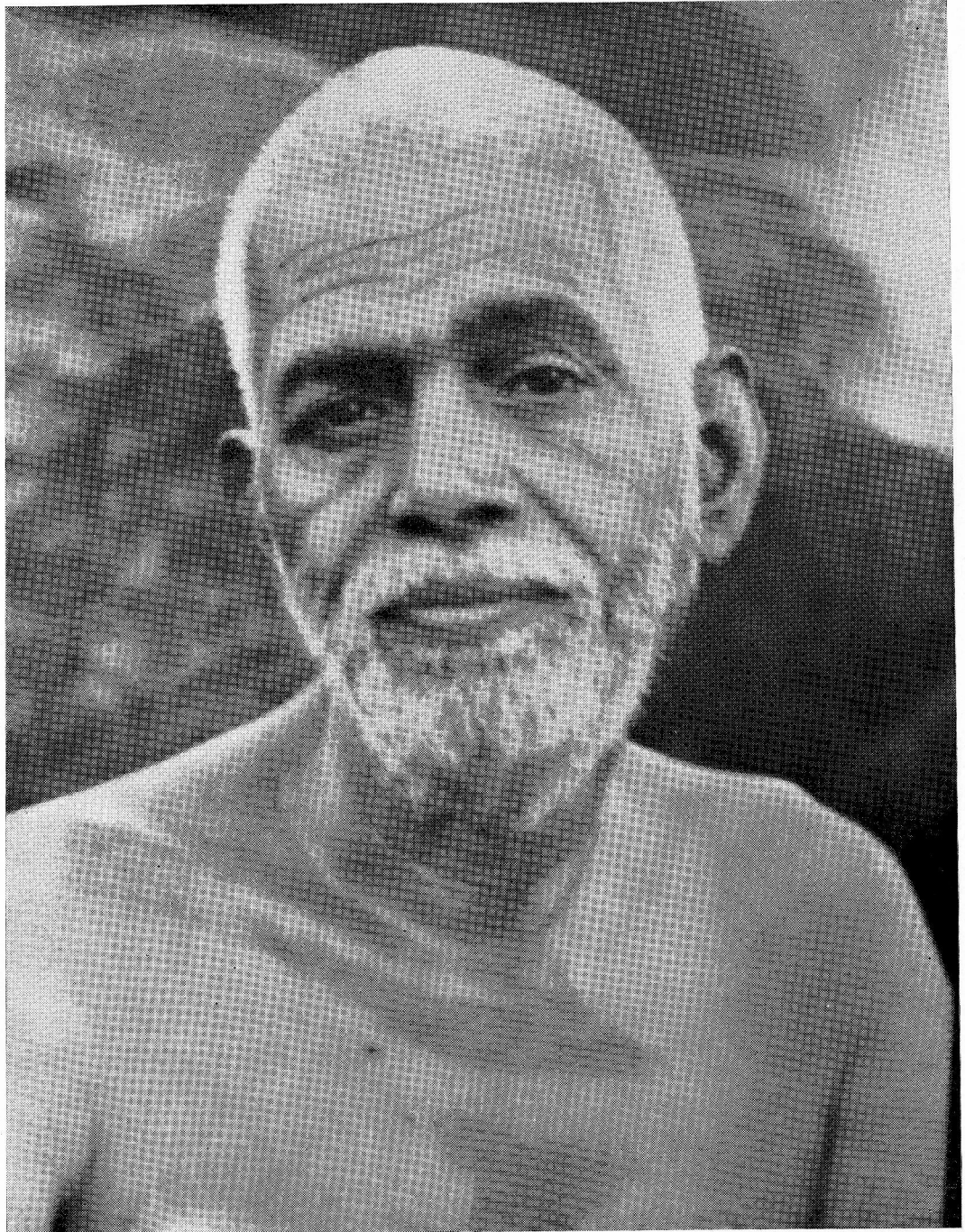
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 వస్తు మనియెంచు వాన్.

3. *While in fact the body is in the Self, he who thinks that the Self is within the insentient body is like one who considers the cloth of the screen which supports a cinema to be contained within the picture.*

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI







# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

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Vol. V

JULY, 1968

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## 'THIS' AND 'THAT'

.....

### Editorial

**W**HY should a quest be necessary? Why should a man not grow naturally into his true state, like a horse or an oak-tree? Why should man alone, of all creatures, be tempted to a misuse of his faculties and have to curb his desires in order to grow to his true breadth and stature? This involves the question what differentiates man from other creatures. Some psychologists and biologists have represented the difference simply as greater intelligence and ability due to a more developed brain. This is patently untrue. Many creatures have greater ability than man in one direction or another. A hawk has keener sight, a migratory bird has a better memory for places and directions, a dog has a stronger sense of smell, a bat a wider range of hearing. What really distinguishes man is self-consciousness, that he not only is a man but knows that he is a man, is consciously a man. This may be called greater intelligence, but not in the commonly understood sense of outwardly turned intelligence. It implies the conscious use of his faculties, the power of deciding how and

whether to use them. And this power is also a necessity. Having the power to direct his faculties imposes on a man the necessity of doing so, since even refusal to do so would be his choice or direction and not spontaneous, as with other creatures.

This is expressed theologically in the dogma that God gave man free will, the will to obey God or disobey, and thus to work out his own weal or woe. Intellectuals are apt to scoff at such dogmas, but they are only picturesque enunciations of fundamental truths. A man cannot simply use his faculties naturally as a bird or animal can, because there is no natural man-action as there is natural hawk-action or sheep-action. Man, of course, has certain natural instincts, just as a bird or animal has (the instincts to eat, to procreate, to preserve his life, for instance), but he may or may not choose to obey them in any specific situation in the complexities of life. His self-conscious existence as man forces on him a choice of uses for his faculties. Even the attempt to use them in what he considered

the natural way would be a choice. He would be sure to find some one who would contest it. This choice is what is called free will. Free will is therefore not only a prerogative but an obligation for man.

Free will, thus understood, has nothing to do with destiny. It is a power which man is compelled by his own nature to use, whether the use he makes of it is predestined or not. If I have to decide whether to spend this evening at a dance or in meditation or whether to strike or forgive some one who has insulted me, the responsibility of deciding rests with me just the same whether the outcome is predetermined or not. If it is predetermined, it is my own past habit-forming and character-forming decisions in this and previous lifetimes which have predetermined it; and this decision in its turn will help to condition my mind, thus determining future ones. In any case, since I do not know which of two decisions is predetermined, I have to choose one or the other.

But, it may be said, the necessity of making decisions as to the use of one's faculties does not imply the necessity of a spiritual quest. All men have to make decisions, whereas very few set forth on the quest. That is only too true. As far back as the Bhagavad Gita it was already said that "Out of thousands perhaps one seeks Realization."<sup>1</sup> What is implied is only the possibility, not the necessity, of the quest.

The quest brings the possibility of rising above the normal human state; but this involves also the possibility of falling below it. This is why the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures warn so insistently to make good use of one's human birth, because if this one is misused another may not be so easily attainable. And it is no implacable outside power which thrusts a man lower down in the scale if he misuses his human opportunities to rise higher; it is the impersonal law of cause and effect. A crow is not blameworthy for rapacity, nor a cat for cruelty, nor a goat for lust, but a man who allows such qualities to dominate him has volun-

tarily given them ascendancy over higher possibilities. If, in this way, he has forced his mind into a subhuman mold in this lifetime, he must expect his body to take the same mold in the next, since the body is only a reflection or condensation of the mind.

Naturally this does not imply that every one who fails to take the quest falls below the human state. There are many gradations within that state. There is the possibility of birth and death, birth and death, birth and death, in an apparently endless and meaningless round; but in the end every one is brought to the point of rising above the human state or falling below it. And between each human death and rebirth there are heavens and hells to reap.

The quest does not mean simply a cultural interest in spirituality, such as one may take in music or philosophy; it means a total dedication. It means making Realization the aim and purpose of life. And since eventual Realization is by nature the purpose of life, those who undertake the quest are the only ones who have understood life aright and live it purposefully, using it instead of being used by it.

Once taken, the quest may assume forms. It is apt to appear primarily under the guise of getting or giving, but in fact both occur, for it is only by making oneself small enough to pass through the eye of a needle that one can expand to all infinity. On a yogic or tantric path one is developing latent powers beyond the ken of the ordinary mundane person, but if the course is to succeed it demands the simultaneous surrender not only of the indulgence of desires but of the desires themselves. On a devotional path the perpetual craving is to love, give, surrender, to be nothing in the hands of God, but power pours into this nothing, this self-naughted worshipper. It is safer to concentrate on giving. As Christ said, only he who gives up his life will find it. By thus giving without seeking one attains the kingdom of heaven; and Christ also said: "Attain first the kingdom of heaven and all else shall be

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*; VIII. 3.



added to you." If one seeks to attain first all else the kingdom of heaven is not likely to be added.

Before a man is drawn to the quest he is directly conscious of only one being, which could therefore be called 'this': this which wants coffee for breakfast, this which has tooth-ache, this which decides to call on so-and-so or to read such-and-such a book. Other people, things, events, are known to him only indirectly, through his senses (including his reason, which the Hindus call the 'inner sense'). But the time may come when he apprehends being of another kind: potent, unconfined, awe-inspiring, which he may think of as 'That'. Henceforth the dominant theme of his life is the relationship between 'this' and 'That', between the individual who experiences, classifies and decides and the dimly apprehended Reality. It may be largely a matter of mental training whether he regards 'That' as other than 'this' or as the hidden Self of it. In any case, theoretical conclusions help him very little. What opens before him is a dynamic venture, the attempt to subordinate 'this' to 'That'. The Maharshi said: "Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute Reality it is only a means for realizing it without name and form. That alone is true Realization wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with It."<sup>2</sup>

The attempt to do this is the quest. Becoming convinced of the identity of 'this' with 'That' is not realizing it, in fact is only the preliminary position from which to set out on the quest of Realization. 'This' feels not only the power but also the grace and pervading beauty of 'That' and is strongly attracted towards it. Whether it calls 'That' 'God' or 'Self', 'this' is shaken by powerful waves of love and devotion for it. The attraction is such that 'this' feels itself being drawn in to be devoured and merged in 'That' and senses that the absorption will produce the peace beyond understanding; but at the same time 'this' struggles against

being absorbed, clinging tenaciously to the life which Christ bade it give up. It still wants its own separate individual existence, its own decisions and enjoyments. Therefore it may feel waves of resentment or actual hostility to 'That'. Or it may feign submission while actually striving to acquire and contain 'That'. "I sought to devour Thee; come now and devour me; then there will be peace, Arunachala!"<sup>3</sup> That is why (except in the rarest of cases, such as that of Ramana Maharshi) the quest is not a single simple achievement. Normally 'this' clings to its separate individual life with one hand while reaching out for the vast universal life with the other. And the two cannot co-exist. 'This' must surrender utterly to 'That' and consent to be devoured before it can merge in the peace of Identity. And it fights against it persistently and cunningly, constantly changing its ground and weapons and tactics, when dislodged from one fortress slipping round the rear of the attacker and setting up another.

Hence the uneven course that the quest takes. It is never a gradual, smooth ascent. It always goes in alternate waves of grace and deprivation, expansion and contraction, a phase when life is a lilt of beauty followed by one of harsh aridity when all that was achieved seems to have been lost and all grace withdrawn. That is because 'this', turning in love and humility to 'That' draws upon itself the grace which is uninterruptedly radiating from 'That', like light from the sun; then it filches the grace for its own use or aggrandisement. Whether in thought or deed, it grows proud, considers the grace its own and thus interposes its own dark shadow before the luminosity of 'That', causing an eclipse and shutting off the flow of grace. Again and again it repeats this, learning only very gradually and by bitter experience; and it is only when, in final desperation, it brings itself to complete surrender that at last peace comes. Then 'That' becomes 'This'. There is no other.

<sup>2</sup> *Forty Verses on Reality*: V. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *The Marital Garland of Letters*: 28 (b).

## THE MAHARSHI'S PLACE IN HISTORY

### *A New Development in Hinduism*

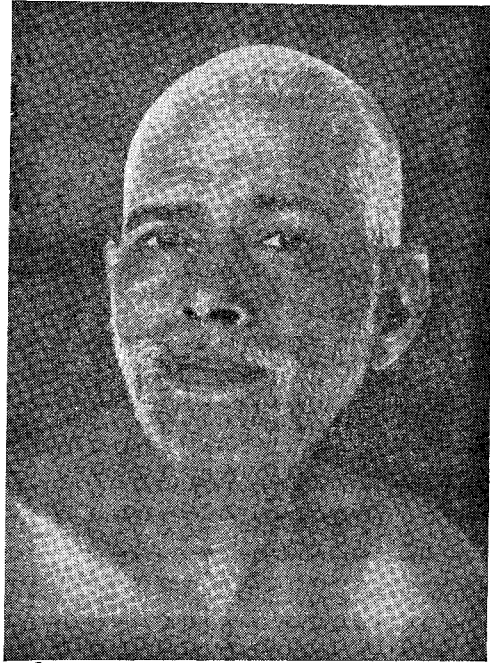
By  
ARTHUR OSBORNE

A NEW development has come about in Hinduism since the time of Ramakrishna. Because, ancient as it is, Hinduism is still capable of development. That means that it is still living, for development is the quality of life, rigidity of death. It is surprising how little this development has been noticed; it just seems to be taken for granted. It is of fundamental importance.

In order to appreciate it one must see clearly what Hinduism is. It is a fusion between an organization of life and worship on what might be called the horizontal plane and paths to Beatitude on the vertical. Of course, not every Hindu takes a path to beatitude — he can still be a Hindu without that. But he cannot be without the horizontal affiliation, that is to say without either being integrated into the Hindu social system or having renounced it, like a sannyasin. And this horizontal modality of Hinduism is so complex that it would be hard for an outsider to fit into it even if he tried. As for his becoming a sannyasin, that would mean adopting the Hindu pattern of life in order to renounce it, which seems rather absurd.

For this reason, Hinduism is not and cannot be a proselytising religion. It is also not an intolerant religion. For those who do follow a path to Beatitude there are a number to choose from, and, for instance, one whose path is through the worship of Rama will not condemn or try to convert another whose path is through the worship of Krishna. Why should not this apply also to one whose path is through the worship of Christ?

What has been happening since the time of Ramakrishna is that the path to Beatitude is being separated from the social organiza-



tion of life, so that people from outside the Hindu community can receive spiritual guidance from its gurus without needing to integrate themselves into that community. This is a change of tremendous importance, since it enables the spiritual influence to radiate out beyond the limits of the organization. For any one who is interested in drawing historical parallels, it is not unlike the change which St. Paul brought about when, revolting against the orthodoxy of St. Peter and St. James, he decided that those who came to Christ from outside Judaeism need not accept the Jewish law and ritual. However, the parallel cannot be pushed too far. The circumstances were different, since what then began as a new path to Beatitude for those who were seeking soon developed into a religion for a whole community with

its own law and ritual and its own social organization.

What is similar is that, now as then, a materialistic world has broken away from religion and many are looking around desparately for guidance. People are giving up religion and, even for those who seek, the paths to Beatitude are becoming lost or inaccessible for the guidance is no longer reliable. Divine Providence always meets the needs of its children, but not always in the same way. In the time of St. Paul it did so through the establishment of a new religion; to-day it does by making spiritual guidance available outside the formal structure of the religions. This is happening in various ways; in the resurgence of non-denominational Christian mysticism through inspired teachers such as Joel Goldsmith, in the spread of Buddhism in the West, not as a creed for the many but as a path for the few, and in this new development in Hinduism, making the path to Beatitude available outside the structure of Hindu orthodoxy.

The proof that this new development in Hinduism is a valid and not a heretical one is that it has been brought about from above, by the Masters themselves, beginning with Ramakrishna and culminating in Ramana Maharshi.

It was Vivekananda who was the most spectacular in introducing this new trend with the Vedanta Societies he founded in the West; but it was not his innovation. Ramakrishna was not mistaken in saying that Vivekananda would complete his work. That work has two aspects; to restore Hinduism to vigour and self-respect in India and to make it known as a spiritual current in the West, a current available to Western seekers. Both were carried to completion by Vivekananda.

Ramakrishna himself had no foreign disciples, but he dreamed once that he was in a Western town of large, modern buildings, surrounded by Westerners, and he interpreted it to mean that he would have many disciples in the West. After his Mahasamadhi, his wife, Sarada Devi, whom all the disciples revered as the Holy Mother, quite

naturally and without argument initiated foreign disciples, even though she spoke only Bengali, which they did not know. All the other disciples approved of this and of Vivekananda's more spectacular action in the West and followed in the same direction.

Since then this has become the regular practice with Hindu Gurus. All or almost all of them accept foreign disciples without expecting them to integrate themselves into the Hindu social system or practise Hindu religious ritual.

This practice culminated in Ramana Maharshi. There was something mysterious about the initiation he gave—no laying on of hands, no mantra, no outer form at all; only the mouna diksha, the silent initiation. Although silent, this was a definite event, not a gradual process. He himself confirmed this in various oblique ways when necessary, asserting that, from the point of view of the disciple, the Guru-disciple relationship is a necessity and explaining that a spiritual practice (and he was constantly enjoining one) only has potency for those who are initiated into it. For those who experienced his initiation no conformation was necessary. If they were in his presence it was given through a penetrating look of terrific power; if at a distance perhaps through a dream or vision, perhaps formlessly. In any case, the disciple felt taken up, swept forward on a wave of power, thenceforward guided and supported. And in any case there was nothing specifically Hindu about it, nothing to make it available to members of one community only and inaccessible to others.

That was one advantage of the silent initiation. Now that he is no longer in the body we see another also—that it can still continue, whereas formal initiation could not. He himself indicated in various ways before leaving the body that his guidance would continue; for instance, when some devotees complained that he was leaving them without guidance and asked what they were to do without him, he replied: "You attach too much importance to the body." The implication was obvious; the body was going, he was not. And indeed, he said

"They say that I am going, but where would I go? I am here." Not "I shall be" but "I am". The body could go, but the formless Self, with which he was in constant conscious identity, just is, eternally, here and now.

This continued initiation and guidance is not just theory; it happens. I will quote a case of it described quite recently in a letter from a man in a Yorkshire village of whom we had no previous knowledge, published in the January 1967 issue of *'The Mountain Path'*.

"On August 13th (1966), without any shadow of doubt, Sri Bhagavan bestowed his Grace on me. Instruction was also implicit in his Grace. And further, even though I could not admit it to myself at once (although I knew it to be so) it was initiation and an indication that a Gurudisciple relationship had been created."<sup>1</sup>

This formless initiation and guidance of Bhagavan, spreading invisibly through many countries, has not been institutionalized. This also is in conformity with the needs of the age, when many who respond to it would not be in a position to join an institution and many also would not wish to be dependent on one. It is supported outwardly by the books on or by the Maharshi and by *'The Mountain Path'*, and in some towns the followers of the Maharshi meet together in a society where they can meditate and discuss and listen to talks. This is a great facility where it exists, but it has nothing of the formality or compulsion of an institution; and there are many for whom even membership of such a society is not available. Many also, by temperament, do not desire it. We see now the wisdom of Bhagavan in establishing a path which can be followed in solitude and silence, without singing or chanting, without the knowledge of any sacred language, independent of the forms and ritual of any religion.

#### PATH AND DOCTRINE

A spiritual path rests on a doctrinal basis, just as a scientific experiment does on a

theoretical basis. To make them universally available, outside the ritual of any religion, the paths the Maharshi taught were simple and direct; and therefore the doctrine on which they were based was universal and free from philosophical technicalities. I say 'paths' because in fact there were two. He would often say: "Ask yourself 'who am I?' or submit". As simple as that and he declared that these two paths both lead to the same goal.

The one that he offered first was always Self-enquiry. Only if some one complained that he found this too difficult or that it did not suit his temperament did he tell him in that case to submit, assuring him that submission would lead to the same goal. Let us therefore start with a consideration of Self-enquiry and the doctrinal basis he provided for it.

#### THE PATH OF ENQUIRY

Self-enquiry is not analysis; it has nothing in common with philosophy or psychology. The Maharshi showed this when he declared that no answer the mind gives can be right. (And, indeed, in this it resembles a Zen koan). If it had a mental answer it would be a philosophical conundrum, not a spiritual practice; and it was as a spiritual practice that the Maharshi prescribed it. So any one who tells you what the answer to the enquiry is shows by that very fact that he has not understood it. It does not mean arguing or saying that I am not this or not that; it means concentrating on the pure sense of being, the pure I-am-ness of me. And this, one discovers, is the same as pure consciousness, pure, formless awareness.

So far is it from being a mental practice that the Maharshi told us not to concentrate on the head while doing it but on the heart. By this he did not mean the physical heart at the left side of the chest but the spiritual heart at the right. This is not a physical organ and also not a yogic or tantric chakra; but it is the centre of our sense of being. The Maharshi told us so and those who have

<sup>1</sup> *The Mountain Path*, Jan. 1967, p. 85.

followed his instructions in meditation have found it to be so. The ancient Hebrews knew of it: "The wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left,"<sup>2</sup> it says in the Bible. It is referred to also in that ancient Advaitic scripture, the *Yoga Vasishtha* in verses which the Maharshi quoted as Nos. 22-27 in his *Supplementary Forty Verses on Reality*. Concentration on the heart does not mean thinking about the heart but being aware in and with the heart. After a little practice it sets up a current of awareness that can actually be felt physically though far more than physical. At first this is felt in the heart, sometimes in the heart and head and connecting them. Later it pervades and transcends the body. Perhaps it could be said that this current of awareness is the 'answer' to the question 'Who am I?', since it is the wordless experience of I-ness.

There should be regular times for this 'meditation', since the mind accustoms itself and responds more readily. I have put the word 'meditation' in inverted commas, since it is not meditation in the usual sense of the word but only concentration on Self or on being. As Bhagavan explained: "Meditation requires an object to meditate on, whereas in Self-enquiry there is only the subject and no object."<sup>3</sup> Good times are first thing when you wake up in the morning and last thing before going to sleep at night. At first a good deal of time and effort may be needed before the current of awareness is felt; later it begins to arise more and more easily. It also begins to occur spontaneously during the day, when one is not meditating. That explains Bhagavan's saying that one should keep up the enquiry constantly, not only during meditation. It comes to be more and more constant and, when lost or forgotten, to need less and less re-awakening.

A man has three modes of manifestation; being, thinking and doing. Being is the most fundamental of the three, because he can't think or do unless he first is. But it is so covered over by the other two that it is seldom experienced. It could be compared

to the cinema screen which is the support for the pictures without which they could not be seen, but which is so covered over with them that it is not ordinarily noticed. Only very occasionally for a brief glimpse, does the spiritually untrained person experience the sheer fact of being; and when he does he recalls it afterwards as having been a moment of pure happiness, pure acceptance, pure rightness. Self-enquiry is the direct approach to conscious being, and therefore it is necessary to suspend thinking and doing while practising it. It may lead to a state when conscious (instead of the previous unconscious) being underlies thinking and doing; but at first they would interrupt it, so they have to be held off.

This is the path; the doctrine on which it is based is Advaita, non-duality, which might be rendered 'Identity' or 'No-otherness'. Its scripture for the Maharshi's followers is his '*Forty Verses on Reality*' together with the '*Supplementary Forty Verses*' which he later added.

In this he declares: "All religions postulate the three fundamentals; the world, the individual and God."<sup>4</sup>

Not all in a formal way, for there are also nontheistic religions; but essentially this is what we start from. Whether I am educated or uneducated, my own existence is the basis from which I start, the direct awareness to which everything else is added. Then, outside myself, my mind and senses report a world of chairs and tables and trees and sky, and other people in it. Mystics tell me that all this is illusion, and nowadays nuclear scientists agree with them. They say that the red book I am holding is just a cluster of electrons whirling about at high speed, that its redness is just the way my optic apparatus interprets a vibration of a certain wave-length, and similarly with its other qualities; but anyway, that is how it

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastes*, X, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, (pub. Sri Ramanasramam), Ch. V.

<sup>4</sup> *Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 2 (from the *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, published by Sri Ramanasramam).

presents itself to my perception. I also have a feeling of some vastness, some power, some changeless Reality behind the vulnerability of the individual and the mutability of the world. It is about this third factor that people disagree, some holding that it is the real Self of the individual, others that it is a Being quite other than him, and others again that it does not exist at all.

The verse continues: "But it is only the One Reality that manifests as these three." This implies that Self-enquiry is the quest of the one Reality underlying the apparent trinity of individual, world and God.

But the mistake inherent in dualism does not consist in supposing that God is a separate Being from you but in supposing that you are a separate being from God. It is not belief in God that is wrong but belief in the ego. Therefore the verse continues: "One can say, 'The three are really three only so long as the ego lasts.'" Then the verse turns to the practical conclusion, as Bhagavan always did in his teaching: "Therefore to abide in one's own Being, where the 'I' or ego is dead is the perfect State."

And that is what one is trying to do by Self-enquiry; to abide as the Self, the pure Being that one essentially is, casting aside the illusory reality of the ego.

Feeling one's insignificance before that mighty Power, one may worship It in one of Its manifestations — as Krishna, say, or Christ or Rama, but: "Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute Reality, it is only a means for realizing It without name and form."<sup>5</sup> That means appreciating Its Infinity, realizing that It alone is, and leaves no room for a separate me subsisting apart from It. Therefore the verse continues: "That alone is true Realization wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with It."

And this is done by Self-enquiry. "If the first person, I, exists, then the second and third persons, you and he, also exist. By

enquiring into the nature of the I, the I perishes. With it, 'you' and 'he' also perish."<sup>6</sup> However, that does not mean blank annihilation; it only means annihilation of the illusion of separate identity, that is to say of the ego, which is the source of all suffering and frustration. Therefore the verse continues: "The resultant state, which shines as Absolute Being, is one's own natural state, the Self."<sup>7</sup>

Not only is this not a gloomy or dismal state or anything to be afraid of, but it is the most radiant happiness, the most perfect bliss. "For him who is immersed in the bliss of Self-realization arising from the extinction of the ego what more is there to achieve? He does not see anything as being other than the Self. Who can apprehend his State?"<sup>8</sup>

Note that in speaking of the unutterable bliss of Self-realization Bhagavan says that it is achieved through the extinction of the ego, that is the apparent individual identity. So that, although nothing is lost, something does have to be offered in sacrifice; and while being offered it appears a terrible loss, the supreme loss, one's very life; only after it has been sacrificed does one discover that it was nothing and that all has been gained, not lost. This means that understanding alone cannot constitute the path. Whatever path may be followed, in whatever religion, the battle must be fought and the sacrifice made. Without that a man can go on all his life proclaiming that there is no ego and yet remain as much a slave to the ego as ever. Although the *Forty Verses on Reality* are a scripture of the Path of Knowledge, Bhagavan asks in them: "If, since you are a single being, you cannot see yourself, how can you see God?"<sup>9</sup> And he goes on to answer: "Only by being devoured by Him."

This brings the path of enquiry to the same point as the path of surrender, since in either case the ego must be sacrificed. It is a very profound verse. It recalls the Hebrew

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 31.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 21.

saying : "No man can see God and live." Many people see visions of God in one form or another, but that is not seeing God. The mind and senses of a man knot themselves together into what wrongly supposes itself to be an individual entity separate from the Universal Being which it aspires to see. But that Universal Being is the true Self of it. Only by surrendering their illusory individual entity to be devoured out of existence can the mind and senses become true instruments for perception by what is thereafter understood to be their true Self, so that, as the Maharshi sometimes said, the only way to see God is to be God.

#### THE PATH OF SURRENDER

There are many who are drawn rather to a path of love, devotion and surrender than to one of inner quest, that is of Self-enquiry. For them too the Maharshi reduced his teaching to the simplest essential when he said : "There are two ways ; ask yourself 'Who am I?' or submit." No matter whether the ego submits to God with form or without form or whether in the form taught by one religion or another, so long as it utterly and completely submits. But what can induce it to submit ? Not the hope of any heavenly reward, because that would be bargaining, not submission. Only love can evoke submission ; therefore the path of surrender is also the path of love.

For people who take this path also Bhagavan composed a scriptural basis for it ; in this case *The Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala*, that is the first of the *Five Hymns to Arunachala*.

Before speaking of this path, however, let us anticipate an objection. That is that philosophers have written countless books and articles, and still do, maintaining that God is either the very Self of you or totally other than you, each side denouncing the other and declaring it at fault. How then can a Master regard it as a mere matter of temperament which one believes ? How can he offer a choice to his followers ? Ought he not to state definitely that one is right and the other wrong ?

Actually, the reason for disagreement is only that the two declarations are inadequately worded. Is Supreme Being the very Self of me or totally other than me ? We obviously cannot answer that until we know who or what is the 'me' about whom the question is asked. The very Self of whom ? Other than whom ? So once again we are driven back to Self-enquiry. I feel myself to be an individual entity with likes and dislikes, abilities and disabilities, before a vast Presence, an illimitable Potency, which I can only dimly apprehend. Can that presence be the same as Me ? It is certainly not the same as this individual entity ; but is this individual entity the reality of me ? It was not here before birth ; it will not be here after death ; it has grown and evolved and will decay and disintegrate. The mistake, then, as I said in speaking of verse 2 of the *Forty Verses*, is not in supposing there to be a God separate from me but in supposing there to be a me separate from God.

There are only two things to do : one is to sacrifice this apparent individual entity (as Bhagavan declared even in speaking of the Path of Knowledge when he said that it must be devoured by God) ; the other is to find out what is the reality of me. The answer is not a form of words but an experience. It is better to have it than to describe it. The individual yearns for its own destruction in Union with the Universal. Bhagavan says in the *Garland* : "Unite with me to destroy Thee and me and bless me with ever-vibrant joy, Arunachala !" <sup>10</sup> The destruction of separate selves is the gateway to ever-vibrant joy. The whole tone of the two scriptures is different. Where the *Forty Verses* were hard as granite and sharp as steel, the *Garland* is one of the great mystical love poems of all time. Never have I read anything so moving and compelling, even in translation.

Death is promised, but at the same time resurrection : "Hast thou not bartered Thyself for me ? Oh, Thou art death to me, Arunachala !" <sup>11</sup> But it is I who am the

<sup>10</sup> *Marital Garland of Letters*, v. 56. (from the *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 62.

gainer by the exchange : "Thou art the Primal Being while I count not in this or the other world. What didst Thou gain then by my worthless self, Oh, Arunachala?"<sup>12</sup> The loss of individual entity is the gain of Divine identity : "The moment Thou didst welcome me, didst enter into me and grant me Thy divine life, I lost my individuality, Oh Arunachala!"<sup>13</sup>

Thus the two paths come to the same goal. The difference is rather of emphasis. In the Path of Knowledge initiative is rather with the seeker : "To seek and abide in the Reality that is always attained is the only Attainment."<sup>14</sup> In the Path of Surrender the burden of initiative is thrown on the Lord, though even so some effort must be made : "Weak though my effort was, by Thy Grace I gained the Self, Oh Arunachala!"<sup>15</sup> In the same sense, Bhagavan has said (and it remains true now as in his lifetime) : "Submit to me and I will strike down the mind." Probing into the Truth behind one's apparent individual entity and sacrificing that apparent entity in love to God both lead to the illimitable bliss of Pure Being. Theorising about the outcome leads nowhere.

And what, it might be asked, of the other two paths, yoga marga and karma marga, did Bhagavan not teach them also? It is of the very essence of this new development of Hinduism that ritual and technique are simplified to the utmost to make it available to those also who are not Hindus or who, being Hindus, are more or less cut off from the traditional forms of Hinduism. It would have been incongruous, therefore, if Bhagavan who brought this development to its completion, had given instruction in a highly technical approach such as yoga. Indeed,

he specifically says in *Self-enquiry* : "As there are elaborate treatises on the elements of ashtanga yoga, only as much as is necessary is written here. Any one who desires to know more must resort to a practising yogi and learn from him in detail."<sup>16</sup>

Karma marga, on the other hand, in the sense of disinterested, harmonious action, free from self-interest, doing what is right simply because it is right, regardless of praise or blame, profit or loss as Sri Krishna taught Arjuna in the Gita, is particularly suited to modern times; and both the paths that Bhagavan taught, Jnana and Bhakti, were to be combined with karma marga. It is possible to follow either of them as a recluse shut off from the world, but that was not Bhagavan's teaching. Time and again some one would ask his authorisation to renounce the world, but he did not give it. He always taught that the battle was to be fought in the life of the world, in the midst of family and professional life. "If you renounce it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of the family and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? So why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever the environment."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 93.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 95.

<sup>14</sup> *Forty Verses*, v. 35.

<sup>15</sup> *Marital Garland*, v. 45.

<sup>16</sup> *Self Enquiry*, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> *Maharshi's Gospel*, Vol. 1, p. 6.

Brahman is supreme. He is the reality — the one without a second. He is pure consciousness, free from any taint. He is tranquillity itself. He has neither beginning nor end. He does not change. He is joy forever.

— Sankara.



## ZEN AND THE VICHARA

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By

G. J. YORKE

**Z**EN Buddhists believe that some 2,500 years ago prince Gautama left home at the age of 29 to become a digambara, a wandering naked ascetic. After six years during which he mastered many of the techniques of yoga, he decided that yogic asceticism and the trance states or samadhis to which it leads were not the whole answer. So he left his guru, decided to wear clothes once more and, if possible, to eat at least once a day. When he had recovered his health he sat down under a tree and vowed that he would not leave its shade until he was enlightened.

I like to think that he sat under that tree reviewing his life and all that he had been taught and had experienced. That he then entered within himself and passed through the various trance states or samadhis, starting with those with form and then refining them into the formless and inexpressible, until he entered what the Chinese call the Samadhi of Sameness or Universality. In it he was still unenlightened. In Zen idiom he was sitting on top of a pole from which he had still to step down to extend the hand of compassion to all sentient beings.

He came out of the samadhi, opened his eyes and saw the Morning Star. Suddenly he was the Buddha, the Enlightened One. He was what he had always been, but at last he was aware of it.

Some six months later he began to turn the wheel of the Dharma by giving his first sermon or discourse. He was back in the world once more. As a Chinese Zen Master put it, the wind in the trees became his sermon of liberation.

It is said that one day, instead of giving a sermon, he held up a flower and his senior disciple Mahakashyapa smiled. Enlightenment was and is as simple and as difficult as

that. It is simple because the immediate cause is something like opening one's eyes and seeing a star, some 'turning' word, gesture or look of one's teacher, or dropping a cup and hearing it smash. At the same time it is appallingly difficult because it is the climax of many lives devoted to spiritual struggle and the discipline of dhyana.

If the Zen allegory is true, the Buddha's gesture of holding up a flower instead of preaching a sermon was the first recorded instance in Buddhism of the Transmission of Mind. There was a sealing of mind and heart by mind and heart. On that level there was no doctrine to teach, but a mutual experience was shared and acknowledged. For both men the common acts of daily life had become ultimate wisdom.

Ramana Maharshi put it like this: "to those who have realized the Self, as well as to those who have not, the world is real. But to the unenlightened, Truth is adapted to the form of the world, whereas to the enlightened Truth shines as the formless perfection and the substratum of the world."

Zen puts it in simpler language. About 900 years ago two Chinese Zen masters met for the first time and one asked the other three questions to see whether he was enlightened. The replies show that he was. The dialogue runs:

Q. What is the world?

A. Just so.

Q. Who are you?

A. What! What!

Q. How do you receive visitors?

A. We have a cup of tea.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was like those two Zen masters. The English novelist, Somerset Maugham, once visited Tiruvanna-

malai to get background for his novel *The Razor's Edge*. But on arrival at the Ramanashram he had a slight heart attack brought on by the heat. As he was resting in a small room, Bhagavan entered and sat on a chair near the bed. Half an hour passed and then Somerset Maugham stuttered: 'Oughtn't I to say something?' Bhagavan replied: "No, silence is best." Similar revealing anecdotes are told of Sai Baba and Ramakrishna.

Zen scriptures of the ninth Century say that the Buddha before his death officially established the Dhyana School, which is now called Zen, by giving his robe to Mahakashyapa. The great Kashyapa in due course tested Ananda when the latter asked: 'What did the Buddha transmit in addition to the robe?' Mahakashyapa replied by calling out: 'Ananda!' Ananda said: 'Yes' and suddenly was enlightened. Mahakashyapa acknowledged the enlightenment by saying: 'Pull down the flag-pole', by which he meant that no more sermons were necessary.

Each Patriarch or Head of the Dhyana School is said to have transmitted the light to his successor in a similar direct way until about 1,000 years later Bodhidharma, who was a Tamil, became the 28th Patriarch and took the Transmission to China. There it was called Ch'an, which is the Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit word 'dhyana'. The Dhyana School, however, has left no discernible traces in India, so that Chinese and Western scholars argue that it was a Chinese invention. It may have been, but if so it does not matter, for the allegory, if such it be, was devised by a master.

In China the Transmission and possibly the Robe were passed down through five historical Chinese Patriarchs who are counted as six by the inclusion of the Indian Bodhidharma. Then the Transmission but not the Robe passed from Ch'an master to master until the present day.

Some three years ago Ch'an master Hsu Yun died at the ripe age of 119 as a result

of being beaten up by a Communist gang. His deathbed gatha for his successor ran thus:

'Taking pity upon ants, the shrimp jumps not into the water'

In other words out of compassion for the communist ants, the Ch'an master had not escaped to Hongkong or Taiwan and his successor carries on secretly in China today.

In the 12th century a Japanese monk took the Transmission to Japan where it was called Zen. There too it has been passed down from Roshi to Rishi until the present day.

When in 526 A.D. Bodhidharma reached China and was asked by the Emperor what he taught, he replied:

A special Transmission outside the Scriptures,  
Without dependence upon words and letters,  
Directly pointing to the mind and heart  
of man,  
Seeing into one's own true nature and  
becoming a Buddha.

Now the Transmission is outside the Scriptures because seeing into one's real nature, finding out who or what one is, is a personal experience. It is a result of doing, not of telling, studying or listening to lectures. This experience is called kensho or satori in Japanese. But to discuss kensho or satori only leads people astray, for they then theorise about it.

The Maharshi used to say: "Preoccupation with theory, doctrine and philosophy can be harmful as it interferes with the really important work of spiritual effort by offering an easier alternative which is merely mental".

Zen puts it thus: flowers are red and willows are green, but kensho or satori — that is to say seeing into the Self-nature — is a flower in the sky, a ghost in thin air. When you talk about it or seek it, it cannot be found.

'Without dependence upon words and letters' means that no amount of learning

will help you to realize who you are or your own true nature. The Guru is within, yet you and I need a human guru to help us find that Guru within.

Since there is no dependence upon words and letters, Zen roshis although they know and quote from the Buddhist Scriptures rarely use the technical terms of Buddhist philosophy. They talk, as Ramana Maharshi did, in simple everyday language. Thus Zen keeps fluid and alive as each roshi coins his own words and analogies to express the inexpressible and relate it to this world.

When asked about the nature of the Buddha, he may talk about something in the room, of a mother-in-law leading a bride on a donkey, of three pounds of flax, or even of a piece of paper. Intuitively he hits upon the very analogy, piece of nonsense or even apparent blasphemy which can burst the logical bonds of the questioner's habitual mode of thought or belief. For it is one's pattern of thought which is so often a barrier to one's spiritual understanding.

And so in Zen the Dharmakaya is called by 1,000 names and analogies such as the Buddha-nature, the essence of mind, the true man of no position, a tree in the courtyard, a round cake that happens to be on the table at the time, this or that.

Then, since words are inadequate to express the inexpressible, gestures are used in their place. Chu-chi for instance would often answer questions by raising a finger, Lin-chi would give a loud bellow or roar, while Yeng-shen would just draw a circle in the air — and so on in infinite variety.

In most books on Zen the third line of Bodhidharma's gatha is mistranslated 'direct pointing to the mind'. But the Chinese word translated *mind* primarily means *heart*. If you are centred only in the mind, you depend upon name and form (*nama-rupa*). But to see into your real nature you have to turn inwards into your heart, which does not mean your physical heart or the anahata chakra. As the Maharshi used to say: "A man does not have to

go and find where his eyes are in order to see. The heart is there, always open to you if you care to enter it, always supporting your movements, although you may be unaware of it. It is, perhaps, more correct to say that the Self is the heart. Really the Self is everywhere aware of itself as the Heart or Self-awareness."

In other words to see into your Self you have to meditate in the heart. But no one can tell you where that Heart is or what the Self-nature is like.

As for 'Seeing into one's own true nature and becoming Buddha' Bhagavan put it like this: 'The mind turned outwards results in thoughts. Turned inward it becomes the Self.' The simplest way in which you and I can get a feel of what this means is to take the darshan of a Christian, Buddhist or Hindu saint — of someone like the late Ramakrishna, Sai Baba, Ramdas or Ramana Maharshi. Of the gurus available today I suggest Shri Ananda Mayi Ma.

The saints, roshis or gurus are simple people who live an active life in the world and yet can sit quietly over a cup of tea. They see mountains as mountains and you and me as we are. They weep with those who mourn and laugh with those who make merry. But they are few and far between while their imitators are legion.

Then what should you and I do if we aspire to bodhi (Enlightenment), or moksha (Liberation)? Should we burn our books and our boats, fly to Japan and sweat in the discipline of Zen meditation under a roshi: or give up everything to sit at the feet of someone like Ananda Mayi Ma? One or two of us may be ready to do so, if we have worried enough over the books and find ourselves in the treadmill of dogma, debate and speculation so that we know we are getting nowhere. If our frustration has given rise to a red-hot iron ball of doubt which only the discipline of Zen or the Vichara can melt and disperse, then perhaps we are ready to go. But you are not ready if you have merely caught a touch of the general feeling of unease which is growing in the world today,

for this is not enough to justify throwing up everything to sit under a Zen roshi or a Hindu guru. Nor should one use it as an excuse to dive unaided straight out of one's depth into the sea of meditation. To do so without a guru at one's elbow is to ask for trouble.

Some people argue, quoting Ramana Maharshi as their authority, that the Guru within is sufficient. And so it is, but only for a really spiritual person who is on the threshold of liberation. Remember that I and most of us are not always able to distinguish between the subtle insinuations of the ego and the enlightened promptings of the Guru within. So it is best to be humble and consult a human guru until he merges with the inner Guru.

Now the Buddhist aim is to experience the Great Tranquillity, Enlightenment or Liberation for the sake of all sentient beings. Ramana Maharshi put it like this :

Between the Self of Pure Consciousness and the physical body there arises mysteriously the ego-sense or I-notion, a hybrid that is neither of them. This flourishes as an individual being. This ego or individual being is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore it has to be destroyed by all possible means. Then that which ever is alone remains resplendent. This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-realization.'

This has to be done now, down here in Samsara and not in some future and temporary heaven. But it cannot be experienced until one has given up all that one has and thinks that one is, and this not all are prepared to do. The I-thought is always, if not there, at least only just beneath the surface.

What then has Zen or the Vichara to offer you and me? The answer is that level of spontaneity, tranquillity and awareness to which each one of us can attain while continuing to live in the world with our present commitments. Its depth will depend upon how far we succeed through meditation in

stilling our desires and suppressing our egos so that we realize in part who we really are.

The meditational disciplines of Zen and the Vichara are designed to free us from name and form (nama-rupa), from our tendencies (vasanas), thoughts and emotions, so that suddenly the light of our Buddha-nature, that is of our Self, breaks through. In Zen jargon one sees one's original face.

Each one of us is an iceberg at the mercy of wind and wave in the ocean of samsara. The vast submerged mass of that iceberg represents the alaya-vijnana, the reservoir of our potentialities for good and evil of which we are still almost completely unaware. The water in that iceberg has been frozen into a mis-shapen mass by our prarabda karma : by our heredity, environment and upbringing ; by our habitual thoughts and emotions : and by the fact that for each one of us the world is still centred round the individual that bears our name. We are still ice-bound. We do not flow freely or live without constraint. Whether we know it or not, we are each shut in a private world of our own imagining. Mountains to us are what we imagine them to be, not what they are. To be free and enlightened, to see oneself and this wonderful world as they really are, one has first to melt that iceberg with the fires of compassion, faith and meditation.

I am now going to say something of what you do and what you should not do when sitting in Zen meditation. But I can only touch on the subject as the variations in the methods taught by different roshis or gurus and in the personal needs of each disciple are endless. So I shall only recommend what appeals to me personally, thus painting a one-sided and personal picture.

First let me say what you should not do in Zen giving the reasons in almost direct quotation from what Ramana Maharshi said in reply to questions.

There is no need to induce the manifestation of any given form of shakti through pranayama or any other method, because the

Self — or Buddha-nature — became all these shaktis.

You do not have to awaken Kundalini deliberately or to explore the chakras, each of which has its own kind of power or knowledge, because the Self-nature or essence of mind supports them all.

You do not try to enter any heaven or any given samadhi, for they too are supported by the Self. If you do so by chance it is an experience for which you are ready and you work through it. If you stay in it, you will never rise above that level and so will remain unenlightened.

You do not visualise your ishta-devata in order to worship at his feet, for seeing God is only being the Self.

You do all you can NOT to enter Sunyata, the void, for the mind finds a void whenever it ceases to see and experience : but that is not the real you. You are the constant illumination that lights up both experiences and the void.

“It is unnecessary to meditate on Tat Tvam Asi, since you are now eternally That. Why should you be for ever thinking : ‘I am That’ . Does a man have to go on thinking ‘I am a man’ ? Are we not always That ? ”. It is the same with ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ . Brahman does not say so. What need is there for him to say it ? The real I always abides in Brahman. All you have to do is to find out who you are.

Now for what one does. Bhagavan once put it like this :

“The Bliss of the Self can only manifest in a mind made subtle and steady through assiduous meditation. He who experiences that Bliss is liberated even while still alive”.

It may be helpful to master a meditational asana, but remember that the Maharshi said : ‘asana really means steadfastness in the Self and is inward.’

In Zen one may have to master a theme, which in fact is not a mental one. Mastery here means that you have to dwell on that theme as continuously as possible. And that

is all there is to zazen. The vichara is not a theme but turning inward.

In Soto Zen one’s first theme, which is not a mental one, is a variant of satipatthana as developed and taught by the Buddha. You just watch and observe your whole breathing process. To start with you feel the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils : then you follow it into and out of your body. That is all. You do not try to stop thoughts rising, but when they do you try not to follow them. The moment you follow a train of thought, a feeling or an emotion, you are caught by it and are no longer watching your breath.

In the process you discover various things : Your own natural breath rhythm : an awareness first of your physical and then of your subtle body, of your thoughts, feelings and emotions. In other words without deliberately trying to do so, you explore the kosas until you find that the vijnana-maya kosa is only the sheath of the I and not the I itself.

You do all this naturally without forcing anything and, after a time, without theorising about it, if a samadhi swallows you treat it in the same way as an asuric revolt against the whole process of zazen — but with this difference, you cannot help enjoying it. You learn a little more from each experience and then ‘walk on’.

From just sitting and watching the breath — which is not easy when the breathing dies down to something so nearly imperceptible that you lose it — you go on to what is called shikantaza in Soto Zen. Here you no longer bother about the breath : you just sit motionless trying to be acutely aware. Slowly you begin to appreciate what awareness is. As with the taste of a mango none can tell you what it is like, you have to experience it for yourself.

Ramana Maharshi said : “The essence of mind is only awareness or consciousness. But when the ego overloads it, it functions as reasoning or perceiving. The universal mind, not being limited by the ego, has nothing outside itself and is therefore only aware.”

One must remember, however, not to get stuck in the awareness of any given state, for on this level it is only another experience, whereas enlightenment is an all-inclusive state of being.

The technical term for this type of awareness — or silent illumination — is *samatha* and its main danger is that you just sit vacantly in a happy haze, becoming a pool of stagnant water, a stone maiden or a piece of dead wood. Long ago a young student, full of the illusions that beset us all, used to sit locked in meditation every available minute. His roshi, after observing him for some time, approached him one day and asked: "What are you doing?" "I want to become a Buddha", replied the young monk. The roshi without a word picked up a brick that happened to be there and began rubbing it. "What are you doing, master?" asked the astonished pupil. "I am making a mirror" said the old man. "But, master, no amount of rubbing will make a mirror out of that brick." "And no amount of sitting will make a Buddha out of a clod", was the master's curt retort, with which he ended his lesson for the day.

Sooner or later in Soto Zen one's roshi will take one on this *samatha*-type meditation which was designed by the Buddha to awaken awareness, for it by-passes the reasoning mind. But one still has to work on the mind before one can discover its source. And so he gives one an iron ball upon which to chew.

In Rinzai, as in Soto Zen, the basic attitude is taken for granted, but in Rinzai one is guided through the early stages of sitting by the head monk: one does not come directly under the roshi until one is ready for koan meditation. When one is ready, the roshi will give one of the three following Dharmakaya koans.

The first is: a monk asked Master Joshu: 'Has the dog Buddha-nature or not?' Joshu answered: 'Mu'. (Mu means No).

The second is: Hakuin Zenji used to say to his disciples: "Listen to the sound of one hand clapping."

The third is: The Sixth Patriarch asked the head monk Myo: "Thinking neither of good nor of evil, at this very moment, what was your original face before your father and mother were born?"

In China, Hongkong, Taiwan and Vietnam the koan "Who am I?", namely the *Vichara*, is used at this stage. But if the meditator has been accustomed to repeating the mantra of Amitabha Buddha he will be given the variant "Who is repeating the Buddha's name?" I understand that this variant is also given by Obaku Zen roshis in Japan today. Strictly speaking there is no answer to a koan, but one has to arrive at a reply which shows that one has seen into it. This reply is not necessarily a logical answer and may not even be verbal, but it holds water absolutely to any one else who has also seen into it. And so you should see your roshi as regularly as possible to show him your latest attitude or reaction to your koan. You should also attend as many as possible of the seven or eight special weeks devoted exclusively to koan meditation at his Sodo during the year.

The replies that one gives to the roshi are reflections of what Buddhists call one's state or degree of ignorance, or, as we say in the West, one's psychological attitude. The roshi's 'No' to all one's answers undermines this attitude and drives one further back or down into oneself. How the student reacts to this is individual to him. Whether he does or does not become aware of his idiosyncracies, of all that he thinks and feels, that he is, also depends upon him. The roshi will repeatedly tell him to have a spring cleaning, but whether he takes this to refer to his room, house, garden or heart, all of them or none, literally or metaphorically, also depends on him.

If we were all the same a clear answer could be given as to what it means to *look into* a koan or the *Vichara*. But all our surface waves are different, so that there is no single answer. The 'original face' is not mine, but my approach to it is peculiar to me and is conditioned by my private set of

delusions. If I want to find out what a thing feels or tastes like, I must try to do it for myself, whether it is drinking iced water or looking into a koan.

What you should do is simple — go on working at your theme, koan or the vichara, as constantly as you can. Walk on. In the words of the Maharshi: "It (the theme) will become constant when the mind is strengthened. Repeated practice strengthens the mind and such a mind can hold on to the theme. Then . . . the theme will remain uninterrupted, no matter what you are doing". And he added: "To be the Self that you really are is the only way to realize the Bliss that is yours."

One cannot pass one's first or Dharmakaya koan until one has entered or experienced for a timeless moment what Mirua Roshi called the undifferentiated realm of the Dharmakaya. Hakuin Zenji said this of it: "When activity of mind is exhausted and your capacity for feeling has come to a dead end, if something should take place not unlike a cat springing upon a mouse, or the mother hen hatching her eggs, then in a flash great livingness springs up. This is the moment when the phoenix escapes from the golden nest, when the crane breaks the bars of its cage." The goose has left the bottle.

If however you think that such a glimpse into your true nature is enough you become a mere worm living in the mud of self-accredited enlightenment. All you have done is to pass what is called the barrier of the Patriarchs and your real training has only begun. You have not done more than entering the stream. To attain enlightenment in Rinzaï Zen you have to look into and pass through another four series of koans.

After deepening your insight into the undifferentiated realm of the Dharmakaya by seeing into more Dharmakaya koans you have to come back down to earth so as to experience the marvellous realm of differentiation. This is done by concentrated reflection over and over again on the koans that

deal with differentiation. You are resharpening your sword of discrimination.

The second series which you tackle is concerned with the study and investigation of words. Before you can teach Zen or understand its Scriptures, you have to penetrate directly into words and understand them thoroughly. The Lankavatara Sutra says of this: "To penetrate into the Fundamental Principle and not to penetrate into the teachings on it is like opening your eyes in the dark. To penetrate into both the Fundamental Principle and the teachings on it is like opening your eyes into the clear light of day".

As Miura Roshi put it: "To illumine one's mind with old learning during the day and to deepen one's discernment of the principle by meditation in the Monks' Hall at night, this is indeed to illumine the teachings with one's own nature. Inside and outside are one, this and that are transcended. It is like two mirrors mutually reflecting one another with no shadow between them".

Next there is a series of koans about which I know nothing except that they are called Nanto, which means 'difficult to pass through'. And there is a last series through which you experience what is called 'the reciprocal interpenetration between the apparent and the Real'. They deal with what is called in Zen jargon the host and guest positions. Finally some roshis then return you to the koan that you were given at first some ten or more years ago.

The full course of training takes some ten or fifteen years of fairly constant work under your roshi before you are authorised to train others in the koan discipline. Then you have to 'mature your compassionate heart'. Having realized that Zen is 'freedom, actuality, action and daily life, you have to live it. If, however, you fail to attract disciples or, having attracted them, you fail to pass on the Transmission to at least one of them, so that you fail of an heir, you will learn that after all you have failed to realize your intrinsic enlightenment.

## ABOUT SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

By

Dr. (Miss) BITHIKA MUKERJI

**J**UNE 1966. Satsang Hall of the Sri Anandamayi Ashram in Kishenpur, Dehradun. Kirtan is just over. It is the time for conversation with Mataji.<sup>1</sup> The hall is quite crowded with the inmates of the Ashram, guests from outside who have come to spend some time with Mataji, and visitors from the town. An old gentleman who is occupying a front seat asks permission to put a question to Mataji. She smilingly nods assent.

"What have you achieved by your *sādhana*?" he asks.

"Here, the question of achievement or *sādhana* does not arise. I am what I have always been."

The gentleman consults a paper and then says:

"What is your message to the world?"

"What message can one give who has not achieved or learnt anything?"

The gentleman does not share the general appreciation of this prompt rejoinder. He is in earnest.

"Ma, I have travelled a long distance to see you. When I go back, my friends will ask: 'What is she like? What did she say?' and then what am I to tell them? I want to understand your message!"

"Very well, tell them: 'I have a small daughter; she prattles of whatever occurs to her.' You said, 'When others ask', therefore I said: 'I am your child,' but actually you and I are one, aren't we? There is only one all-pervading *Ātmā*, naught else except the ONE. You yourself are a barrier unto yourself in the form of *samskāras*. The destiny of every human being is to destroy the veil that hides his own Self. To realize the Self means to realize God and to realize God is to realize one's Self."

"There are good as well as bad *samskāras*. Do good *samskāras* also act as barriers?"



*The Mataji*

"The bad-ones do not allow the good-ones to be effective. However, from the ultimate point of view there is no such thing as good and evil."

The gentleman professes himself pleased and satisfied with this answer.

He no doubt would have been extremely surprised to hear Mataji on other occasions advocate the ritualistic worship of deities. She also countenances forms of worship which relegate ritualism to a bare minimum. It cannot be said that Mataji has any religion, doctrine or method of her own because she accepts and approves of all of them. She would in effect say: "How can you impose limitations on the Infinite by declaring: 'This is the only true way'?"

<sup>1</sup>Sri Anandamayi Ma is generally known as 'Ma' or 'Mataji.'



"Why should there be so many different religions and sects? Because through every one of them He gives Himself to Himself, so that each person may advance according to his individual uniqueness . . ." <sup>2</sup>

Mataji's teachings are mainly for the individual and as such it would be as futile to enumerate her words of guidance as to pin point the radiating flashes of a diamond. To each questioning person she generally replies according to his cultural background, his capacity to understand and also the degree of his conviction. However, some generalizations may be attempted without fear of misrepresentation.

Mataji has been guiding people away from the ways which lead to religious frenzy or extreme rigorisms. Mataji never delivers a talk. Neither does she herself perform any ritual whatever. She usually encourages the singing of *Nāma Kirtana* and sometimes takes active part in it. Mataji is easily able to establish rapport between herself and people of all countries, age groups and coming from various walks of life.

Now that she is quite well known, many foreign seekers after Truth, artists, journalists and tourists visiting India make it a point to meet her. Mataji receives them as she receives thousands of others. The writer of this article, as one of the interpreters, has had numerous opportunities to watch Mataji with foreigners. She gives them the same individual treatment as to persons well known to her. To superficial questions her answers consist of two or three words and the interview is terminated before it has well begun. To a few she gives detailed instructions about many things.

In a particular case the interpreter had a strong feeling that the translation was superfluous. Mataji hardly waited for it to be over before she would start speaking again. The man, looking at her face, would nod understandingly, as if the meaning, which was already clear to him, was being confirmed by the translator. Indeed, many foreigners have experienced no difficulty in communicating with Mataji although she speaks only Bengali and Hindi.

The variety of the advice she gives would explain to a large extent the difference of opinion amongst her devotees about Mataji's teachings. Some will claim that she upholds orthodoxy: "She told me not to eat food cooked by a non-brahmin." Another will say: "Mataji never believed in the caste system. Did she not have the temple doors in the Ashram at Dacca opened for all, many years before such a movement started elsewhere in India?"

We may hear such contradictory statements as: "She believes in education. She has asked me to study hard and finish my educational career before I think of doing anything else," and: "Education is not important. She told me: 'This education will help you to earn material wealth only. You must strive for spiritual wealth.'" Or: "Mataji so strongly advises against the breaking up of a home: it is no use arguing that my difficulties can be solved only by going away. She always exhorts me to have patience and forgive again and again." And: "She has told me that no duty is binding for one who goes forth in quest of God."

Some will assert that she upholds the ideal of social service, others that she advocates renunciation of the world for the sake of God, and each person will be correct.

It must be understood that all these teachings are the variations of just one theme: The supreme duty of every human being is to strive for the realization of THAT WHICH IS. She knows no compromise in this. All other obligations, namely towards family, country, humanity have their places in the hierarchy of human values but they are all subsumed under the supreme duty towards God: "To aspire for the realization of Truth is alone worthy of man." "It is man's duty to bear in mind that he exists for God alone — for His service and for the realization of Him."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Words of Sri Anandamayī Ma.* (Published in 1961 by the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Varanasi.)

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from *Matri Vani*, a collection of Mataji's replies to letters.

But it cannot be said that Mataji recommends renunciation of the world. To the oft repeated question : "Should I renounce the world because this would be helpful to a life of *sādhana*," she has variously replied : "The time has not come for you to do so since the question arises in your mind whether you should or not."

"The call of the Divine must be felt as a compulsion. A man who hears this call leaves all behind even as a dry leaf falls from its branch."

"If renunciation does not purge one clean of every sense of duty and obligation, it is merely a flight into another world."

"A man does not debate whether he should escape from a holocaust."

Mataji generally maintains that so long as duties are meaningful they should be carried out meticulously and as a service to God.

She repeats this again and again to statesmen, businessmen, intellectuals, ignorant, rich, poor, old and young. "The Ashram of the householder is a field of service and every service should be performed as a worship of God."

"Abide by your duty. To live in the home that he has created for himself is surely fitting for a householder. Do not, however, neglect the search for your real Home. Only when this has been found has one truly come home".<sup>4</sup>

"There are various modes of living : one is the Ashram of the householder ; another to do service, regarding whomever one serves as a manifestation of the Supreme Being ; a third way is to fix Self-realization as the one and only goal and advance towards it with uninterrupted speed and determination. In keeping with his inclinations and bent of mind everyone chooses one of these modes of living. God Himself will take care of everything that concerns a man who puts his whole trust in Him."

To children Mataji sometimes says something like this : "You are my friends, aren't you ? Will you do something for this friend of yours ? (1) As soon as you wake up in the morning bow down to God and

pray to Him to make you a good boy or girl. Say : 'Lord, I don't know where you are. Grant that I may find you.' At night, do *pranāma* again and if you have done anything wrong, ask God to let you do better the next day. (2) Try to obey your parents and elders. (3) Study well. (4) Always speak the truth. (5) Laugh and play, run and jump to your heart's content and if you can do the first four things you may be naughty and mischievous as well."

To a busy housewife she said : "You have no time during the day but the nights are your own. It does not matter when or how you remember God. Divine Grace is all-pervasive. Everyone should constantly endeavour to be in readiness to receive this ever-present Grace."

A religious life does not mean a life of idleness. What is required is to live constantly in the presence of God. Nobody need neglect any duty to practise *sādhana*. Admittedly, there are conditions that are not conducive to a religious atmosphere. But Mataji's counsel in general would be to make the best of the existing circumstances. It is only she who can devise ways and means out of seemingly unsurmountable difficulties.

Mataji is rather strict about the quality and purity of food for persons engaged in spiritual discipline. The general rules of orthodoxy are maintained in her ashrams because this seems a desirable arrangement for all concerned. She sometimes says : "You have come here for the purpose of serious *sādhana*. Everyone lives within an aura of his own creation. The commingling of natures is not conducive to progress on this path." Such advice is for the inmates of the ashrams and for other serious minded devotees. She does not seek to change the customs ordinarily followed by people.

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Mataji was born in 1896 in the village of Kheora, now in East Pakistan. Her parents, devout Brahmins, named her Nirmala Sundari.

<sup>4</sup> *Matri Vani*.

By all accounts she was an extremely obedient, helpful and radiantly happy child. Her mother does not recall that Nirmala Sundari ever expressed a wish of her own. From her infancy she exercised unusual attraction on all who met her. For a short time only she was a pupil of the local village school. She was ever ready to help with the chores, not only at home but at all the neighbouring houses. Mataji has always approved of physical work. She herself, was untiringly engaged in household work till the years 1923-24. She was able even to combine the life of a hard-working housewife with that of the ascetic engaged in rigorous sādhana.

Before completing her thirteenth year, Mataji was married to Ramani Mohan Chakravarti, known as 'Bholanath'. In accordance with village customs, she stayed with her husband's family for the first few years after marriage. When she was about 18 years old, she went to keep house for Bholanath at his place of employment.

The question of leading a conventional married life just did not arise for this unusual couple. Mataji has said: "My parents told me that I should respect and obey Bholanath and look upon him as my guardian. Consequently I gave him the respect and obedience due to my father. He was always like a father to me." Bholanath, by all accounts, was a remarkable man himself. When the time came for them to stay together, the young husband found that he had a most extraordinary wife to look after. She was gentle, hard-working and of a joyous nature, but without a trace of worldly feelings and desires. Her innocence and unquestioning trust in him made him the devoted guardian he was to her throughout his life. Mataji has a delightful sense of humour. The anecdotes of her life with her relatives by marriage and also with Bholanath are full of penetrating observations. About her marriage, Mataji has once said: "In the beginning Bholanath used to say: 'You are very immature and childlike. . . . It will be all right when you grow up . . .', but it seems I never grew up!" More seriously: "Bholanath's restraint and sense

of dignity were always exemplary. All the years I was with him I did not even have an inkling of the desires which assail mankind. It is now that I hear unending tales of troubles and transgressions."

Mataji was never taught any spiritual practices, neither did she engage in them in the accepted sense of the term. However, during the years she spent in Bajitpur and Dacca (roughly from 1918-1926), she spontaneously went not only through the varied sādhanas indicated in the Hindu Scriptures but also those of other faiths. The effects of these practices manifested on her body. She would be in exalted states of *bhāva* or *samādhi* or her body would assume various yogic postures. She had no previous knowledge of such matters. She watched herself go through the innumerable paths of sādhana as she watched herself performing household work. She refers to this period as "The play of sādhana." She has said . . . "As a rule there is a veil that separates man from his own Self. This veil has to be worn off by practising sādhana. But here, there was no veil. It was drawn only in order to be removed again. Therefore, what else should this be called but play?" What she has related about this phase of her life would fill a volume, yet she says that she has not disclosed even one hundredth part of the entire experience. The minutest details of each line of approach were revealed to her in their true significance.

Mataji did not need or ask for publicity. In fact, she tried her best to avoid it. In the beginning a few of Bholanath's friends would come and talk to her about religious topics. All knowledge of rituals, spiritual exercises and also philosophical evaluations of such matters came unhesitatingly, clearly and convincingly from this untutored village maiden. These friends brought others and gradually crowds began to assemble round Mataji's radiant personality, seeking advice on spiritual things as well as on their own problems.

Mataji herself did not go out of her way to talk to anyone. If Bholanath asked her

to speak to people she would do so, not otherwise. Throughout his lifetime Mataji never did anything without his consent. Bholanath occupied a peculiar position. He looked upon Mataji as his guru and spiritual preceptor and also received from her the untiring service of which she alone is capable. After his death in 1938 at the age of 56, other devotees have tried to serve Mataji and make all arrangements for her.

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It is difficult, indeed impossible, to understand Mataji because her actions and words reveal nothing about her. Usually action gives a clue to the mental make-up of a human being. Mataji's actions arise out of the needs of the people around her. For herself no action whatever is necessary. Even bodily requirements such as food, rest, sleep and so forth do not influence her behaviour and may remain suspended for any length of time. During earlier days this was a more frequent phenomenon. Once she did not eat or even drink water for 13 days. On the 14th day, she broke this remarkable spell of abstinence with the remark: "I just wanted to see how it would be to remain without water. I find that even the need for water is becoming extinct. But for the comfort and convenience of people a semblance of normal behaviour must be kept up."

Other similar features make it impossible for ordinary judgement to be meaningful in her case. To the question: "If you have no mission to fulfil or message to give, why do you tell us to worship God?", Mataji replied: "If you do not ask, I have nothing to say. But if you ask and if it is my mood then I shall certainly tell you about the better way of life."

Mataji herself has had no Guru and she does not give formal initiation to anyone. The hundreds of people flocking round her are not bound to her even by this intangible tie. The secret of her attraction she sometimes explains in this way: "It is natural for people's hearts to go out to a child. My body is aged but actually I am a small child and as such receive affection from all.

Although this little girl cannot do anything for anybody, people out of the goodness of their hearts love her nevertheless." Or alternatively: "All children and unmarried people are my friends, and married people are my fathers and mothers and so I am dear to all. Is it not natural to love one's friend and child?"

Mataji has no chosen attendants. Her companions, travels, places of residence are fortuitous. One is as good as the other. One of Mataji's favourite expressions, repeated by her again and again, is: "*jo ho jāy*: Whatever comes to pass is equally welcome". Nobody can presume to say that he or she is indispensable to Mataji or specially favoured by her. Out of the throng that surrounds her, there may be one or two who understand the immeasurability of the personality that gives of herself freely and unstintingly to all who have need of her and yet remains so remote. Her compassion for suffering humanity is unbounded. Her days are more than full with assuaging the sorrows of the bereft, unlucky and afflicted. Mataji has no mission to fulfil in the world because no lack in her requires fulfilment. This self-sufficiency makes her personality absolutely enigmatic. From this point of view her closest companion of over 40 years' standing is as distantly placed as the stranger at the fringe of the crowd. She passes through the multitudes mostly as an on-looker. She has no fault to find with anything or anybody but if approached in perplexity she will give guidance and hope and advice as only she can.

All those who have seen Mataji will however subscribe to one general opinion about her: In Mataji's proximity there is no room for pessimism, despair or depression. The divine presence seems to permeate the atmosphere. The razor's edge path appears easy to traverse. The heart is buoyed on a wave of joyousness unimaginable before. It seems a miracle to be born a human being to whom the Kingdom of Heaven has been promised. Mataji's mere presence awakens in every man, woman and child a sense of destiny which is ANANDA.

## THAYUMANAVAR, A TAMIL POET-SAINT

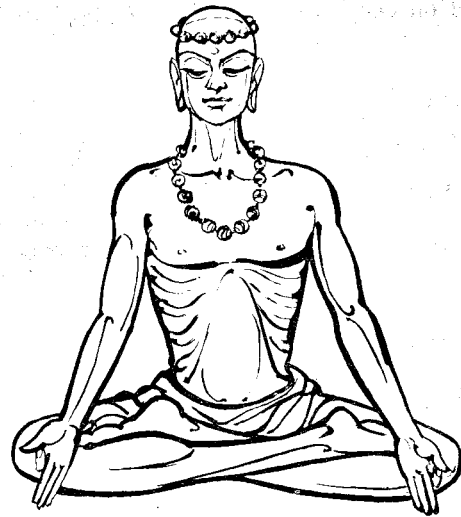
By  
T. KRISHNAJI

THE lives of mystics and poets the world over is a revelation of Divine Grace. Sometimes this takes tangible form ; sometimes not. Lord Krishna bestowed Grace on his devotee Sakku Bai, a woman mystic of Maharashtra, by assuming her appearance and doing her housekeeping for her when she was away on a pilgrimage. Lord Siva, out of love and grace, attended as a mid-wife on a Vaisya girl when her mother, who was to have done so, was unavoidably absent. On account of this, he is known as Thayumanavar in Tamil, Matrubhuteswara in Sanskrit, meaning 'He who became the mother'. Under this name he is the God worshipped at the Rock Fort at Tiruchirappalli. Following the Hindu custom of naming a child after a God, a Vellala of Vedaranyam, who was a high officer under the Nayak king of Madura, named his second son 'Thayumanavar'. The child was to become famous both as poet and saint.

We are told that he early entered the service of the king and, after the latter's demise, while still an adolescent, left the court to avoid the amorous advances of the widowed queen. Thereafter he wandered as a sadhu in quest of God and Guru. At the above-mentioned temple at Tiruchirappalli he met Mouna Guru Arulananda Sivachari, a great saint of the Saiva Siddhanta School. He asked to be taken as a disciple, but the saint answered '*chumma iru*', meaning 'be still' or 'be quiet' or 'just be' (a phrase which Ramana Maharshi also used on a number of occasions when some one came to him in a restless state of mind). However, he added that when the time was ripe he would initiate him.

Thayumanavar then returned to family life. He was taken back to Vedaranyam by his brother and there he was married and had a son named Kanakasabhai. Soon after

the child's birth his wife died and he again left home in quest of God. The Mouna Gurū met him, as he had promised, and gave him initiation into sannyas, from which there is no return to family life.



Thayumanavar

He followed the discipline of silence (*mouna*), which he describes as : "that state which spontaneously manifests after the annihilation of the ego." He says : "It is a state beyond light and darkness, but it is called light, since language is inadequate to express it. The ego disappears and 'I' spontaneously manifests in full glory." Ramana Maharshi particularly singled out this verse of his for admiration.

True spiritual silence is not easy. Thayumanavar invokes the Grace of God to hold to it : "O Eternal! only to remain in Silence devoid of thought and speech is my ambition by day and night." This inner silence is beyond disputes and dialogues between the sects. Aldous Huxley quotes the Spanish mystic Molinos (1640-1697), who paid with his life for his silent mysticism,

as distinguishing three degrees of silence : silence of the mouth, silence of the mind and silence of the will : to refrain from idle talk is hard ; to quieten the gibbering mind is harder still ; hardest of all is to still the voice of desire and aversion in the will.<sup>1</sup> St. Antony, one of the Desert Fathers of early Christianity, says that : "He who sits quiet hath escaped from three wars, hearing, speaking, seeing."<sup>2</sup>

Strangely enough, despite his general withdrawal into silence, Thayumanavar could on occasion take an active part in the affairs of the world. Seeing the Portuguese occupying Rameswaram, one of the four outstanding Hindu places of pilgrimage, he called upon all the Maravars to rally to its defence under the banner of their leader Raghunatha Sethupathi ; and such was the force that arose in response to his appeal that the Portuguese withdrew. It was not that he had anything against Catholicism. Throughout his poetry he expresses appreciation of all religions and calls for mutual tolerance and respect, but he knew that if it fell to the Portuguese there would be no tolerance and this ancient pilgrim centre would be closed to the Hindus.

Thayumanavar is the most popular Tamil poet-saint. His mystical and devotional lyrics continue to inspire people. Their profundity of meaning is matched by their beauty of form, so that they appeal to simple and learned alike. Declaring that all paths culminate in a realization of the same truth, he extols Vedanta and Siddhanta alike. He is the great prophet of *samarasa*. He equates Maya with avidya or ignorance, saying : "What is Maya but my ignorance ?" Although proclaiming Advaita or Identity, he does not decry Dwaita or Duality but declares : "Dwaita leads to the light of Advaita." He worships God both as Personal and Impersonal. Lamenting intolerance, he declares : "The cause of innumerable disputes between lands and religions is that each claims rightful sovereignty for its own God."

In the completeness of his worship, he declares with the Kenopanishad : "With-

out Him no atom could move." What, then, of human intelligence or ignorance ? Or of human will ? He answers unequivocally : "Without Thee there is nothing." In some of his poems he uses also the language of bridal mysticism.

Often he retired to the forest or public gardens and remained for days absorbed in the bliss of the Self. Tradition has it that he was sitting thus, immobile in samadhi, in a public garden in Ramnad when the gardeners, not noticing him, piled a dump of dry leaves and twigs about him and set fire to it, and thus his body was consumed and he merged in the Godhood.

Although he lived only about two hundred and fifty years ago, we have no precise knowledge of the date of his birth and Mahasamadhi. There is no tradition of any miracles that he worked ; his poems were his miracles. He was supremely great alike as a saint and a poet. Ramana Maharshi often referred to him and quoted from him. The following is a prose translation of seven consecutive verses that he selected from him and that Sri Ramanasramam has printed as a leaflet.

1. *The individual self known as 'I' having arisen and caused trouble to all, universal Maya, the diversifying agent, spontaneously follows it. Who could ever describe the vast ocean of misery due to it ? It appears as the flesh, the body, the outer and inner sense, the all-pervading ether, air, fire, water and earth, as mountain and forest, as huge visions like hills, physical and subtle, as forgetfulness and memory. Thus rising up, it beats upon a man, wave after wave, bringing pleasure and pain born of his past actions, bringing also their remedies known as creeds and religions. It brings God and the seeker after God and the testimony found in learning and logic ; and all these things are more numerous than the grains of sand on the sea-shore.*

<sup>1</sup> *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *The Desert Fathers* by Helen Waddell, p. 67.

2. Unaccountable troubles spring up spontaneously, sheaf upon sheaf. How can one destroy them all at one blow, like burning up a hill of camphor in one great blaze, leaving no residue of ash? <sup>3</sup> To accomplish this miracle and grant me enlightenment, Grace took on a form in every respect like my own, eating and sleeping, suffering and enjoying, bearing a name and having a human birth, It appeared as the Silent Guru, like a deer used to decoy a deer.
3. It claimed my body, possessions and very life. Eliminating the unreal, It taught: "You are not the five senses, nor the five elements, nor the limbs, nor the mind, nor their attributes, nor all these collectively, nor the body, nor knowledge, nor ignorance. You are pure consciousness, separate from its background, like a crystal, but revealing it to those who look. And I am only indwelling Nature revealing the truth to you on finding you ripe for it.
4. "If you wish to reach the Being-Consciousness-Bliss at the heart of all, which is also the inner abode of healing Grace, listen to what I tell you. May you attain the pure Heart and abide there for ever! May dense ignorance vanish for you! May you attain to Bliss-Consciousness!" Speaking thus,
5. The Guru bestowed true knowledge of that unique Silence which destroys all bondage, wherein there is no meditation, no ego, no space or time, no direction or association, no elimination of error or differentiation, no expression, no parting of night and day, no beginning, middle or end, nor any aggregate of these.
6. Yet, though all these are excluded, is it not void but Natural, Eternal Being, inexpressible in words, not manifesting as ago, but the Reality engulfing all, having swallowed up ignorance as day does night and absorbed all knowledge. Transmuting the seeker into Itself, It shines in Silence, Self-effulgent.
7. By Its emergence It prevents any other from appearing; all else is suddenly extinguished like burning camphor,<sup>3</sup> leaving no ash or glow. Alone It shines, beyond the senses and apart from knower-knowledge-known. It is, but who can speak of It, and to whom? For when It arises the individual is transmuted into It. It speaks Itself.

And finally, to give some slight indication of the lyric beauty, this translation by Prof. K. R. R. Sastry already published in *The Mountain Path* of October 1964:

I cannot worship at Thy shrine  
Or to Thy holy symbols bow;  
I cannot pluck the flowers for offerings,  
When in each flower's heart art Thou.  
How can I press my palms together,  
My body bent to worship Thee,  
How my imperfect service offer,  
When Thou indwellest, Lord, in me?  
Thou art the vastness of the Void,  
The elements, the primal sound,  
The Vedas and the quest they bring,  
The Goal beyond all seeking found.  
Thou art the quest and Thou the finding,  
Thou of all seeing art the Sight,  
Of knowing, Thou alone the knowledge,  
Of mind and eye the inner Light,  
The outer word and inner Meaning,  
The vocal and the silent Call.  
Oh Source of Grace in joy past thinking,  
Lone cosmic Dancer in high Wisdom's hall!

<sup>3</sup> Camphor is burnt as a symbol of the aspirant burning up the ego, because it leaves no residue of ash.

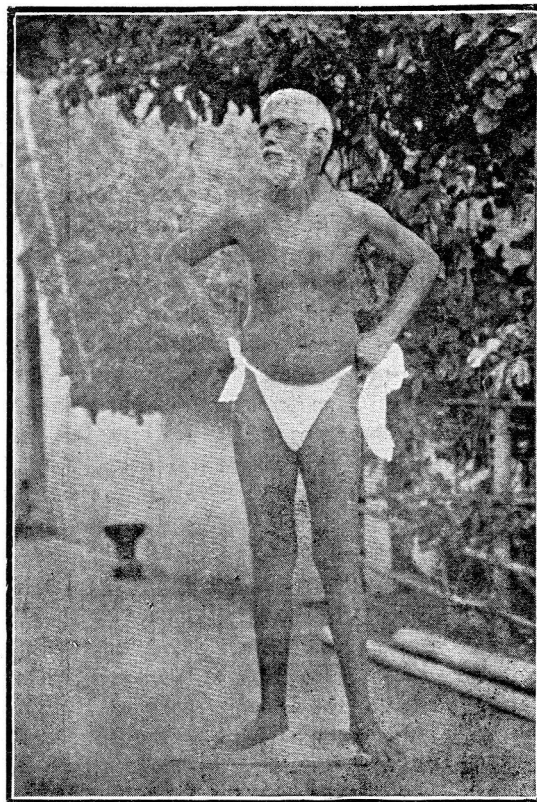
The secret meaning of the Vedas is truth; of truth, self-control; of self-control, freedom from all limitations! This is the sum of all the scriptures.

— *The Mahabharata*.

## HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By  
Dr. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

I WAS studying medicine and my final examination was a few months ahead. Together with a few friends I set out on an excursion to Vellore. I carried my camera with me and took pictures of the old Fort and some stone carvings of archaeological interest at Vellore. There was not much to see there, and some one suggested that the temple at Tiruvannamalai was a huge and impressive work of art. So we got in a bus for Tiruvannamalai and went round the temple, admiring the beautiful stone carvings and the huge towers. I had a good harvest of photographs. A by-stander suggested that we pay a visit to the Maharshi who was living a couple of miles away. So we set out for the Ashram in a horse cart. I was wondering if the Maharshi would be a good subject for photography. It was evening by the time we arrived at the Ashram. The visitors had dispersed from the hall. The Maharshi had gone out, as was his habit, for a short walk on the hill. We waited for a few minutes and saw a string of people following a tall man walking with a stick and holding a *kamandel* (vessel for water). We alerted ourselves and I asked if I could take a few photographs of the Maharshi. The reply was 'No, no, you cannot.'



The first photo by me.

As we were talking, the tall stately figure had approached us and asked what was the matter. Mr. Seshu Iyer, the man I had asked for permission, pointed to me and my colleagues and said, 'This party are from Madras and they want to take some pictures of Bhagavan.' 'Oh! Is that so?', said the Maharshi. 'Let them.' So saying he stood posing for me with his hands on his hips and with his face in semi-profile. I lost no time. I opened my camera, brought it into focus and clicked 3 or 4 times, giving different apertures and different timings. I was not looking for any spiritual fare and I was not

conscious of any holy atmosphere. Bhagavan, as they called him, entered the hall and lowered himself on to the sofa which was carefully arranged for him. He pulled out a towel and wiped his wet feet and then he sat recumbent on the sofa, seeming quite relaxed. It was surprising how he merged into himself totally oblivious of the surroundings. We entered the hall and sat a few feet off in front of him. The Maharshi did not seem to take notice of anything around him. He wore a calm and distant look. His eyes were shining and there was something divine about his countenance.

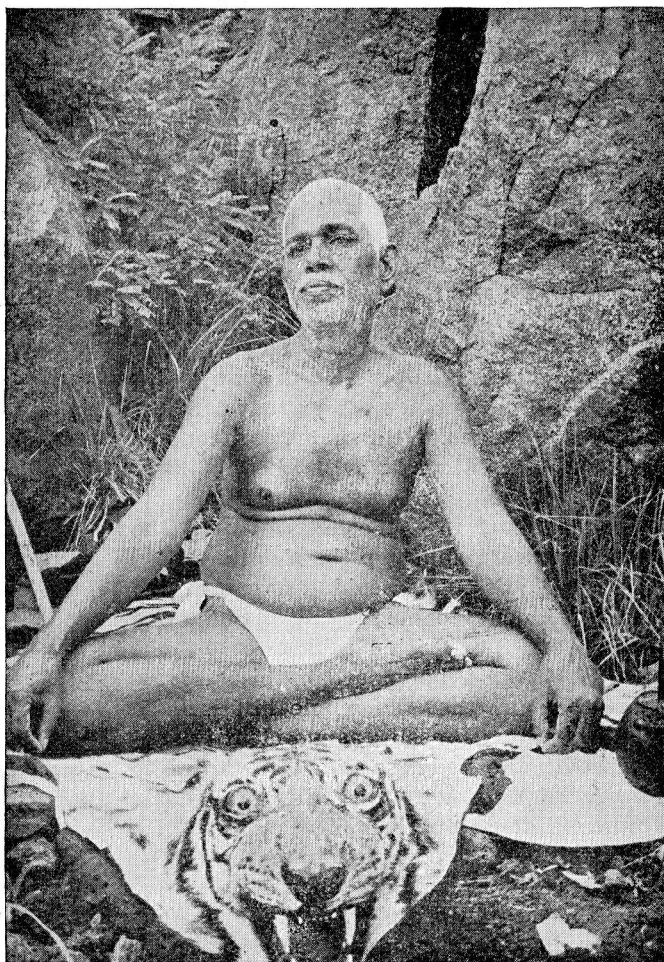


The hall was badly lighted for photography but still I took a few pictures of the Maharshi. We then got up and mechanically prostrated before him and left the hall; before we were out of the Ashram compound, a Sanyasi clad in orange robes came running after us and said, 'Please send a few prints to us to the Ashram address. We do not have any good picture of Bhagavan.' This person was none other than Sri Niranjanananda Swami, the then Sarvadhikari. I left the Ashram without giving any further thought to the matter and never suspected that it was to play a vital part in my life. I returned to Madras, developed the films and sent a few prints to the Ashram.

Then I settled down to my studies. I had almost forgotten Tiruvannamalai. One morning I received a letter inviting me to come and take a group photo with the Maharshi, as all the devotees were impressed with the good picture that I had made. I wondered if this could not be put off till my examinations were over. But somehow I found myself entrained for Tiruvannamalai. When I entered the Maharshi's presence, he greeted me with a smile and said: 'They want a group photo and they want you to take it for them.' I felt highly flattered and I felt that I had done right in answering their call. To have been the object of Maharshi's remark, was exquisitely pleasing. I felt quite important, arranged the group, erected my camera and took a few pictures. Then Bhagavan posed for me in the conventional Padmasana. The Ashram has sold many thousand copies of this particular pose of Bhagavan. Bhagavan sat almost statue-like, with a clean shaven head.

On another occasion, as I entered the hall, the Maharshi remarked, 'Just now we were

talking about you and see the coincidence, you are here in person. You may yourself receive the letter personally which they have addressed ready for posting to you.' Whenever I went to the Ashram, though I usually stayed there only for one brief day,



Padmasan pose, also taken by me.

from morning till evening, I made it a point to accompany the Maharshi and take as many pictures of him as possible.<sup>1</sup> I used to wonder if such doggedness on my part would not vex the Maharshi. I have snapped him walking, sitting, eating, cleaning his feet. I have snapped him smiling; bursting into

<sup>1</sup> Most of the photographs of the Maharshi that are available and published in our books, were taken by Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami.

laughter ; smiling at a child ; in a meditative mood ; in samadhi etc. Once he was going up the hill when there was a slight drizzle and he was offered a country-made palmyra umbrella. I took a picture of him while he was using this. I also took another picture of him using an ordinary umbrella. As I began to take this picture, the Maharshi was smiling broadly.

In the few hours that I spent with the Maharshi, I felt charged with an inexplicable peace and contentment and I returned home elated. The Maharshi seemed someone whom I knew intimately. I felt at home in his presence and even expected some sort of paternal indulgence and affection from him. I have no doubt that he did indulge me like a loving father. It is amazing how the thousands of visitors felt at ease in his presence and were made to feel that personal attention was bestowed upon each one of them. My short walks with the Maharshi gave me the rare opportunity of listening and taking part in the conversations. One day, as we were going up the hill, he picked up a small glistening pebble from the path and held it out to me saying, 'Some one from abroad has written asking for a stone taken out from a holy part of this hill. He does not know that the whole hill is holy. The hill is Siva Himself ; as we identify ourselves with the body, so Siva has chosen to identify Himself with this Hill. Arunachala is pure wisdom appearing in the shape of a hill. It is out of compassion to those who seek Siva, that Siva has chosen to reveal himself as a hill visible to the eye. The seeker will obtain guidance and solace by staying near this hill.' These words sank into my heart. It never occurred to me to weigh or examine the aptness of what was said. The hill was holy. The Maharshi had said it and that was what counted with me.

Sometimes I used to wonder if it was not ridiculous of me to pay so much attention to photography whereas his teaching was 'I am not the body.' Was I not chasing the shadow and even trying to perpetuate it? Somehow so long as I was seeing the Maharshi, his teaching did not assume any importance to me. His person was seen and felt by me and I felt drawn and attracted to him. It gave me immense pleasure to take pictures of him: He was more important to me than his teaching — every little movement, every one of his acts and gestures, was highly valued by me and they always carried some divine fragrance. Simply to watch him, no matter what he was doing, was highly gratifying. I was attracted to him like a baby to its mother.

His death gave me a severe jolt. I was shocked. Had I missed the opportunity of a life-time, to imbibe the teaching of the Enlightened One? I had done nothing in the direction of spiritual sadhana. Had I wasted all my time taking photographs, while I should have engaged myself in trying to understand and practise his teachings in his very presence. 'No', I said to myself, this cannot be true. I was sure that I had obtained some grace from the Maharshi. He was somehow still here. Only, we have to learn to feel his Presence. We would never be forsaken for he had himself assured us that he was not going away.

Then I turned with a sad heart to studying his teachings. I began to see light in them. Some of the sentences touched me and made me feel that I was in his presence, listening to him. I took heart ; the more I read, the more intimate the Maharshi became to me. His teaching pulsed with life ; I began to understand it and it mixed with my being and became my own!

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Divine is he who has overcome both good and evil.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam.*

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## CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY AS SEEN BY A HINDU SWAMI

By  
SWAMI NIRMALANANDA

**I**F anyone were to put me the question who has had a great influence on my life, I would unhesitatingly name the personality of Jesus Christ. If He were to come again in our midst in flesh and blood, I would not only worship Him with my whole-hearted adoration, but would wash His feet with tears of devotion. It was that immortal book, *The Imitation of Christ*, which in my view, would rank equal to the Bible, that made me to appreciate the wonder and glory of Christ. Many years ago in my early twenties I had a unique vision of Jesus Christ. Since then many a time He has come to me in His cosmic form and I have rejoiced to live in communion with Him, for Christ is the living Truth that makes men free.

In quest of the historical Jesus, to imbibe the spirit of His wonderful personality, I have wandered in every nook and corner of the Holy Land which remains sanctified by His physical presence. While walking along the shores of the Lake of Galilee, at Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives, in the Garden of Gethsemane and along the Via Dolorosa (The Way of the Cross) leading to the Holy Sepulchre, my mind was so much moved with historical reminiscences that I felt that the great drama of His life was being reenacted in front of my very eyes.

It has been truly said that our sweetest songs are those that sing of the saddest thoughts of life. In fact, the tragic ending of the life of Jesus was a triumph of Truth. Only in death can we find a new life. Without crucifixion there can be no resurrection. Despite His selfless love, spotless purity and noble teachings Jesus had to suffer by the hand of men, their insult, torture and tormentation. Yet His boundless love for all, His unlimited forgiveness even to those

who crucified Him, His true humility and perfect obedience serve as a model for all mankind. All the troubles of the world are of our own making. Even today the wicked make the innocent suffer without realizing that an insult to one is an affront to all. However much we may deny our part, we all are equally responsible for all the evils and injustice found in the world. Christ came as an example to all of us so that we might turn from our evil ways and live as a fine example to all others. He lived, suffered and died on the Cross in vain, if we do not turn to His way of love, purity and perfection.

Christ is the centre of our being and He knocks at the door of our heart calling us to His way of love, peace and freedom so that we all may live as He lived, pray as He prayed and love as He loved. Human life has its many problems which entail sufferings. How true is the saying of Jesus: "In this world ye shall have tribulations." To many these wearisome burdens of life are often so heavy that they feel altogether crushed and almost lost in the misery of life. Christ is the beckoning hope of all such dejected, despised and despaired souls. "Come unto me all those who are weary and troubled, I shall give you rest." "Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "I am the light of the world and he who believeth in me shall not walk in darkness." "Let your heart not be troubled. Be of good cheer. I am with you always." There could be no greater assurance nor mere comforting words of hope and consolation. As Jesus Himself has made it clear, "it is the sick that needs the physician." He did not come to call those who profess to be righteous, but the erring and struggling souls to a noble and happy life of peace and perfection.

As we all do, Jesus too lived on two planes of existence: in terrestrial as well as celestial kingdoms. Because of mounting miseries and the multifarious problems of this earthly life, we all prefer to live in heaven experiencing the undisturbed peace and happiness in God. Yet the fact remains that we all are forced to come down to earth in order to satisfy our physical needs: for our working, eating and sleeping. As smoke is contained in the fire, all worldly undertakings have their own limitations. Every action is tinged with an element of imperfection. The more one lives in his ordinary mortal mind, the more he is bound to feel unhappy and disgusted with life. But the celestial life lived in the Christ mind is the life of perfection, freedom and happiness. The difference between a worldly man and a man of God is while the former lives more in the individual mind, the latter dwells often in the universal mind. We see this clearly in the life of Jesus. On a few occasions we find Him uttering these words of limitations of a mortal being: "Why do you call me good? There is nothing good except my Father in heaven." "I of my own self can do nothing." "If possible, this cup may pass away from me." "Oh God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" On all other occasions, knowing His true nature and identity with the Creator, He spoke the immortal words of wisdom: "I and my Father are one." "I am the truth, the way and the life." "I am the light of the world." "He who has seen me has seen the Father." etc.

One profound Truth which we read in the Old Testament is that God is *I am*, as Moses himself heard His voice as *I am that I am*. This *I am* which has always been *I am* is the absolute reality. "*I am* before Abraham was." "*I am* the truth, the way and the life." "*I am* with you always." If we are to abide in the universal Christ, we must experience this *I am* that is ever-present in us.

Jesus does not call men to a particular religion or denomination but to the supreme path of love and righteousness. The extent to which His exhortation has gone is to love

even our enemies, to do good to those who hate us and to bless those who curse us. Love was the recurring theme of His whole message. It was the key to open the door of the Kingdom of Heaven. Above all, did He not ask us?: "Love ye one another as I have loved you." How far have we been true to His words? The frequent wars and revolutions in the Christian world and the growing number of people who break away from the church having lost their faith in it are clear indications that the church and Christianity have failed in their profession of love.

Of all religions of the world, Christianity can legitimately be proud of having contributed more to the material well-being of mankind. By extending and imparting education to the ignorant, it has helped to give mental enlightenment and emancipation to many enslaved millions who would have otherwise remained in ignorance and poverty. Christianity's service in the field of health and medical care is not a small achievement.

The spiritual and contemplative life of Christianity can be seen in the rich traditions of the Catholic Church. But its great drawback has been that it rigidly binds the mind of its followers keeping them almost under virtual subjugation. The Protestants, on the other hand, have been protesting too much. In their eagerness to be free from the dogmas, rigidity and authoritarianism of the Roman Catholic Church they became too free and lost contact with the Inner Life. In the field of mystical and contemplative life their original contribution is very little.

In our undue concern for material well-being, spiritual life is being utterly neglected. This is true all over the world, but in highly prosperous Christian countries of the West this is more true. Even if we fill the whole world with money, food, hospitals and material comforts, the misery of the world would still continue, as long as man's spiritual need is not satisfied. As Jesus Himself says, "man does not live by bread alone." It is

thousand times better to live in rags with Christ than in a palace without Him. Let us not forget His words : "Blessed are the poor." In the West where even the ordinary people have access to all sorts of luxuries and comforts, we find a growing number of mental diseases, alcoholics and neurotics. More and more people break away from the church, its dogmas and doctrines. The impressive but routine ceremonies of the church, the well-sounding but repetitive sermons of the priests or pastors cannot adequately satisfy man's hunger for God.

"For 2000 years we have had Christianity without Christ, but hereafter we must have only Christ without Christianity." "The difference between Christ's teachings and the Christianity of today is 1966 years!" "Christ and His teachings are like a mighty elephant, but the church and its doctrines like a little cage. When the upholders of the church and its doctrines find that the mighty elephant cannot be contained in their man-made cage, they begin to cut its limbs so that they would somehow be able to fit it into their cage." These are harsh words, but they come from some thoughtful and intelligent Christians of the West. When we try to find the truth of their allegations, we cannot say that they are baseless accusations. There is an element of truth in these charges.

Heart-breaking brutalities are spreading all over the world and the cracks of growing unrest, decay and degeneration are visible in all countries. To build a new society the world is in urgent need of a revolution, not a revolution with guns and bombs, but a revolution based on spiritual values. All the so-called revolutions fought for man's material well-being create more problems than they wish to eradicate. Many of the world's so-called revolutionaries

have been really reactionaries because they reacted against certain particular situations. He who reacts is a reactionary. The wise never react. But Christ was a true great revolutionary. Our society is based on many false values. We are selfish, aggressive, ambitious, competitive, hateful and nationalistic. These basic evils are the root causes of all our problems. No improvement in the conditions of the world can ever happen, as long as we individually do nothing to be free from these vices. To fall in line with the ways of society is quite easy, but not to accept their false values and yet to live in the world would require extraordinary courage. It means living dangerously. It has been said : "When a Christian becomes a true Christian, then the real revolution begins."

Organized religions like organized nations can be a great curse for mankind. Each person should be left alone to work out his own destiny or salvation. Perfect freedom both inside and outside, but not liberty of the mind to do anything as one pleases, should be the cherished goal of human life. Without this freedom life is not worth living. Just as a bird whether tied by a gold or iron chain is not free to fly, so a mind tethered by dogmas and doctrines, however good they may be, loses placidity and pliability which are so essential for a spiritual life of enlightenment and emancipation.

Christ stands before us in His cosmic form and His words can still be heard ringing in our mind :

"Be ye holy as *I AM* holy,  
Be ye universal as *I AM* universal,  
Be ye pure as *I AM* pure,  
Be ye forgiving as *I AM* forgiving,  
Be ye compassionate as *I AM* compassionate."

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Heaven is the domination of sattva in the mind.  
Hell is the predominance of tamas.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam.*

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## NO MIND DOCTRINE OF RAMANA

By  
R. N. SARAF

IT would have been preposterous had it not been true to say that there is no mind. Ramana's statement on this subject is unequivocal and emphatic. He definitely says there is no mind at all. The meaning is not so easy or so absurd as at first appears. When the mind is denied, the phenomena that are taken for mind are not denied. What is denied is a unitary and self-subsisting thing. The mind is tripartite and consists of knowledge, emotion and will. They are separate and exclude each other. They have a point of reference beyond themselves. Thus the mind is not a unitary thing and depends for its existence upon something else other than itself. What does not exist by itself is said not to exist. When we say that water is not an element we mean that it does not subsist by itself. Separating the elements that compose it would destroy it. So if we analyse the mind into its components, the illusion of the mind which is produced by the composition of its components disappears. The illusion of the unity of the mind is produced by the unity of the consciousness. Thoughts occur, emotions arise, will decides in unintermittent succession. Consciousness reveals them as conscious states and the conscious states produce the illusion of a separate mind. Bhagavan Ramana says :

“The conscious states depend on the ego-consciousness ;  
the mind is nothing more than these states ; therefore the ego-consciousness is the mind.”

The ego is nothing more than the illusory unity of the conscious states. When the consciousness takes off its support, these states all fall to the ground and the illusion of the mind is destroyed. The consciousness sustains the ego which unifies the states. If one

tries to find out the ego, Bhagavan says it falls down — merges in the self from which it had sprung.

Bhagavan Jnaneshwar says the same thing. He says :

“Like the blueness of the sky, or the water in the desert ;  
the mind springs into existence without any reality of its own.”

The appearance is true enough as appearance but if taken as reality is wrong. How the mind comes into existence out of nothing is a mystery far beyond the reach of the human mind. It is but natural. Nobody can know his own beginning. To know one's beginning one must be in being, before one has come into being. This is absurd. So the beginning of the mind is beyond the reach of the mind. The mind can find out that it has no substantiality of its own by self-inquiry. It finds out that it ceases to be in sleep where there are no thought, no emotion and no will. It has no other existence when the memory which supplies the clue itself comes into being when the mind comes into being. At the time of sleep the memory remains merged in its source, the source of all. The daily emergence of the mind from its source is a daily miracle. How the lost mind emerges entire can never be known. It is like waking to know the sleep. The waking would destroy the sleep and never know it. So the mind would destroy itself if it tried to know how it came into being and merged in the self.

When we say that things have no colour we substantiate the statement by showing that colour is nothing more than reflected light. So when we say that there is no mind we must be able to show that it is nothing more than a reflection.

## PROBLEMS OF RIGHT AND WRONG

By  
'SEIN'

IN the very first class of the ethics course for my M.A. I was told that there were two ways of looking at ethics : as good and bad or as right and wrong, and that the former was the more profound. This made a lasting impression on me. I felt strongly that the two ought always to be the same but was unable to deny that they are not. I was given the example of a rishi who was sitting in his ashram in the forest when a wealthy merchant rushed in and took refuge from a gang of thieves who were pursuing him. They soon reached the ashram and asked the rishi whether any one had come there. He admitted it and the merchant was dragged out and butchered. It might be said that the rishi had done right in telling the truth, but it was certainly not a good action, since it caused an innocent man's death. What would Bhagavan have done? Probably he would have sat immobile and abstained from answering; but few people, even rishis, have the power of Bhagavan's silence.

I have since learned that Lord Krishna himself declared at the end of the Mahabharata that the Kali Yuga, the fourth epoch of time, had now set in, when complete rectitude would no longer be possible. One has to gauge which course of action will entail the greater benefit or justice and the less harm or injustice and follow it.

Some exponents of ethics go to the length of denying that there is any right and wrong and reducing both to social conventions. For instance, in a country where polygamy is accepted a man is doing nothing wrong in having more than one wife; in a country where it is banned he is. Or again, in a country where duelling is accepted a man who kills a personal enemy in a quarrel may be not only not guilty but actually honourable, whereas in a country where it is not

he may be guilty of murder. One has to admit that there are no absolute uniform standards. When some thieves once broke into the Ashram and began to steal the articles there (only very few) and beat the inmates, including the Maharshi, Sri Bhagavan would not allow the latter to resist. He said : "Let them stick to their dharma and we will stick to ours. Our dharma is to be sadhus." That implies that dharma does not necessarily mean 'what is right', because the thieves' action could certainly not be called right. It may mean simply 'accepted way of life'. Then suppose a householder had been staying with his wife and children in a house near the Ashram and the thieves had attacked him too; would Sri Bhagavan have allowed him to resist? I think he would, because his dharma was not to be a sadhu but a householder and this involves having rights and property and defending them in case of need!

The question may arise, however, whether it is good or bad to exercise one's rights in any given circumstances. If a thief breaks into my house in a country where a householder has the legal right of self-defence and I am armed I may have the right to shoot him, but the question still remains whether it would be a good thing to do. That, however, may be beside the point, since it is confusing the adjective 'right' in the sense of 'correct' with the noun 'right' in the sense of 'legal authority': "I have the right to beat my children but would it be right to do so?" There is no hard and fast rule.

So far as one can generalise it may be best to say that what is good is concerned more with the spirit of the law and what is right with the letter of the law. After Duryodhana had cheated the Pandavas out

of their inheritance and his father had sent them on a twelve-year exile, Lord Krishna gathered his forces and, in a lightning swoop on the forest, urged Yudhishtira to turn back and make an immediate attack before the Kauravas had time to mobilise resistance and while their potential allies were still alienated by the shock of their treacherous conduct. Yudhishtira refused on the ground that the Kaurava action had been legally right although morally wrong, and he therefore felt bound by it. Yudhishtira was right by the letter of the law, Sri Krishna by the spirit of the law. It was hard for Yudhishtira to see this because the letter of the law was against him, and it is always harder for an honourable man to go against the law when it suits his interests to do so ; it makes him suspect his own motives and wonder whether he is not indulging in false casuistry.

There was another occasion when Yudhishtira was still farther from the spirit of the law or from goodness, and that was when his wife, Draupadi, was declared forfeit after the infamous dicing game and dragged before the assembled kings. He could accept the forfeiture and submit to it as being legally right but there was certainly no goodness in it. Even if he had brought it on himself, Draupadi had not, and what about her suffering ? Didn't that matter ? It did to Sri Krishna and he refused to sanction such legalised wrong-doing. It is noteworthy that in the Yaksha Prashna, the list of questions on dharma put to Yudhishtira, he is asked what is the typical corruption of the Kshatriya and he himself states that it is desertion of a dependent in time of need ; and yet this is just what his treatment of Draupadi amounted to !

Lest this article should seem too critical of Yudhishtira, let me mention also the classical case when he came out strongly on the side of goodness against rectitude. That was when Drona was using foul means to slaughter the followers of the Pandavas and, on Krishna's bidding, Yudhishtira and the other four told him a lie which took away his zest in the fighting. Arjuna was very

upset by what they had done, but Yudhishtira boldly declared that he stood by it, even if he was to be punished for it, because it had done much good and saved many innocent persons from destruction.

It is impossible to give a categorical answer from a book to all such questions. One has to do what is right to the best of one's ability but also to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to others. Yudhishtira clung to his own interpretation of what was right, even against himself, but in doing so he overlooked the suffering caused to Draupadi and to his brothers. Such rightness can be a subtle form of egoism. Frequent problems assail one in daily life and the interpretation is not always easy. A lawyer once asked Sri Bhagavan whether he could continue to practise his profession, since it sometimes led to the condemnation of his opponent, and Bhagavan said that he could. He did what he considered right, he interpreted the law in the way that he considered right, and there his responsibility ended.

There are some ethicists and psychologists who reject both the conception of right and wrong and that of good and bad and speak only of 'socially acceptable' and 'socially unacceptable' actions. This is an increasingly popular attitude. Its implication is that whatever is generally accepted is right and to be conformed with. But it is a superficial attitude because the misfit, what the psychologists call the 'socially maladjusted person', may be above the generally accepted level as well as below it ; and that is where spiritual considerations impinge on ethical or psychological. The Athenians condemned Socrates and the Jews Christ for blasphemy. Both of them were put to death for militating against the socially accepted code of their day. But it is the verdict of Christ and Socrates which has been accepted, and in going counter to it their judges have in fact condemned themselves.

This leads us to raise the whole question of the motivations of our judgements. In modern ethics and psychology an action is condemned primarily for external reasons,



because of the harmful effect it will have on society if freely indulged in; but spiritual teachers condemn an action primarily for internal reasons, because of the harmful effect it will have, if persisted in, on the man himself. One's own character is constantly in the making. The actions that one performs, good or bad, right or wrong, solidify into molds or action-patterns, that is into vasanas, and these provide the channels in which one's future actions tend to flow. A wandering sadhu once sent a message asking Sri Bhagavan what his future would be, and Bhagavan replied: "tell him that as his present is so will his future be." A simple and yet a profound reply! Whatever theories we develop we cannot help modelling our future because our present actions are doing that automatically.

This is one more illustration that intelligence is needed. It is not easy to be rightly guided. First it is necessary to understand what the right decision is, then to take it. Both processes are character forming. Neither is sufficient alone. There is a story that once three rishis were ascending to

heaven when they saw an eagle carrying a serpent in its talons to feed its young. The first of them released it by his yogic power. He fell back to earth for having robbed the young egrets of their food. The second, seeing this, immediately restored it to the eagle by his yogic power, and he fell back to earth for having deprived the serpent of its life. The third remained impassive and continued on his way to heaven. However, even though one remains aloof towards them, decisions have to be taken. There are situations where action is incumbent as well as where it is redundant.

Indeed, it was noticeable that when any one asked Sri Bhagavan what to do in any circumstance he usually sat silent, leaving the questioner to seek his own decision. Only then, when the decision had been taken, would he show by gracious approval or cold disapproval whether it was right or not. Really what we are seeking in our sadhana is *anubhava*, spiritual experience. Right action smoothens our way to it by removing obstructions and wrong action causes obstructions, but it is a living thing and cannot be known vicariously or by a set of rules.

## "I" The Stillness

By A. R. Nikam

The 'Silence' in me,  
and the great Silence outside,  
Communicate!  
Only the feeling of 'me'  
divides their Union!

The 'stillness' in me,  
and the great Stillness outside,  
Communicate!  
Only the feeling of 'me'  
prevents their Union!

This feeling of 'me'  
is 'empty sound'  
veiling the Great Silence!

This feeling of 'me'  
is the 'noisy mind'  
veiling the Great Stillness!

Now that I know —  
I am the 'Silence'  
I am the 'Stillness'  
the barrier of I, me and mine,  
that compose the mind,  
will be swept away,  
Some day  
By the Great Silence,  
By the Great Stillness.

Indeed that Great Silence is Me!  
Indeed that Great Stillness is Me!

## EATING THE MANGOES

By

Prof. EKNATH EASWARAN

IF we were given the choice between going to heaven and listening to lectures about going to heaven, Dr. Carl Jung is said to have remarked, most of us would choose to attend the lectures. I know a distinguished scholar who has a comprehensive collection of books on World Mysticism, and who lectures brilliantly on the various methods of Meditation, from the simple self-inquiry of Sri Ramana Maharshi to the mondo-koan techniques of Rinzai Zen. He can keep an intellectual audience spellbound with his comparative exposition of Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa Samadhi, and illustrate it graphically from the lives of the great mystics of the major religions. "How long have you been practising Meditation?" I asked him when he was showing me round his Meditation library. "I am afraid I don't find any time for learning to meditate," was the simple reply of this distinguished scholar in the field.

When you are standing under a mango tree, Sri Ramakrishna would say to his disciples, don't waste your time and energy counting the leaves, but climb the tree, pluck the mango and eat it. The mango is the most luscious fruit I have tasted, and this is the season for them all over India. I shall not, therefore, hesitate to repeat the words of Sri Ramakrishna, "Let us stop counting the leaves, and start eating the mango fruit."

Counting the leaves is information; eating the mango is realization. Here is a seven-fold practical program or Sadhana which can lead us to this resplendent realization:

1. Meditation
2. Doing only one thing at a time
3. Japam or use of the Mantram
4. Discriminating restraint of the senses

5. Association with similar-minded people
6. Putting the other person first
7. Some form of selfless service

Is it not possible for a human being to attain instant Samadhi without practising Meditation? Yes, it is possible for a Ramakrishna or a Ramana Maharshi. But for the vast majority of ordinary people like you and me the long laborious discipline of Meditation is unavoidable. In the inspiring words of Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

"Who knows the Atman  
Knows that happiness  
Born of pure knowledge:  
The joy of sattwa.  
Deep his delight  
After strict self-schooling:  
Sour toil at first  
But at last what sweetness,  
The end of sorrow."

Meditation is concentration, and concentration is consecration. It is only as long as we have a grasshopper mind and live on the surface level of consciousness that finite things — such as money or material possessions — would seem to bring some sort of satisfaction. But as our concentration grows, it will become increasingly clear to us that our real driving need is, not for anything that is fleeting, changing or finite, but for the immortal, immutable and infinite Reality called God who dwells in the depths of our consciousness. When we are letting our mind become many-pointed, we are moving away from the Lord of Love who is the heart of our heart, the life of our life; when we are making our mind one-pointed we are moving closer to Him. "If the heart wanders or is distracted," says St. Francis de Sales, "bring it back to the point quite gently and replace it tenderly in its Master's

presence. And even if you did nothing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back and place it again in our Lord's presence, though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour would be very well employed."

The dynamic discipline of Meditation can be greatly facilitated if we try to do only one thing at a time instead of dividing our attention among two or three things at the same time, as we are being conditioned to do in the name of efficiency or relaxation. Concentration is efficiency; concentration is relaxation. Division is inefficiency; division is tension. Swami Vivekananda has said, "Concentration is the quintessence of education."

When I was in my early teens I had just discovered Washington Irving, and could not tear myself away from his delightful story of Rip Van Winkle. At breakfast I was reading Rip Van Winkle and eating rice-cakes with cocoanut chutney at the same time. "This is poor reading and poor eating," remarked my grandmother as she took away my plate of rice-cakes and cocoanut chutney.

Whenever I go to the campus cafeteria I cannot help being surprised at the number of students who are drinking coffee, smoking and reading books simultaneously. This is going against one of the fundamental principles of education which is to give all our attention to one thing at one time. It is not difficult for me to visualize my illiterate grandmother walking into the cafeteria and taking away from every student the cup of coffee and the pack of cigarettes, leaving them with only their books to be read with undivided attention.

One of the valuable aids in making the mind one-pointed (to translate the Sanskrit term *Ekagra*) is by scrupulously refraining from doing more than one thing at a time. When your boy friend is telling you about the climax of his unwritten novel, even if a peacock comes on the scene and starts dancing in front of you, don't look at the dancing peacock, but keep both your eyes on the future novelist. On the other hand,

when you are looking at the dancing peacock, give all your attention to it so that you don't even hear the words of the coming Hemingway. In the words of the Buddha, when you are walking, walk; when you are sitting, sit — don't wobble!

Most of us are under the impression that we spend our waking hours in logical, systematic thinking. If we can observe the thoughts of even a profound scholar, we would be surprised to find how his mind jumps about, like a grasshopper, from thought to thought, sometimes relevant, sometimes irrelevant, sometimes profound, sometimes puerile. When the temple elephant is being taken in procession through the narrow lanes in the bazaars of India, his wandering trunk snatches clusters of bananas from a fruit stand on one side, then passes on to the other to pick up cocoanuts from a grocery store. In this manner he weaves his way through the winding lanes, his trunk in constant motion. The mahout, who takes good care of the elephant, will give the animal a bamboo stick to be held firmly in his trunk so that it may not wander from stall to stall.

This is exactly what the Mantra does for the wandering mind. Not only does the Mantra steady the mind from wandering thoughts, but it can serve as a tremendous transformer when tidal waves of anger, fear or lust rise up in our consciousness. On such occasions, instead of taking it out on those who are near and dear to us, we should go for a brisk walk, if possible, repeating the Mantra — Hare Ram, Jesus Jesus, Hail Mary, Om Mani Padme Hum, Barukh Ata Adonai, Allah, or any other spiritual formula sanctioned by the Scriptures. The rhythm of the Mantra, the rhythm of the footstep, and the rhythm of the breath blend into a healing harmony.

The intense repetition of the Mantra thus enables us to direct into constructive channels the Prana or vital energy which would otherwise have run amuck, inflicting severe damage on our body and mind. It is sometimes asked whether this does not lead

to suppression. In suppression, as I understand it, a wave of anger is pushed down where it continues its destructive work below the surface level of consciousness. On the other hand, in Japa or the repetition of the Mantra, the very power that is agitating the mind in the form of anger begins to calm it. The power is there in both the cases; in anger it is working against me because I am the victim; in Japa it is working for me because I am the victor.

Mahatma Gandhi has pointed out that the control of the palate is a valuable aid to the control of the mind. In our abundant American economy, under the influence of sense-stimulating advertisement campaigns, we often find ourselves consuming articles of food that have little nutritional value and are perhaps even harmful, such as candy that leads to cavities. When your mind is craving for a log of pecan delight, say to it, "You may have it in a couple of hours." It is the nature of the mind to keep changing and you need not be surprised, therefore, if at the end of two hours it is demanding to go for a restless ride on a motorcycle. Another way of tackling a sense craving is to offer it a healthier substitute — raisins instead of candy, orange juice instead of coffee. When there has been overindulgence, both the body and the mind may benefit from skipping a meal. The ancient Hindu

custom of fasting for a day fortnightly has been corroborated by a recent Russian scientific experiment as contributing to health and longevity.

It is not too difficult for us to exercise discriminating restraint over our senses if we associate with people who are following the same way of life. You may be inclined to believe that you are the only person in your community on the spiritual path, but if you look around you are likely to find others who too are engaged in the same search. From our own observation it may be stated that there is great interest today, particularly among the younger people, in the eternal verities.

It is in the bosom of our own family that we have the fullest opportunity to lead the spiritual life. We do not have to retire into the remote regions of the Rocky Mountains to bring about the dissolution of our ego. This can be done beautifully and with least violence in the family context by putting first the welfare of our parents, partner, children and friends. This does not mean saying "yes" all the time but saying "no" with love and respect when it is necessary in the interest of the other person. In contributing to the happiness of others we are ensuring our own happiness which steadily increases as our ego diminishes.

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## What is true now?

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*Devotee* : Is the theory of Evolution true ?

*Bhagavan* : The trouble with all of us is that we want to know the past, what we were, and also what we will be in the future. We know nothing about the past or the future. We do know the present and that we exist now. Both yesterday and tomorrow are only with reference to today. Yesterday was called 'today' in its time, and tomorrow will be called today by us tomorrow. Today is ever present. What is ever present is pure existence. It has no past or future. Why not try and find out the real nature of the present and every present existence ?

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## SYMBOLISM IN THE LIFE OF SRI KRISHNA - I

By

Dr. W. RADHAKRISHNAYYA

THERE are simple devotees who repeat lovingly the stories of Sri Krishna and his marvellous doings ; there are naturalists who try to think out a rational explanation for the apparent miracles and there are modernists who speak scornfully of what they call 'superstitions'. All these are superficial attitudes. In fact the exploits of Sri Krishna are to be understood symbolically. This does not necessarily mean either that they did not happen or that they did ; the symbolical importance of a story is independent of its historicity.

The stories of the life of Sri Krishna mostly come from the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata, being the work of the great poet and consummate artist, Veda Vyasa, and are therefore certainly not superstitious.

Let us recall : the *puranas*, meaning 'ancient', are ancient symbolical stories enshrining the inherited lore of the *sanatana* (Eternal) *dharma* set down by the great master, Veda Vyasa. The greatest of them is held to be that grand epic the Mahabharata, incorporating the Bhagavad Gita, the Song of the Lord Krishna. Even this, however, despite its beauty, adventure and pageantry, did not prove accessible to all, so he further added the Bhagavata. The Gita has been called the milk drawn from the cows of the Upanishads ; and in the same spirit the Bhagavata has been called the milk-sweet made out of the milk, the sweetened food of it being readily available. But it still is good food, for it must never be forgotten that however captivating the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata and other Puranas may be, their main purpose is to provide spiritual instruction.

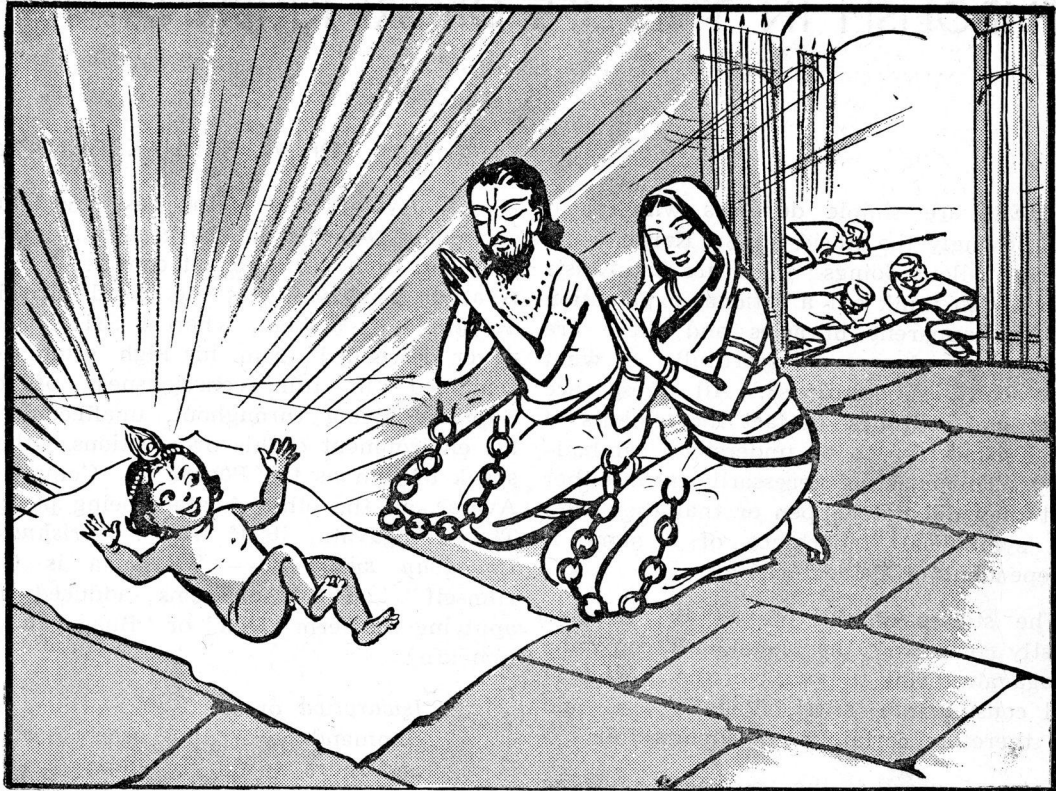
A large part of both the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata is taken up with the life and teachings of Sri Krishna. He is the eighth in the accepted puranic list of the ten

greater Avatars and is the best loved and commonly regarded as the greatest. Indeed there are some who do not consider him as Avatar. They say that the word signifies *avatarana* or descent, whereas Sri Krishna never descended from his high estate but remained in full consciousness of his Supreme Being throughout, unaffected by his environment or his own actions. Others speak of him as the *Poorna* or 'Complete' Avatar, all the other Avatars being partial. The Bhagavata itself says : *Krishnastu Bhagavan swayam* — "Krishna is God Himself". The indications adduced for applying the term 'God' or 'Bhagavan' to him are :

1. *Iswaratwa* or Lordship : He could command even the gods, Brahma and Indra, to do his bidding.
2. *Dharma* : he was the supreme teacher of *dharma*.
3. *Yasas* : fame or renown.
4. *Sri* : wealth, which he could bestow unasked on his devotees.
5. *Jnana* or Knowledge : he was called the Jagat-Guru or 'World-Teacher' on account of his teaching in the Bhagavad Gita and the Uddhava Gita.
6. *Vairagya* or detachment : shown for instance when he laughed cheerfully on hearing Gandhari curse him and his whole dynasty.

The Bhagavata, a sacred scripture written by a sacred author, the great Veda Vyasa, tells the life story of Sri Krishna from birth up to his giving up his mortal form.

The advent of Sri Krishna was at a time of social and moral break-up in some ways reminiscent of to-day. As to-day there were violent and treacherous rulers and deceitful double-dealers. The legend is that the earth



The prison grew bright with his lustre. The chains fell off. The guards, all slept.

could no longer bear the weight of such a generation and, in the form of a cow with sad face, tearful eyes and piteous cry, approached Brahma, the Creator, for relief. Brahma saw that there was no fault in his work of creation, so took her to Siva. Siva also saw no fault in his work of destruction, so the three of them repaired to Vishnu, the Supreme Lord, beseeching him to put things right.<sup>1</sup> The Lord graciously acceded to their request and decided to take birth in the Yadava dynasty for this purpose. He was accordingly born as Krishna, others of the celestials also being born to assist him and play their parts in the drama, notably Sesha who came as Krishna's elder brother Balaram.

The term used for the 'Supreme' here is *Vrishakapi*, implying the power of entering various bodies and instilling life into them. The cow represents mankind and Brahma the mind with four faces looking all four

ways. The Supreme is represented as reclining in the Ocean of Milk, that is the infinite potentiality of the heart.

Coming now to the actual story: Vasudeva (the head of the Vasus or celestial benefactors) married Devaki, the queen of the devas (that is of indriyas or faculties). In their previous birth they had been great devotees and longed for a divine child (for the new life of Realization). In this life their

<sup>1</sup> According to Hindu mythology the three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, constitute respectively the forces of Creation, Preservation and Destruction. One or another of them is regarded as the Supreme according to the viewpoint. From the point of view of preservation and salvation of the universe Vishnu is the Supreme, but from the point of view of the re-absorption (or destruction) of the universe in Non-Being, Siva. The Bhagavata is a Vaishnavite scripture and therefore represents Vishnu as the Supreme and Krishna as the Manifestation of Vishnu. This will come as a surprise to Advaitins who are accustomed to regard Siva as the Absolute and Supreme.

devotion ripened into *jnana* and *vairagya* (knowledge and dispassion which, when united, produce Realization). But Devaki had an elder brother, Kamsa (the ego, also represented as a reincarnation of the demon Kalanemi) who, on their wedding day, heard a voice declare that Devaki's eighth son would kill him (an intimation that the awakening of the Self would be the end of him). His first impulse was to slay her but then he relented and allowed her and Vasudeva to live on condition that they were to remain prisoners (in the bondage of *samsara*) and all their sons were to be handed over to him and killed at birth.

The six infants renounced by them in their longing for the Divine Child represent the *jnana-indriyas* (organs of cognition). There is a remarkable addition coming later in the story that Krishna, after coming to maturity, restored life to his infant brothers, that is to say that the faculties offered up in sacrifice are restored to the awakened Self.

The seventh child was Balaram, who was smuggled out to Gokula and brought up there in the house of Nanda, where he was later joined by Krishna himself. Kamsa was informed that there had been a miscarriage. Balaram represents *sattvic ahankara*, the

purified ego-sense, which has the strength of a giant.

Krishna himself, the Divine Child, was born a little after midnight on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Sravana, midnight being the darkness of envelopment in Nirvana and the eighth day the time of the rising moon of Enlightenment. He revealed himself in his true glory to his parents. The prison grew bright with his lustre. The chains (the bondage of ignorance) fell off. The guards (the impulses of the ego), all slept. The prison doors stood open. Vasudeva took the Divine Child in his arms and walked across the flood waters of the Yamuna with him (untroubled by the turbulence of events). He took him to Gokula (synonymous with the Goloka of the Puranas, the Abode of Serenity). Nanda is Ananda, the state of Bliss. His wife Yasoda had just given birth to a daughter whom Vasudeva took back in place of Krishna. The watchmen now woke up and hastened to inform Kamsa of the birth, but the infant girl was *Māyā*, the power of illusion. She showed herself in super-human power before Kamsa and then disappeared from his sight. Recognizing now that his schemes had failed, Kamsa released Vasudeva and Devaki.

(To be Continued)

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## Meditation on Truth

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Meditation on the meaning of truth as it is taught in Vedanta leads to the highest illumination. By this means, the misery of worldly life is altogether destroyed.

Faith, devotion, and constant union with God through prayer — these are declared by the sacred scriptures to be the seeker's direct means of liberation. To him who abides by them comes liberation from that bondage of physical consciousness which has been forged by ignorance.

— Sankara.

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## WHAT IS SELF-REALISATION?

By

DOUGLAS E. HARDING

**I**N order to answer this question as clearly as possible, let us distinguish six progressive stages:

### Steps

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| (1) to (2) Gradual | (1) <i>Ignorance</i> — not knowing What one is   |
| (2) to (3) Abrupt  | (2) <i>Understanding</i> — knowing What one is   |
| (3) to (4) Gradual | (3) <i>Seeing</i> — catching sight of What one is  |
| (4) to (5) Abrupt  | (4) <i>Illumination</i> — steadily seeing What one is  |
| (5) to (6) Gradual | (5) <i>Self-Realisation</i> — being Who one is   |
|                    | (6) <i>Full Self-Realisation</i><br>— Steadily seeing What one is<br>steadily being Who one is<br>steadily realising That one is |

This table is subject to variation in individual cases. For instance, Understanding (2) may come later than Seeing (3), and Illumination (4) may come later than Self-realisation (5). Again, some of the stages may be telescoped, though not actually avoided. And, of course, the titles chosen for the six stages are rather arbitrary and will not suit everybody. In fact, having set up such a scheme, it is easy (and, in the end, necessary) partially to demolish it. Before we do that, however, let us see to what extent it can clear up misunderstandings about the nature of Self-realisation and how it may be arrived at.

- (1) *Ignorance* — not knowing What one is:

The marks of this stage are that one believes the world is real in its own right, that one is a body which is a part of the world, and that one's consciousness is dependent upon the body.

The activities which normally go with this stage are the pursuit of pleasure, and when that disappoints the pursuit of

possessions and power, and when those disappoint the pursuit of reputation and fame.

- (2) *Understanding* — knowing What one is:

It is a decisive step in one's life when one turns from the surrounding world to oneself at its Centre, and asks What lies here. More or less gradually one comes to understand that one is not the body but Consciousness or the Self, that one is not a thing among things but that unique No-thing which is the Source and Ground and Container of all things. One comes to know, and in the end whole-heartedly to believe, that the Real is not what is experienced, but the Experiencer, the One who is not in the world, but in whom the world is.

Profound intellectual work is characteristic of this stage. It takes the form of ever-renewed discrimination between the object or not-Self there, and the Subject or Self here, with the result that one becomes progressively detached from the world and identified with the Reality it depends on.



Also appropriate to this stage are talking and reading about spiritual matters, and the practice of systematic meditation. All this leads to growth of one's desire for Self-realisation, directly experienced.

(3) *Seeing — catching sight of What one is :*

Though it is a useful preparation, no amount of understanding the Self will ever build up to seeing the Self. And for a very good reason : seeing the Self is quite incompatible with thinking about the Self, and is a much simpler and more direct experience. Instead of *knowing* that right here, on the Spot one occupies, is this brilliant Clarity without so much as a speck of body-mind, one actually *sees* this Clarity, and sees it more sharply and convincingly than one sees anything else whatever. The Self here sees itself to be perfectly lucid, transparent, obvious. In fact, mere objects out there are, by comparison, hardly seen at all : only very limited aspects of them are perceived, remotely and one at a time, and in the spatio-temporal gap between observer and observed all kinds of errors are certain to creep in. Not so Self-seeing, where Seer and seeing and seen are one and the same, coincident, unseparated by any interval of time or space, with the result that there is no possibility of error. Moreover, because this Self-seeing is seeing what has no parts or aspects or history, it is always a total and perfect seeing : one cannot half see it, nor can one see half of it. To see the Self at all is to see it entire — while the seeing lasts.

This Self-seeing is true Liberation, the decisive step. Or rather, it is a sudden, unpremeditated leap in the dark : not the result of intention or training or merit, but the free gift of a Grace which is not to be commanded. Nevertheless this first seeing is, as a rule, a sudden flash which does not at once issue in a steady state. It fades immediately it is not attended to, and needs constant renewal. In a sense, therefore, this third stage is only the beginning of the true spiritual life.

(4) *Illumination — Steadily seeing What one is :*

One's seeing needs to be practised and stabilised, till it goes on all the while. Actually, 'practised' is misleading : 'enjoyed' is nearer the mark, because seeing is so very easy, natural, and agreeable. All the same, it can be neglected, and total dedication is indispensable. Normally, it will take years of more-or-less deliberate seeing before seeing becomes quite automatic, in all the circumstances of daily life. In the end, there will be no occasions which are unfavourable to Self-seeing.

(5) *Self-Realisation — being Who one is :*

Just as there is no footbridge between understanding the Self and seeing the Self, so there is no footbridge between seeing the Self and being the Self : the transition is a sudden leap, powered by Grace. No amount of seeing clearly *What one is* — namely, this Emptiness of body-mind — will automatically lead to the first-hand experience of being *Who one is* — namely, the One, the Sole Reality, the Alone. Certainly some progress in stabilising one's Self-seeing will make Self-realisation rather more likely. But they are distinct and independent orders of experience, and it is perfectly possible to advance in one bound from one's initial seeing of *What one is* to being *Who one is*, without any practice of the former. This radical shift of consciousness, of identity, comes out of the blue, when it wills.

The mark of this stage is that, instead of merely *thinking about* and *seeing* the One, one actually *feels* like the One. One answers to this Name, as before one answered to a human name. One directly experiences what it is to be the All and the Source of All.

But again, this realisation is not, normally, constant, but a series of realisations, flashes of the Supreme Identity separated by periods of Self-forgetfulness.

(6) *Full Self-Realisation — steadily being Who one is :*

Again, it is certainly not practice as a task or a duty, but as ever-renewed enjoyment,

which leads to the permanent establishment of the Supreme Identity.

And probably, long before that Identity is uninterruptedly enjoyed, it will be seen to include, besides seeing *What* one is, and being *Who* one is, realising *That* one is. In other words, though the experience of this sixth stage is in the last resort perfectly simple and indivisible, yet it must somehow include a total amazement — amazement at the 'impossible' fact that one has actually occurred, that anything exists at all, that the Self actually *is*. Here, one says 'I AM!' and that is enough. Not *How* I am or *What* I am, but *That* I am: not what I look like, or embrace, or do, but the simple and astounding fact that I ALONE AM — this incredible achievement of having, without help or reason or cause, raised Myself out of the chaos of non-existence and nullity into BEING. This alone is true spiritual knowledge — the knowledge of the unknowable Mystery, which is the Self's own wonder at Itself.

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The fact that some exceptionally gifted souls may be able to combine two or more of these six stages, thus abbreviating our table, does not make non-sense of the table. For most of us, it is essential to sort out our

confused ideas about Self-realisation, and cease (for instance) confusing the mere understanding of Stage 2 with the seeing of Stage 3, or the seeing of Stage 3 with the being of Stage 5; otherwise, we are likely to rest satisfied with a partial realisation, or (in the case of Stage 2) with no realisation at all, but only an intellectual grasp of the truth. Moreover, unless we recognise the difference between the stages of gradual progress, where systematic practice is appropriate (not to say essential), and the stages of sudden break-through, where practice is meaningless and only Grace counts, we are in danger of misdirecting our energies.

The only way to see the Self is to be interested enough just to look, once and for all, at the Spot one occupies. And the only way to be the Self is to submit, once and for all, to the experience of Aloneness. These two essential leaps in the spiritual life cannot be commanded or worked up to, or occur in slow motion. They are mysterious, unpredictable gifts. On the other hand, they are eminently worth knowing about, because they are more likely to be conferred upon those who have heard of them, and earnestly desire them. Grace gives no command performances, but has been known to respond to an urgent and heartfelt invitation.

## II

# SELF-REALIZATION AS TAUGHT BY SRI BHAGAVAN

By  
ARTHUR OSBORNE

**T**he experience of the sages is that Self-Realization is one, whether a glimpse or ultimate. The only difference is that it remains a glimpse when the mind is not pure enough to hold it. After such a flash sadhana may begin in true earnest to still the mind so that thoughts, desires, vasanas, etc., whatever one may call it, do not hide our true nature which is ever present.

Sri Bhagavan says that in Nirvikalpa Samadhi the mind is temporarily immersed in the Self, like a bucket immersed in water, which is drawn out again by the rope of mental activity. In Sahaja Samadhi the mind is merged like a drop of water in the limitless sea. The drop, in essence the same as the sea, has only lost its limitation, having become the sea.

"These distinctions in Realization are from the standpoint of the others who look at them ; in reality, however, there are no distinctions in release gained through jnana."

"One should enquire into one's true nature."

The Consciousness of "I" is the subject of all our actions. Enquiring into the true nature of that Consciousness and remaining as oneself is the way to understand through enquiry one's true nature.

Then there would shine in the Heart a kind of wordless illumination of "I-I". That is, there would shine of its own accord the pure Consciousness which is unlimited and one, the limited and the many thoughts having disappeared. If one remains quiescent without abandoning that (experience) the egoity, the individual sense of the form I-am-the body, will be totally destroyed and at the end the final thoughts, viz., the "I"-form also will be quenched like the fire that burns camphor. The great sages and scriptures declare that this alone is Realization.

The meditation on the Self which is oneself is the greatest of all meditations. All other meditations are included in this. So if this is gained the others are not necessary.

Sri Bhagavan wrote with the authority of full spiritual knowledge. Even so he would add : "Thus say the Sages". Like all his expositions Self-enquiry is concerned with practical questions of the path to Self-Realization. In reply to questions such paths as meditation on one's identity with the Self and breath control are described but he himself prescribes only Self-enquiry or submission to the Guru. He would say : "There are two ways : 'Ask yourself — Who am I ?' or 'Submit and I will strike down the ego'."

How to practise these paths is fully dealt with in 'The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi', a revised third edition of which has recently been brought out by Sri Ramanasramam.

### III

## IT IS OUR BIRTHRIGHT

By

NATANANANDA

(These were questions put by a devotee to Sri Natanananda and answered by him)

Question 1 : What is the method of attaining peace ?

Answer 1 : (a) It is first of all necessary to know what the mind is.

(b) There is no such thing as a mind separate from the Self, one's real nature.

"When one enquires constantly into the nature of the mind it is seen that there is no such thing as the mind. This is the direct path to be followed by all."

— Upadesa Saram—v 17.

"When one enquires into the nature of the mind it is seen that the Self itself is the mind."

— Who Am I ?

(c) According to this teaching of Sri Bhagavan, when the Self forgets that it is a separate entity different from the body and regards itself as the body, it is named the mind, the individual (*jiva*) and the ego.

(d) By regarding as the Self the body which is not the Self, one becomes attached to (develops desires for) mother, father, brothers, sisters, house, lands, wealth, fame, greatness, etc., all connected with the body. When these desires are fulfilled there is joy and when they are not there is sorrow.

(e) When the ignorance which is the cause of regarding the body as the Self is got rid of it is fully realized that the very nature of the Self is Peace.

(f) Although a temporary state of peace may result from practising worship (*puja*), repetition of holy names or sacred sounds (*japa*) and meditation (*dhyana*), one cannot attain peace until one frees oneself from his connection with the body.

(g) It is not possible to free oneself from the bondage of the body all at once. Long practice is necessary.

*Question 2* : Is it possible (for every one) to attain, like Sri Bhagavan, complete enlightenment, that is Realization of Truth and Liberation ?

*Answer 2* : These (three) are not different and are not newly acquired. They are ever present with all of us. If they were to be newly acquired, they would be lost also ; they could not then be permanent.

Even when the Self regards the body as the Self, it is in fact in its true state of Liberation, which is natural to it.

That which makes this Truth clear and frees the Self from ignorance is known as Guru's Grace.

Liberation is the birthright of every human being. But faith and Wisdom are also necessary.

*Question 3* : Is it possible for one to attain Peace ?

*Answer 3* : As has already been stated Peace is the very nature of the Self. But it is covered up by thoughts. The evidence for this is the peace which one experiences in the state of sleep when there are no thoughts. It is possible to attain, if one makes the necessary effort, a state which is free from thoughts even while awake.

NOTE : It is needless to doubt whether one will attain Liberation in this life or not.

"O Son! the first plane itself is difficult to gain. This gained, Liberation is as good as gained."

— *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, v. 155.

"If one associates with Sages what is the need for all these methods of discipline? When a pleasant breeze from the south is blowing, of what use, tell me, is a fan?"

— *Supplement to Forty Verses*, 3.

According to the above conclusion of the wise the very fact that you possess a great desire for Liberation and that you have begun to associate with sages, is due to the grace of the Guru and a sure sign that your aspiration will be fulfilled.

*Question 4* : How is one to attain Self-Realization ?

*Answer 4* : Self-Realization is (nothing but) utter desirelessness.

---

## Siva and Sakti

.....

By V. Venkataraman

Bhagavan once said to me : "Sri Nataraja (Siva in the cosmic dance of creation and dissolution of the universe) and Sri Arunachala are one and the same. The former is the Lord's dynamic aspect and the latter His static. There is no difference."

On another occasion when speaking about Siva and Sakti he said "Sakti is only Siva's Grace personified."

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## THE YAKSHA PRASNA

From THE MAHABHARATA (contd. from the last issue)

(Based largely on the annotated translation by K. Balasubramania Iyer published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.)

*Yaksha*

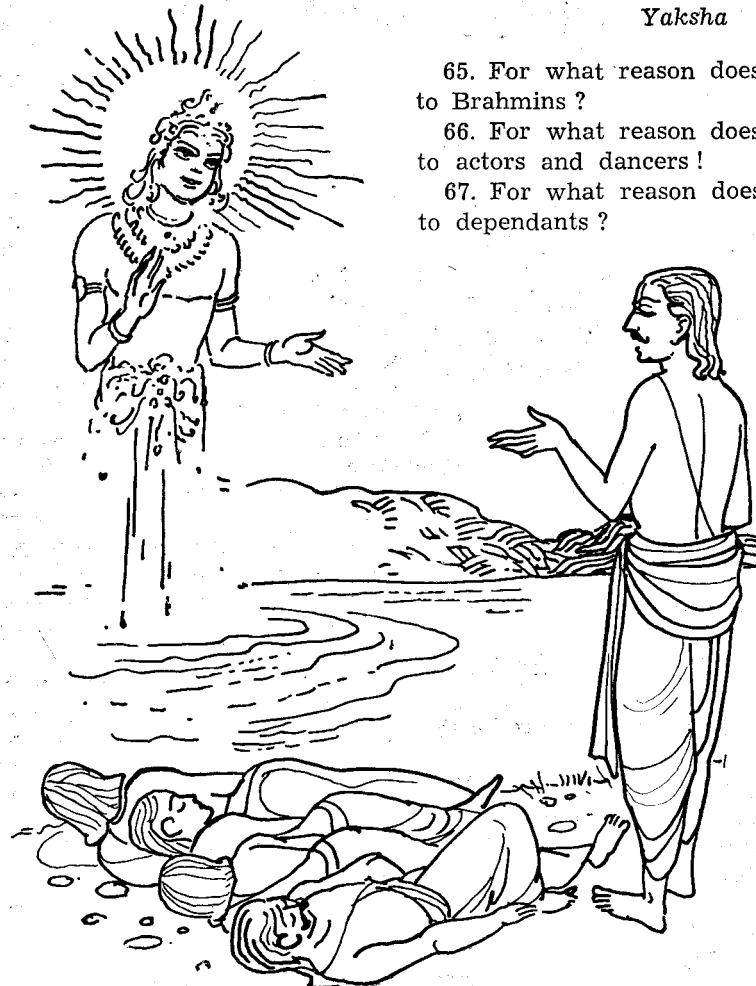
- 61. Renunciation of what makes one beloved ?
- 62. Renunciation of what frees one from grief ?
- 63. Renunciation of what makes one prosperous ?
- 64. Renunciation of what makes one happy ?

*Yudhishtira*

- 61. Renunciation of pride makes one beloved.
- 62. Renunciation of anger frees one from grief.
- 63. Renunciation of desire makes one wealthy.
- 64. Renunciation of grasping makes one happy.

*Yaksha*

- 65. For what reason does one make gifts to Brahmins ?
- 66. For what reason does one make gifts to actors and dancers !
- 67. For what reason does one make gifts to dependants ?



68. For what reason does one make gifts to kings ?

*Yudhishtira*

65. One makes gifts to a Brahmin for the sake of dharma.

66. One makes gifts to actors and dancers for the sake of fame.

67. One makes gifts to dependants for their maintenance.

68. One makes gifts to a king out of fear.  
*For the sake of dharma means for the right performance of sacrifices and other ritual.*

*Yaksha*

69. By what is the world enveloped ?

70. Why does it not shine ?

71. Why does one abandon friends ?

72. Why does one not attain heaven ?

*Yudhishtira*

69. The world is enveloped in ignorance.

70. It does not shine owing to darkness.

71. One abandons friends out of avarice.

72. One does not attain heaven owing to attachment.

*Yaksha*

73. What man can be regarded as lifeless ?

74. What kingdom can be regarded as lifeless ?

75. What shrāddha (ritual offering to the ancestors) can be regarded as lifeless ?

76. What yajna (ritualistic sacrifice) can be regarded as lifeless ?

*Yudhishtira*

73. A poverty-stricken person can be regarded as lifeless.

74. A kingdom without a ruler can be regarded as lifeless.

75. A shrāddha performed by unqualified persons may be regarded as lifeless.

76. A yajna in which remuneration is not made to those who perform it may be regarded as lifeless.

*Yaksha*

77. What is the path to be followed ?

78. What is spoken of as water ?

79. What is food ?

80. What is poison ?

81. Tell me, what is the right time for a shrāddha ? After that you may drink the water and take some away with you.

*Yudhishtira*

77. The way of the righteous is the path.

78. Akasa (space or ether) is spoken of as water.

79. The cow is food.

80. Desire is poison.

81. When one meets a man qualified in the Vedas is the time for shrāddha.

What do you think, O Yaksha ?

*The first answer indicates that it is no use saying that one path or doctrine is right and others wrong. Wherever one can find a true guide is the path. It is based on the answer found later to question 120: "Logic is inconclusive; the scriptures are divergent; there is no Sage whose opinion is final; the truth of dharma lies hidden; therefore the only way is to follow the path of the great."*

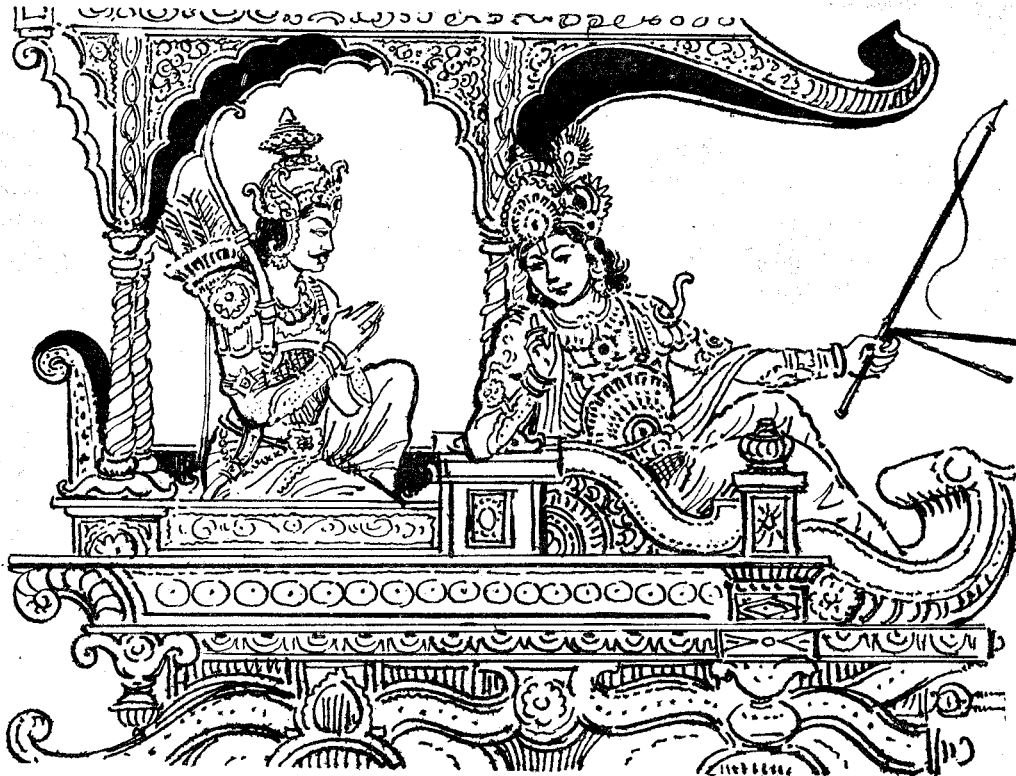
*'Nature' on a higher plane is spoken of as 'akasa', on a lower as water. Akasa may also symbolise Brahman and water may symbolise man so that this answer implies the Mahavakya: 'That thou art'.*

*The Hindus at this time were not yet vegetarians, nevertheless the answer to question No. 79 goes far beyond the problem of vegetarianism. It has affinity to answers No. 40 and 56. Simple uncorrupted nature is food, while desire or sense-attraction is poison.*

*Why does the Yaksha follow four such fundamental questions with an apparently trivial one about the right time for performing a rite? It is obviously a trap, and Yudhishtira evades it: just as the right path is that on which one can find a qualified guide, so, he says, the time to perform it.*

*It would be nice to think that Yudhishtira's closing counter-question showed a sense of humour and meant, "So you see I am not so easily caught!"*

*(To be continued in our next issue)*



# The Bhagavad Gita

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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

1

Sri Bhagavan said :

This body, O Son of Kunti, is known as the Field ; and he who is aware of it is called the Knower of the Field by the wise.

(Here 'knower' means 'illuminer')

2

And know that I am the Knower of the field in all the fields, O Bharata. The knowledge of the Field and the knower of that, in my opinion, is true Knowledge.

3

Hear what I say briefly : What the Field is, of what nature, what its modifications, what its source, also what He (i.e. the Knower of the field) is and what is His power.

4

It has been sung by the Rishis in manifold ways in various inspired verses and also expressed in the Brahma Sutras in reasoned and analytic texts,

The Gita discusses this age-old crucial topic, already handled by the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras or Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana. Shankaracharya understands 'Brahma Sutra etc.' to mean sentences indicating the Brahman in the Upanishads and not actually the Sutras of Badarayana.

## 5-6

The (five) great elements, ego, reason, the unmanifest, the ten sense organs and the one (mind) and the five objects of senses, desire, aversion, happiness, misery, aggregate (the body), intelligence (the visible activity) and firmness — these, in brief, constitute the Field and its modifications.

This is the objective world of which the Self is aware; of these are the twenty-four principles included in the Prakriti of the Samkhyas.

## 7-11

Humility, lack of hypocrisy (i.e. unpretentiousness), non-violence, forgiveness, straightforwardness, service of the Guru, purity, firmness (or steadiness), self-control, detachment from the objects of the senses, also absence of egoism, perception of the evils of birth, death, old age, disease and misery; non-attachment, absence of self-identification with son, wife, home etc., and constant equanimity of mind in desirable and undesirable events, unflinching and unswerving devotion to Me, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of men, constant adherence to the Knowledge of the Self (or fixity in Self-knowledge) and perception of philosophical truths — all this is called 'wisdom' (*jnana*); what is not this is ignorance (*ajnana*).

## 12

I shall now describe that which ought to be known: (*jneya*); knowing which one attains immortality. It is the beginningless Supreme Brahman, which is called neither Being — *Sat*, nor non-Being — *asat*, (i.e. which is beyond the duality of the *Sat* and *Asat*, the manifest and the unmanifest.)

## 13

It has hands and feet on all sides, has eyes, heads and faces in all directions, has

ears everywhere. It abides in the world enveloping everything.

## 14

Though it appears to be engrossed in the qualities (or activities) of the senses, yet is free from them all; unattached, it supports all; free from qualities (*gunas*), it enjoys the qualities.

## 15

It is within and without (all) beings, immovable as well as movable; it is unknowable on account of its subtlety; it is far as well as near.

## 16

Although undivided, it appears to be divided in beings. That is to be understood as the support of (all) beings; pervades (them) and rules (over them) — devouring and (yet) generating.

## 17

It is the light of all lights and is said to be beyond darkness. It is wisdom (*jnana*), the object of wisdom (*jneya*) and the goal of wisdom, residing in the hearts of all.

## 18

Thus in brief the Field, the wisdom and the object of wisdom have been explained. My devotee, having understood this, attains My status.

*Note:* Here ends the topic of *Jneya*.

## 19

Know that Prakriti (matter) and Purusha (Spirit) are both without beginning and that modifications and qualities are born of Prakriti.

## 20

Prakriti is said to be the cause of the effect (viz., the body) and the instruments (viz., the senses<sup>1</sup>). Purusha is said to be the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain.

<sup>1</sup> Alternate rendering: cause of the generation of causes and effects.



## 21

Purusha residing in Prakriti enjoys the qualities born from Prakriti. His attachment to the qualities is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs.

## 22

And the Supreme Purusha residing in this body is known as the Spectator, the Permitter, the sustainer, the enjoyer, the Supreme Lord and the Highest Self.

## 23

One who knows thus Purusha and Prakriti together with the qualities, is never born again, although engaged in all sorts of activities.

Here ends the topic of Purusha and Prakriti. The Gita adopts the Samkhya Principles but adds a higher Purusha over and above the two. Essentially the Gita-doctrine is non-dualistic, comprehending other principles.

## 24

Some see the Self within oneself by meditation. Others by the Samkhya Yoga (i.e. Jnana Yoga, the yoga of Wisdom), while some others by the Karma yoga (the yoga of Action).

## 25

Some, however, not understanding (these yogas) listen to others, who know and thus become devoted. They too, who are intent on hearing, surely cross (the ocean of) death.

This stanza probably refers to Bhaktiyoga (Yoga of Devotion). The different yogas are the different spiritual paths suitable to men of different temperaments. In the first three, personal effort is essential, while in the last surrender is more important than effort. Their destination is, however, the same.

## 26

Know, O best of Bharatas, that whatever is born, immobile or mobile, is born from the union of the Field and the Knower of the Field.

## 27

He who sees the Supreme Lord residing equally in all beings — the Imperishable One among the perishable, — sees (truly).

## 28

He who sees the Lord residing equally everywhere, does not destroy the Self by the Self and hence reaches the highest state.

## 29

He who sees (realizes) that actions of all kinds are being performed by Prakriti alone and that the Self is inactive, (truly) sees.

The Self is only a witness to the dynamic show of Prakriti that is not apart from it.

## 30

When he sees the separate existence of beings as rooted in the One and spread out from that, he attains Brahman.

## 31

This eternal Supreme Self, though dwelling in the body, O Son of Kunti, neither does (anything) nor is attached, as He is beginningless and has no qualities.

## 32

Just as the all pervading ether, being subtle, is not affected, (tainted or contaminated) (by anything) even so, the Self pervading the whole body is not tainted.

'Polluted' is equally good — used by some translators = *lipyate*.

## 33

Just as the single sun illumines this whole world, even so the Knower of the Field illumines the entire Field, O Bharata.

## 34

Those who perceive with the eye of wisdom the distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field in this manner and also the liberation of beings from Prakriti, reach the Supreme (Brahman).

Here ends the Thirteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, entitled "The distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field."



## THE UPAKARAVANA

### III

We give here the third instalment of our translation of the Vedic chant which was conducted daily before Bhagavan and is now before his shrine in the Ashram. It is the second part of the morning chant and consists of the first three chapters of the Taittiriya Upanishad.

We aim at a literal translation, but the mental outlook of the ancients is so different from that of to-day that explanation is often needed. Some parts, for instance, are mantras in which the actual sound value is of prime importance. Some parts are inconceivably terse and cryptic; where it is stated, for instance, concerning the worlds, the luminaries learning or marriage what is the original form, the evolved form, the fusion and the process (of accomplishing the fusion). This is not an exposition in the modern sense of the word, but rather a reminder of themes for understanding or meditation.

On the other hand, some passages may seem needlessly prolix: for instance, the strange arithmetic listing various degrees of bliss as amounting each of them a hundred times the preceding one. This, of course, is to conjure up the conviction of 'beyond all this' in the mind of the chanter.

\* \* \*

#### TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

May Mitra be propitious to us! May Varuna be propitious to us! May Indra and Brihaspati be propitious to us! May Vishnu of the long strides be propitious to us!<sup>1</sup> I bow down before Vayu. O Vayu I bow down before thee. Thou alone art the manifest Brahman.<sup>2</sup> I will proclaim thee the law;<sup>3</sup> I will proclaim thee the Truth.

May That protect me! May That protect the guru.<sup>4</sup> May That protect me. May That protect the guru. Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.

We will now expound the science of phonetics — vocalisation, tone,<sup>5</sup> measure,<sup>6</sup> force,<sup>7</sup> uniformity<sup>8</sup> and continuity.<sup>9</sup> Thus is expounded the section on phonetics.

May glory be on both of us! May the lustre of Brahman illuminate both of us! We will now expound the upanishad<sup>10</sup> of the samhitas,<sup>11</sup> under five heads, that is: the worlds, the luminaries, knowledge, progeny and the atma.<sup>12</sup> These they call the great samhitas.

First concerning the worlds : earth is the prior form, heaven the subsequent form, akasa<sup>13</sup> their combination and air the process (of combining). Thus concerning the worlds.

Now concerning the luminaries : fire is the prior form, the sun the subsequent form, water their combination, and lightning the process. Thus concerning the luminaries.

Now concerning knowledge : the acharya is the prior form, the disciple the subsequent form, knowledge their combination, and the chanting the process. Thus concerning knowledge.

Now concerning progeny : the mother is the prior form, the father the subsequent form, progeny their combination, and procreation the process. Thus concerning progeny.

Now concerning the being<sup>14</sup> : the lower jaw is the prior form, the upper jaw the subsequent form, speech their combination and the tongue the process. Thus concerning the being.

These are the great samhitas. He who knows<sup>15</sup> these great samhitas as here expounded is endowed with progeny, cattle, the Light of Brahman, food and the heavenly world.<sup>16</sup>

May Indra who is the lord of the Vedas,<sup>17</sup> who possesses innumerable forms, who has arisen from the immortal Vedas, endow me with wisdom. O Lord ! may I possess immortality. May my body be fit !<sup>18</sup> May my tongue be honeyed ! May I hear well with my ears ! Thou art the sheath of Brahman concealed by intelligence.<sup>19</sup> Safeguard for me what I have learned.

Sri<sup>20</sup> ever provides me amply and promptly with raiment, cattle, food and drink ; therefore bring her to me with wool-bearing animals for which I here offer oblation in the fire. Svaha !<sup>21</sup>

May Brahmacharins<sup>22</sup> come to me, Svaha !

May Brahmacharins come to me quietly, Svaha !

May Brahmacharins come to me from all sides, Svaha !

May self-controlled Brahmacharins come to me, Svaha !

May Brahmacharins of controlled mind come to me, Svaha !

May I be renowned among men, Svaha !

May I be respected among the wealthy, Svaha !

O Lord, may I enter into Thee, Svaha !

O Lord, enter into me, Svaha !

In Thee who hast a thousand branches may I be cleansed, O Lord, Svaha !

As waters flow downwards, as months to the year, O World-Sustainer,<sup>23</sup> may Brahmacharins come to me from all sides, Svaha !

Thou art the refuge ; enlighten me ; absorb me in Thee !

Bhu, Bhuva, Suva : these are three sacred utterances.<sup>24</sup> Besides these the Son of Mahachama taught the fourth. That is Maha, That is Brahman, That is the Atman. The other gods are its members.

Bhu is this world, bhuva the inter-world, suva the upper world, and Maha the sun. All the worlds are made glorious by the sun.

Bhu is agni,<sup>25</sup> bhuva is vayu,<sup>26</sup> suva is the sun and maha the moon. All the luminaries are made glorious by the moon.<sup>27</sup>

Bhu is (denotes) the mantras,<sup>28</sup> bhuva the samans,<sup>29</sup> suva the yajus<sup>30</sup> and Maha is Brahman. All the Vedas are made glorious by Brahman.

Bhu is prana,<sup>31</sup> bhuva apana,<sup>32</sup> suva vyana<sup>33</sup> and Maha is annam.<sup>34</sup> All the pranas are made glorious by food.

These are the four vyahritis each comprising four and becoming fourfold. He who knows them knows Brahman. To him all the gods bring homage.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the myth of Bali who acquired powers over heaven and earth. Vishnu appeared before him as a dwarf and begged him for as much land as he could cover in three strides. The boon was granted and the dwarf then grew to such immensity that he covered heaven and earth in his first two strides and for the third had no place left to set his foot except on Bali's head. A myth of the humbling of the ego once it grants a foothold to God.

<sup>2</sup> Air or wind is taken as the symbol or manifestation of Spirit.

<sup>3</sup> The word translated 'law' is 'rtam' from which the words 'rite' and 'ritual' come. It has much the same meaning in Vedic Sanskrit as 'dharma' has in later texts.

<sup>4</sup> Literally 'the speaker' or 'chanter' (of the scriptures) but the meaning is the 'guru'.

<sup>5</sup> Various distinct tones or pitches are used in reciting Vedic mantrams, as in a tonal language.

<sup>6</sup> Measure or quantity in the sense of short, long and still longer vowels.

<sup>7</sup> Stress or emphasis.

<sup>8</sup> Evenness of pronunciation.

<sup>9</sup> Combinations of sounds.

<sup>10</sup> The word 'upanishad' means literally 'sitting together'; here it can be understood as the 'secret' or 'meditation'.

<sup>11</sup> The collections of Vedic hymns are called *samhita*. Here it means 'combinations'.

<sup>12</sup> Atma means the 'self' in the sense of the 'being'; here it is rather the physical being.

<sup>13</sup> Akasa can mean 'ether' or 'space'.

<sup>14</sup> atma.

<sup>15</sup> i.e. meditates upon.

<sup>16</sup> i.e. *Svarga*.

<sup>17</sup> Literally 'the bull among the Vedas'.

<sup>18</sup> The body and its faculties are required for full development.

<sup>19</sup> Divine power and knowledge sprung from the Vedas is still only the sheath enclosing the Formless Absolute of Brahman.

<sup>20</sup> Sri is equivalent to Lakshmi, the spouse of Vishnu and Goddess of Prosperity.

<sup>21</sup> There is no dictionary meaning of the Vedic cry Svaha. It is somewhat akin to the Biblical 'So be it!' or 'Amen'.

<sup>22</sup> Celibate students. The practiser is now a qualified guru appealing for disciples.

<sup>23</sup> In Sanskrit *Dhata*.

<sup>24</sup> *Vyahruti*.

<sup>25</sup> fire.

<sup>26</sup> air.

<sup>27</sup> Here the viewpoint is changed. It will be seen in what follows that there are four sacred utterances, each to be meditated upon in four different ways. Thus they make up the sixteen kalas or parts of the Purusha. All this is to be regarded as indications for meditation, not as an exposition of theory.

<sup>28</sup> The riks or verses of the Rig-Veda.

<sup>29</sup> The chants of the Sama-Veda.

<sup>30</sup> The liturgical portions of the Yajur-Veda.

<sup>31</sup> The vital force which rises in the body.

<sup>32</sup> The vital force which descends.

<sup>33</sup> The vital force which pervades the body.

<sup>34</sup> Food.

(To be continued)

## Garland of Guru's Sayings

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

64. To meet the needs of various minds  
The Master spoke of various doctrines.  
*Ajata*<sup>1</sup> is the only doctrine  
He taught as from his own experience.
65. This Truth supreme is what at first<sup>2</sup>  
The Lord revealed to Arjuna.  
But finding His friend's mind bewildered  
Reeling, Krishna later spoke  
Of other doctrines.
66. By their diverse cosmogonies  
What do the Holy Books intend?  
Not to tell how the world began,  
But to start the bold enquiry.  
"How real is the world?"
67. "Him all things obey"  
Means only that they act  
As various beings, sentient and  
insentient,  
Stir and move  
In mere presence of the thought-free  
Sun  
Arisen in the heavens.<sup>3</sup>
68. In mere bright presence of the Sun  
The loadstone emits fire,<sup>4</sup>  
The lotus blossoms;  
The water-lily closes;  
All creatures move or rest  
According to their nature.
69. From His sheer potent presence  
Flows His five-fold function,<sup>5</sup>  
As the needle near the magnet trembles,  
And beneath the moon  
The moonstone drips,  
The water-lily blossoms  
And the lotus closes.
70. In the bright presence of the Lord  
Free from any trace of thought,  
Persons in accordance with their nature  
Aptly walk the ways of works,  
Accomplish mighty tasks  
And, turning inward, reach  
The home of freedom.

<sup>1</sup> *Ajata* = No birth.

<sup>2</sup> In Chap. II of *Bhagavad Gita*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. paragraph 15 of "Who am I?"

<sup>4</sup> Cf. a convex lens used to ignite cotton-wool.

<sup>5</sup> Creation, preservation, dissolution, veiling and grace.

## WE INSIST ONLY

Wei Wu Wei he very naughty boy.

He say in July 67 Mountain Path, p 261 :

The apparent universe is a colossal conceptual structure in mind, extended in the basic concepts of 'space' and 'duration'.

It is NOT

at all

what he says.

Wy?

Because how could our dear universe be what he or me says it is?

Because what he says is itself a concept and so without validity, except to the living dead.

Validity is a big word meaning what you say it means to you.

Sweet Wei Wu Wei is like a child asking for candy.

Let's give him som.

He say we do not exist.

He cannot legitimately say that wy?

Be cause his statement itself disproves itself. He is there saying he does not exist. Ha ha. Ah Oh.

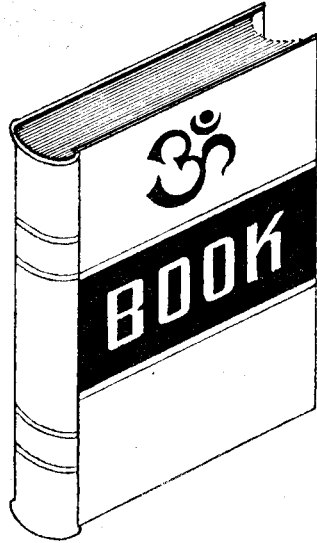
What he mean must be this:

WE DO NOT EX-IST.

AND WE NEVER SHALL EX-IST.

WE INSIST.

rePS



## REVIEWS

**RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD:** By S. Radhakrishnan; George Allen and Unwin; Pp. 186; Price in U.K. 25s.

We live in an age of transition and uncertainty, a scientific age with an anti-metaphysical bias. When man's basic needs are satisfied and he becomes bored with a surfeit of pleasure he may start wondering whether there is any purpose in life. Science is making tremendous strides reaching out for the moon and stars, bringing a nuclear age with weapons of destruction of such staggering power as to threaten total disaster if not controlled. So the height of this technological might has brought insecurity and bewilderment. What next? The author says that it is a desperate situation and a crisis which heralds either a total catastrophe or a new beginning. The human individual has to be renewed if human society is to be preserved. Having gone almost to the limit of our frail minds those immersed in science are also groping to find a meaning and a way out of the impasse. To quote Einstein, the greatest scientist of this age, faith is not inconsistent with the demands of modern science:

"The cosmic religious experience is the strongest and noblest mainspring of scientific research. My religion consists of a humble admiration of illimitable superior spirit, who reveals Himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God."

Dr. Radhakrishnan evaluates the position of religion in a changing world with remarkable erudition, intellectual understanding and a deep religious feeling. This book offers a solution pointing beyond the doubts and insecurities of modern man to greater security and hope. Our knowledge of this world is limited. We only know the present or middle part which is a succession of changes. Man does not know the totality of the universe. "Scientific theories are not transcripts of reality. In our knowledge of the physical world there is our experience on the one side and the theory which is our creation on the other. The appeal of metaphysics is to a judgment more basic than either sense experience or rational logic. We devise experiments to test the validity of working hypotheses. Religious ideas are also tested and judged by the lives and experience of those who adopt them. There is an essential similarity of purpose in seeking truth." There need be no conflict between the scientific and religious approach. The antagonism stems mainly from misunderstanding and failure to appreciate the deepest insights of religion. Nobody doubts his own existence which means also for him the existence of the world. This calls for enquiry both religious and scientific. The author affirms that through the discovery of the intelligible world we reach the truth. Metaphysically it is rather through the discovery of ourselves that we reach the truth.

Ramana Maharshi says that if we succeed in the quest "Who am I?" everything else is solved. Life remains a mystery in spite of the most powerful instruments devised by the human

mind by what is called scientific method and despite all the results of scientific research, which seeks to determine the laws according to which events occur. The cosmos is not a conglomeration of accidents. To those who seek in the right way the harmony and intelligent force that orders the entire universe becomes apparent, an intimation of a Presence that transcends thought.

SHAKINAH.

GLORY OF THE DIVINE MOTHER (Devi Mahatmyam): By S. Shankaranarayanan, Distributors: Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pp. 322, Rs. 12.)

There are many editions of the *Devi Mahatmyam* from the Markandeya Purana, giving the text of the 700 verses and translation in English. But the present brightly got-up volume stands out from all of them. It is an illuminating study of the scripture bringing out its spiritual, occult, philosophical and religious significance. The author, Sri Shankaranarayanan, himself an *upasaka* from a very early age and a brilliant scholar with a genius for assimilation and unsurpassed presentation of difficult subjects, is singularly equipped for this task.

In the course of a comprehensive introduction of 127 pages, the writer studies the work (*Chandi* or *Devi Mahatmyam*) as a fine synthesis of the Vedic and the Tantric traditions. While discussing its role as a major scripture in the Tantric lore, he lays bare in modern terminology the science of the mantra, the organization of the worlds, the Deities, the means to communicate with them and the real significance or rituals. His expositions of the meaning of *bhutasuddhi*, *kavacha*, *argala*, *keelaka*, *nyasa* etc. make this a standard work for reference. There is a detailed description of the preliminaries that are enjoined upon one who seeks to do the *parayana*, worshipful recitation, of the text.

The full text of the three episodes, *charitas*, is given in bold types along with a faithful and yet readable translation in English. The translator differs from some of the popular interpreters in places, e.g. *tan vishannan suran drshiva chandika prahasattvara* or *vidyah samastastava devi bhedah striyah samastah sakala jagatsu*, etc. and gives strong reasons why he does so. He draws upon *Guptavati*, the celebrated commentary of Bhaskaracharya on the text, and expounds the esoteric significance of certain terms in a satisfying manner. His references to the writings of Vasishtha Ganapati Muni, especially his *Umasahasram*, for the delineation of the *matrkas*, Little Mothers,

are welcome for the new vistas they open on the topic.

The last section in *prayoga* is truly a remarkable exposition of the *saptasati* as a *sadhana sastra*—for secular as well as for spiritual ends.

A profound work of insight, scholarship, devotion and soul-power.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE THREE JEWELS, An Introduction to Buddhism: By Bhikshu Sangharakshita (Sthavira), Rider & Co., London, Pp. xii+276, 50sh.

Bhikshu Sangharakshita is already well-known to Indian readers and to Buddhists the world over through his many publications, and especially through his book. "A Survey of Buddhism" (published by the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore), in which he traces the historical and philosophical development of Buddhism. His present book *The Three Jewels* is concerned with the fundamentals of Buddhist life and thought: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. This is a subject which, on the face of it, seems to be so well-known, that people might wonder, whether anything new could be said about it. But Sangharakshita has not only succeeded in saying many new things, but in saying them in a most fascinating and inspiring way. Even the most familiar subjects are handled with such originality and spontaneity that one begins to see with new eyes. Only a man who has made Buddhism his own way of life and who has experienced every phase of it, could write in such a convincing and refreshing way. Indeed, in this book Buddhism comes to life, and even the most technical, philosophical or psychological terms are made easy and lucid, supported by well-chosen similies or parallels in modern thought. The difficult subject of *trikaya*, the threefold body of the Buddha, for instance, has been illustrated in the following way: "Three people are looking at a flower. One is a child, one a botanist, and one a poet. All that the child sees is an object of a certain shape with a pleasing bright colour. The botanist, while not failing to observe its shape and colour, sees that the flower belongs to a particular species, thrives best at a certain time, place etc. The poet, though his eyes are as keen as the child's and though he knows about botany as much as the botanist, is not so pre-occupied with the colour of the flower or the formation of its leaves and petals. He sees that the flower is alive, joyously alive, even as he is alive, and that there works through the frail perfection of its leaves and blossoms the same spirit of

life whose creative impulse he feels pulsing in the depth of his own being. Despite their great differences of vision, however, the child, the botanist, and the poet still see the same flower, not three different flowers." (p. 36). In other words, the *trikaya* doctrine does not proclaim three separate bodies, but three different aspects of the same reality in dependence on three different levels of consciousness: that of the senses, that of the mind, and that of intuitive spiritual experience. By keeping in mind these three levels of consciousness, Sangharakshita avoids the pitfalls of previous writers on Buddhism who, obsessed with the idea of scientific rationalism, tried to separate historical facts from mythological and legendary elements, by discarding all supernatural or miraculous events in the life of the Buddha as mere inventions or superstitions of credulous devotees. Sangharakshita rightly points out the profound psychological significance and spiritual truth hidden in these apparently legendary passages: "Far from being either devotional effusions or flights of poetic fancy these legends in fact make up a symbolical biography of the Buddha no less important than the historical narrative with which, in the traditional biographies, it is interwoven, and upon the main episodes of which it constitutes a spiritual-cum-metaphysical commentary of the highest value." (p. 30). The present reviewer has always maintained that the Buddha was not only fully cognisant of the Vedic and Upanishadic traditions of his time, but that he actually had been trained in yogic practices by his brahmanical teachers Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. This fact is born out by the apparently fantastic story of the serpent-king Mucalinda, who protected the Buddha after his enlightenment by winding himself in seven coils around the body of the Buddha and by spreading his seven-headed hood like a canopy above the head of the Enlightened One. There can be no doubt that here we have a description of the ascent of the *kundalini*, the 'serpent power' or spiritual energy through the seven psychic centres of the body, as Sangharakshita points out. The further fact, that the Buddha was described as having been in a state of blissful ecstasy during this even adds to the evidence that we are confronted here not with an outer occurrence or a material fact, but with an inner experience which has nothing to do with mythology and is of far greater historical importance than external happening. By recognising and understanding the psychological and symbolical language of Buddhist texts in their organic development and their different cultural settings,

Sangharakshita succeeds in giving a convincing and inspiring picture of the inner unity and consistency of Buddhist thought and life. It is due to this profound understanding that he is able to enter into the spirit of the Mahayana without abandoning his stand on the fundamental teachings of the Buddha. These in fact were wide and universal enough to accommodate a tremendous range of religious experience and philosophical interpretation, though they were hampered when the free life of the early *parivrajakas* (who wandered from place to place) hardened into the monastic institution of an organized Sangha with innumerable rules and regulations and a narrowly circumscribed body of canonical scriptures and commentaries. It was in revolt against this narrowing of Buddhist ideals and the splitting of the Buddhist community into monks and layman, that the great vehicle of the Mahayana with its all-encompassing, universal Bodhisattva Ideal came into existence: an ideal which eliminated the barrier between the monk and the householder as well as the duality of *nirvana* and *samsara*. "Therefore," in the words of the author, "there can in the ultimate sense be no question of escaping from the conditioned to the Unconditioned as though they were distinct entities. Or, to speak paradoxically, in order to be truly free one has to escape not only from *samsara* into *nirvana*, but from *nirvana* back into *samsara*. It is this 'escape' or descent that constitutes the *mahakaruna* or Great Compassion of the Buddha, which is in reality His realization of the non-duality of the conditioned and the Unconditioned..." (p. 56). Out of this all-transcending realization, in which Enlightenment turns into infinite love for all sentient beings, arises the glorious conception of the Bodhisattvas, who out of compassion take upon themselves the limitations of conditioned life. And with this a vision of infinite beauty is revealed which pervades all aspects of the Mahayana and percolates down into all forms of popular Buddhism, which are vividly described in the last chapter of this book. The author's awareness of the element of beauty in the teachings of the Buddha and of its ever increasing emphasis in the scriptures of the Mahayana dispels the misunderstanding that Buddhism regards ugliness as real and beauty as unreal or that the higher one ascends in the spiritual life, the more ugliness is revealed at all levels of existence, while beauty becomes more and more illusory. It is true that our scale of values changes and that many of the things which appeared attractive and beautiful at a lower level of understanding may appear worthless from a



higher point of view, but this does not invalidate the sense of beauty nor diminish the chance to see beauty on all levels of existence. On the contrary, the higher we rise and the less we are blinded by selfish interests and desires, the more we are able to appreciate beauty even in the simplest things and in the lowliest forms of life, due to our capacity to look deeper into the nature of reality and to realize that every individual form is a unique expression of the Whole, due to the interwovenness of all things and states of existence that make up the universe. Sangharakshita supports this view by quoting the Buddha's own words from the Digha Nikaya, in which the Buddha refutes the allegation that he had ever taught such things as expressed in the following words wrongly attributed to him: "When one reaches up to the Release called Beautiful, and having reached it abides therein, at such a time he regards the Whole (Universe) as ugly." And the Buddha continues: "This is what I do say. Whenever one reaches up to the Release, called the Beautiful, then he knows indeed what Beauty is."

It is the realization of this beauty, shining through all the manifold forms and traditions of Buddhism, which makes this book so stimulating and enjoyable.

LAMA ANGARIKA GOVINDA.

STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION:  
Tomorrow Publications, London, Autumn 1967,  
pp. 190. 5sh. or 85 cents.

This quarterly contains an article "A Thomist Approach to the Vedanta" by Bernard Kelly in which he writes:

"It is said of Shri Ramana Maharshi—a saint of the Hindu 'way of knowledge' a jnani—that the question which possessed his childhood was this, 'Who am I?'. At length, as a very young man he left his home and, taking nothing with him, lay on a tomb determined not to get up until he had verified the answer to his question. He never came back."

This statement is fallacious and does not correspond to facts.

The question 'Who am I?' never possessed his childhood, nor even occurred to him. Nor did he lay on a tomb after leaving home, determined not to get up until he had verified the answer to the question.

What actually happened was a sudden unexpected spontaneous experience of death and what survived it, when Ramana Maharshi was in his teens. Only in the process of this experience did

the question of "Who am I?" arise resulting in complete and final Self-Realization. What followed later when he read about it in scriptures or the utterances of sages was only a verification of his own transcendental state arrived at through direct experience.

Here is a description of His experience in Ramana Maharshi's own words:

"It was about six weeks before I left Madura for good that the great change in my life took place. It was quite sudden. I was sitting alone in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. I seldom had any sickness, and on that day there was nothing wrong with my health, but a sudden violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it, and I did not try to account for it or to find out whether there was any reason for the fear. I just felt 'I am going to die' and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor or my elders or friends; I felt that I had to solve the problem myself, there and then.

"The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words; 'Now death has come, what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' And I at once dramatized the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out stiff as though *rigor mortis* had set in and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word 'I' nor any other word could be uttered. 'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body am I dead? Is the body I? It is silent and inert but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the 'I' within me, apart from it. So I am Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless spirit.' All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truth which I perceived directly, almost without thought-process. 'I' was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centred on that 'I'. From that moment onwards the 'I' or Self focussed attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on. Other thoughts might come and go like the vari-

ous notes of music, but the 'I' continued like the fundamental *sruti* (the monotone persisting through a Hindu piece of music) note that underlies and blends with all the other notes. Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading, or anything else, I was still centred on 'I'. Previous to that crisis I had no clear perception of my Self and was not consciously attracted to it. I felt no perceptible or direct interest in it, much less any inclination to dwell permanently in it." (*The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co. pp. 7-9).

**LET GO: THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DETACHMENT ACCORDING TO ZEN:** By Huber Benoit, George Allen and Unwin, pp. 277, 30 sh.

Dr. Benoit's approach is original in the sense that it is analytical from the standpoint of scientific psychology. Man, he says, should be able to know immutable bliss beyond time, independent of organic joys and sufferings and for this, he thinks, it is necessary that the intellect should develop all its possibilities completely. Having evolved through intellect to the plane of general or pure ideas, and symbols it allows man to become unidentified with his psychosomatic organism. According to him the complete development of our intellectual possibilities comprises a conciliation between the universal will of integration and the universal will of disintegration. Non-attachment will consist in balancing man's intellectual gaze by developing an antagonistic and complementary magnetism. The way of imagining absolute harmony results in a fabulous and unreal mental construction and a partiality towards joy. Psychomotive power seems to be concerned more with the process of bringing to completion the realization of our human nature than with the realization of our natural true state which is divine.

The author describes various modalities or disciplines in order to become a saint or a wise man but he does not think they can ensure the blossoming of the infinite possibilities of many.

This book is supposed to have been conceived from the point of view of pure Zen, of the Zen of Hui-neng and of Huang-Po. The author himself is aware of the fact that no Zen master has treated his problem of complete development which implies complete detachment in the way he has done.

Zen masters were not in the least concerned with the distinction between the convergent and divergent functioning of the intellect. They in-

cessantly put their disciples on guard against the intellect.

Why should the distinction between harmony and the idea that man has conceived about it be of the greatest importance? A wise man is in complete harmony without any ideas about it and those who entertain ideas about it are obviously not in harmony.

When it is a question of the reality underlying formal appearances our intellect must abstract itself from all forms, not only "other than verbal". It must become void. Reality underlying all appearances is transcendental and perennial hidden only by our thoughts and ideas and all the paraphernalia of the intellect.

We seek liberation and transcendence from our temporal limits and "the only way for us to have done with the impression of enslavement and to know absolute bliss consists in balancing the partial convergent functioning of our intellect by its partial divergent functioning. We must develop the intellectual automatism of divergence as we have developed those of convergence". Is this according to Zen?

Liberation can be gained by transcending or rather rejecting all intellectual automatisms, or in simple language by stilling our mind. It is said in the Psalms also "Be still and know that I am God". Sri Ramana Maharshi used to quote it as containing the essence of spiritual teaching. In Zen it is expressed as "void"; voiding the mind so that our transcendental pure ever-present state is not obscured.

According to the author we have no need of a guide if we wish to learn not to think; for lesser things he can be of use. This is a fallacy. The highest effort a human being is capable of is to learn not to think, to still the mind so as to realize "voidness" a state so sublime that no words can describe it; "words turn away baffled". For this a guide, a guru is certainly necessary. His grace and guidance is of utmost importance. So say the sages who have realized the Truth.

From an analytical point of looking at things one may get caught up in the complexity of a world of ideas and this does not lead to detachment nor realization.

Another fallacy is to write of the "probable" satori (enlightenment) of Buddha and Ramana Maharshi. How can a man who professes to have studied the ideas of the Zen about realization, entertain such doubts? It also remains "obviously unknown" to the author what exactly happened in the mind of Sri Ramana Maharshi

during his experience of death and it was not a mental will to die "but a sudden unexpected" spontaneous experience of death and what survived it.

The author's concluding remarks about detachment are very apt and to the point. "It is not a question of our letting such and such a thing go; it is a question of 'letting go'".

**MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING (Anapanasati) :**

Translated from the Pali by Bhikku Nanamoli, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, pp. 125, no price mentioned.

However excellent a translation may be it still gives room for some divergences from the original intended meaning. Pali is an exception since it has never been used outside the field of Theravada Buddhism. So its words have the linguistic distinction of being precise, according to the translator, who first of all collected the material from the Pali canon and its commentaries for his own use. His aim was to have a precise and condensed version omitting repetitions and yet preserving its pattern.

Mindfulness of Breathing (Anapanasati) is given great prominence in the Pali canon for mind training, connecting up the fundamental doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. Pranayama (breath control) is used here as a stepping stone. First one gives attention to this meditation subject to counting. It should be remembered that respiration-mindfulness is a method of developing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and that this development consists of "the constant practice of properly directed mindfulness and clear comprehension in the order," concentration, insight, path-attainment.

There is a description of the states of the mind which hinder and those which help concentration and an analysis of the process of attaining full concentration and respiration-mindfulness with its 16 cases which is "of great fruit, of great benefit." The Blessed One said that Respiration-mindfulness developed and repeatedly practised fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness, these in turn developed and repeatedly practised fulfil the seven enlightenment factors, which developed and repeatedly practised perfect clear vision and deliverance.

This anthology is a valuable work by a distinguished Pali scholar and could take the place of a guide for those who follow this path.

LUCIA OSBORNE.

**THE COLLECTED WORKS OF RAMANA**

**MAHARSHI:** Edited by Arthur Osborne; Published by T. N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai—pp. 293. (for sale in India only); Price Rs. 6 (postage extra).

The present edition is a revised edition containing *Spiritual Instruction*, a work of Ramana Maharshi which was not included in the previous two editions.

Another important feature is the restoration of the pieces *Self Enquiry* and *Who Am I?*, which appeared in essay form in the earlier editions to their original form as dialogues between a master and his disciple.

The Maharshi was not a writer of books. He himself stated that it never occurred to him to write any book or compose poems. All compositions of his were at the request of his devotees. The only poems that came to him spontaneously and compelled composition were *Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala* and *Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala*, in Tamil.

His first work in Sanskrit, *Arunachala Pancharatnam*, composed without having studied the language was quite spontaneous and greatly admired by such an eminent Sanskrit scholar as Kavya Kantha Ganapathi Muni, who explained to him the features of the Arya metre, immediately before writing. Later when these verses were about to be printed the Maharshi himself translated them into Tamil at the request of a devotee.

A little reflection on the curious genesis of these compositions will enable one to evaluate the Maharshi's writings properly. They are not the productions of a pundit or a philosopher who has made a deep study of the subject from available materials. For the Maharshi left home in his sixteenth year without completing his schooling.

During his sojourn in Tiruvannamalai, he made no systematic study of our scriptures or of other philosophical works. Yet, he produced works in more than one language with unrivalled clarity and literary merit on the most abstruse aspects of Advaita Philosophy. They are subjects that defy even a scholar's attempt at expression in easily understood language.

The Maharshi was in a state of constant absorption in the Divine and whatever he spoke or wrote was in response to an enquiry by an earnest seeker after Truth. The knowledge that flowed through him was, therefore, of the nature of revealed knowledge, not different from the writings in the Upanishads. We will not be guilty of ex-

aggeration if we call all his productions *sacred works*.

In that context it is enough if the translation is free from misinterpretation; the present work is free of it.

The traditional method of acquiring knowledge from the writings of a Guru who has shed his human body is to invoke him with devotion and reverence before beginning to imbibe his teachings. For as the Maharshi said more than once, a Guru is none other than God Himself, who, out of compassion for the seeker, makes

use of a human form for transmission of grace. Such a method of approach will enable one to reach at least the fringe of his consciousness. The full import of his teachings will thereafter begin to unfold itself gradually into the consciousness of the seeker.

Therefore, to those who are attracted by the Maharshi's teachings and who are seeking practical guidance in the path, this book may easily assume the role of the Guru, to guide them to the goal.

SWAMI ANUANANDA.

## Poetry

By Richard Clancy

THE poets are the main link externally between what are called the two worlds; the inner world that we know within us, and the external one that reaches us through our environment and the five senses. Our brothers of the human species are the many-tongued channel through which speaks the creative mind of God, or the Supreme Consciousness, according to whether viewed by one kind of believer or another. Of these voices the greatest and the most important are the poets, God's poets and prophets. It is in the nature of the human brain that words are its petty coinage, and these are the poet's tools more than anyone else's.

There is no road that does not lead from Thee,  
O God.

The sumptuous flow of never-ending thought  
That carves Thine image graven in our  
minds,

This is the manna that falls from heaven  
And feeds us in this body of light

Though clothed in matter for a term—

A term of years viewed now as days  
But dayless in retrospect.

A stream of things remembered;

Of the scope of things forgotten

Black punctuated voids alone remain.

There was no sleep; no waking daily.

A stream unbroken except by the ripples

Of mind's activities in its eternal current,

Now deep and narrow, focussed and  
concentrate;

Or wide and shallow, soft sandy-bottomed

And moving with the surface below the  
streaming waters

With no impression, here and there without  
a stone or pebble,

Curved, bent, and fish-peopled.

All waters flow unceasingly from the source to  
the Sea's depths,

By vapours which are channels back to the  
solitary mounts—

Early snows, winter rains, spring showers, and  
the summer's sun.

Lend us this frame festooned with centuries  
That we may know the joys of building,

contriving, compounding and creating.

And may this moving spot contain within

The image of all that has been and may be.

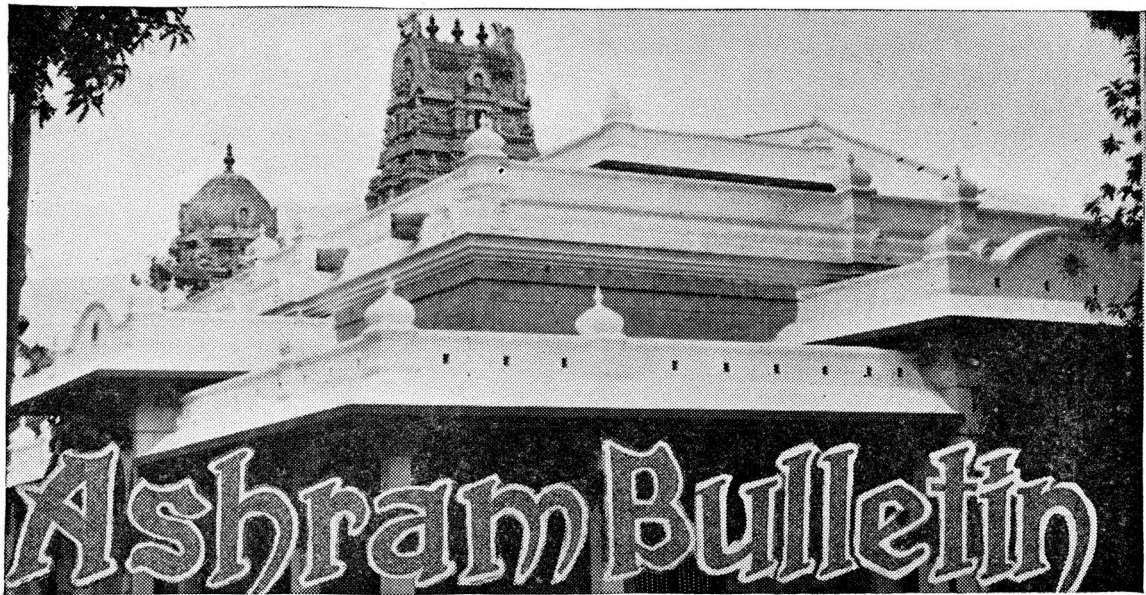
To be in all within this spot of oneness;

Beyond the borderless stretch of being.

No tree, no plant, no rock or stone, but  
moulded,

And contrived with love of Thee and beingness.

All this are we, all is within.

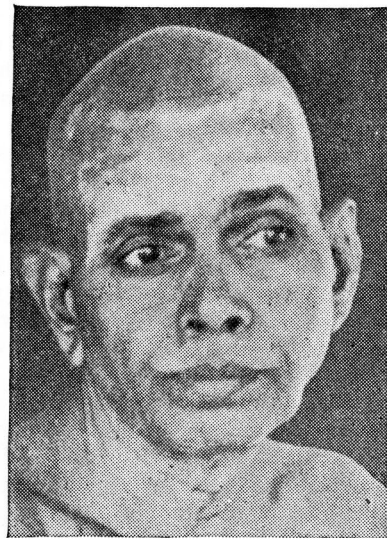


## 'EVER BE THE SELF'

Sri Bhagavan quotes *Kaivalya Navaneeta*

**T**HE RAMANA SATSANG gatherings in the New Hall of the Ashram continue to be a regular and useful feature. These gatherings are held on Sunday evenings and sometimes, in special cases, on other days also.

Among the speakers who participated were Sri Purisai Murugesu Mudaliar who spoke on two Tamil Saints—Appudhi Adigal and Gowri Ammaiyar—on March 23rd and 24th; Mrs. Lucy Cornelissen our German devotee, spoke on the 'Leela of Arunachala' on March 31st; Smt. Suri Nagamma read from her recorded 'Talks' in Telugu on some most interesting anecdotes and events from Sri Bhagavan's life (April 14 & 21); two Jain nuns, belonging to Therapanthi sect, Sadhvi Pattuji and Sadhvi Naginaji, spoke on Guru Bhakti and spiritual life on May 5. They are the disciples of Acharya Tulsi, founder of 'Anuvrata' movement. On the 9th June, Sri Srinivasan, Principal, Govt. Arts College, Tiruvannamalai, gave a good account of his spiritual experiences and how Sri Bhagavan continues to help yearning souls. Sri Somasundaram Pillai spoke on two Sundays and subsequently his daughter Smt. Pankajam on a Sunday, how they were drawn to Sri Bhagavan most dramatically

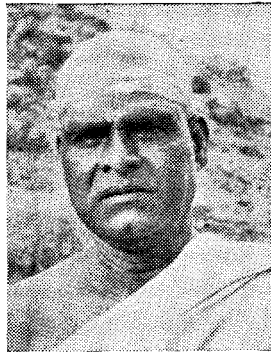


and how He influenced and continues to influence everyone in their family.

Among these weekly participators was Sri Kunju Swami (for an introduction of whom see our issue for April 1966, p. 217) one of the early

attendant-devotees of Sri Bhagavan, who gave his reminiscences of the Master and also narrated the following interesting and instructive account:—

“It was in 1919 that I first came to Sri Bhagavan. He was then living at Skandasramam on the slope of the Hill Arunachala. His mother and brother lived with him. Palaniswami used to attend to his few personal wants. Plague had driven away most of the inhabitants of the town and consequently visitors to Sri Bhagavan were very few. I was, therefore, left alone with Sri Bhagavan most of the time.



*Sri Kunju Swami*

He used to look at me and his eyes had, as is well-known, a strange brilliance and fascination in them. When I had looked into his eyes for some time I saw a bright effulgence. I could not say whence it came but it had the effect of making me forget everything. It was not like sleep for I was fully aware. I was also filled with a strange peace and bliss. I came back to myself with a shudder after some time. This experience occurred again and again—during all the seventeen days that I stayed with Bhagavan. I was like one intoxicated. I was absolutely indifferent to everything. I had no curiosity to see anything, no desire whatsoever. What I did I did most mechanically. I would have continued to live in this state if it had not occurred to me that it was not proper to partake of the food that was offered to Sri Bhagavan by his devotees without paying anything. I thought that he had initiated me into the experience of Brahman and that I had nothing more to gain by staying in his presence. I, therefore, returned to my native place and began to practise meditation in a room in my house all by myself. I could succeed to gain and retain that experience only for a few days; it started to diminish gradually and at last one day it was lost. I could not regain the experience. I decided to return to Sri Bhagavan. This I did, and a great good fortune awaited me when I came.

Palaniswami who was rendering personal service to Sri Bhagavan had to go on a journey

for some time. Before going he asked me to render such service. This I considered to be my greatest good fortune. I felt extremely happy that I had been able to do something in return for the grace which Bhagavan had shown me. I did not thereafter bother myself about the spiritual experience.

I, however, asked Bhagavan why I could not get the experience when I meditated in my house. Bhagavan said: “You have read *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, have you not? Don't you remember what it says?” And he took up the book and read out the relevant verses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The disciple said:

“Lord, you are the Reality remaining as my inmost Self, ruling me during all my countless incarnations! Glory to you who have put on an external form in order to instruct me! I do not see how I can repay your Grace for having liberated me. Glory! Glory to your holy feet!”

“The Master beamed on him as he spoke, grew htm near and said very lovingly: ‘To stay fixed in the Self, without the three kinds of obstacles obstructing your experience, is the highest return you can render me’.

“My Lord! Can such realisation as has transcended the dual perception of ‘You’ and ‘I’, and found the Self to be entire and all-pervading, fail me at any time?”

“The Master replied: ‘The truth that I am Brahman is realised from the scriptures or by the Grace of the Master but it cannot be firm in the face of obstruction.’

“Ignorance, uncertainty and wrong knowledge, are obstacles resulting from long-standing habits in the innumerable incarnations of the past which cause trouble and then the fruits of realisation slip away. Therefore root them out by hearing Truth, reasoning and meditation.<sup>2</sup>

“Checked by incantations,<sup>3</sup> fire will not scorch. Likewise defective realisation will not put an end to bondage. Therefore devote yourself to hearing the Truth, reasoning and meditation and root out ignorance, uncertainty and wrong knowledge.

“Ignorance veils the Truth that the Self is Brahman and shows forth multiplicity instead; uncertainty is the confusion resulting from lack of firm faith in the words of the Master; the illusion that the evanescent world is a reality and that the body is the self is wrong knowledge. So say the sages.

“Hearing the Truth is to revert the mind repeatedly to the teaching: ‘That thou art’. Reasoning is rational investigation of the meaning of the text, as already heard. Meditation is one-pointedness of mind.

“If every day you do these, you will surely gain liberation.

“The practice must be kept up so long as the sense of knower and knowledge persists. No

<sup>2</sup> *Sravana, manana, nididhyasana.*

<sup>3</sup> *Sthambhana.*

Sri Bhagavan then explained to me at great length the purport of these verses. They relate to the doubt raised by the disciple about the need to continue spiritual practices even after one has had the supreme experience. The disciple asks what he should do in return for the Guru's grace which had enabled him to obtain the highest experience. The Guru replies that if he continued to abide in the supreme state always that would be sufficient reward. The disciple wonders whether the spiritual experience once gained could be lost. The Guru says that it would be until he took care to practise *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*, that is hearing from the Guru the Truth, reflecting over it and assimilating it. The experience would occur in the presence of the Guru, but it would not last. Doubts would arise again and again and in order to clear them the disciple should continue to study, think and practise. These would be done until the dis-

effort is necessary thereafter. Remaining as pure, eternal consciousness untainted like the ether and thus liberated while alive, one will live forever as *THAT*, after being disembodied also."

*Kaivalya Navaneeta*, Section I, Verses 86 to 93.

tion of the knower, the object of knowledge and the act of knowing no longer arise. In view of Sri Bhagavan's explanation I decided to stay always by Bhagavan's side and to practise *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*."

## BRAHMANIRVANA CELEBRATIONS

### At the Ashram

The 18th Aradhana or anniversary of Sri Bhagavan's Brahma-Nirvana was performed on the 25th April, in the midst of a large gathering of devotees from all over India.

The function commenced at 7 a.m. with the chanting of 'Arunachala Sthuthi' and 'Ramana Sadguru Sthuthi'. This was followed by the chanting of the Taittareya and Mahanarayana Upanishads, the Rudra, the Chamaka, the Purushasuktha etc. Ekadasa Rudra Mahanyasa Abhishekam and Sahasranama Archana were performed as usual. At the *Arthi* time the devotees felt the Bliss and Presence of Sri Maharshi and a very happy atmosphere prevailed throughout.

Important persons who attended the function included: Sardar Surjit Singh Majithia of New



ARADHANA CELEBRATIONS AT BOMBAY: Function held on May 18, 1968 at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay to celebrate the 18th Anniversary of the Brahmanirvana of Sri Bhagavan. From left are: M/s, Jamnadas Ladiwala, Harikishandas Aggarwal; the Minister, Bhanushankar Yagnik; Sahukar, Swami Rasajnananda and Smt. Mani Sahukar.

Delhi, Sri H. C. Khanna and K. C. Khanna and family from Kanpur, Major I. J. Taneja from Hyderabad, Mr. George Oakenfold from England, Mrs. Roda MacIver from Bombay, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, K. K. Nambiar, K. Gopala Rao and A. R. Narayana Rao's family from Madras and Smt. Suri Nagamma from Vijayawada. Messages of good wishes were received from ministers and other officials. There was feeding of the poor on a large scale. In the afternoon there was a *Hari Katha* by Bangalore Sri Krishna Bhagavathar on Sri Kanakadasa. There was also a *bhajan* in the night by Brahmasri Jagadeesa Iyer and party.

#### Delhi

Gurupuja was celebrated on April 21 in the Satsang Hall of the Sarojini Nagar Vinayak Mandir.

After Vedaparayana and devotional music, Shri M. L. Sondhi, M.P., spoke on the special significance of Shiva Mrityunjaya and of His association with the Himalayas in the North and with Arunachala in the South, especially after the advent of Shri Ramana Maharshi, the highest embodiment of transcendental awareness in the modern world.

#### Madras

Gurupuja was celebrated on Sunday, April 28th, with the usual Vedaparayana, devotional music, etc. The principal speaker was Sri N. Subrahmanyam ("Anna") who presented the life and philosophy of Bhagavan as a clear, contemporary manifestation of *advaita vedanta*.

The Sabha meets every Sunday at 5 p.m. at Dharmalayam, 94, Mowbray's Road, Alwarpet, Madras-18.

#### Kolar

The 18th Aradhana of the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated by the Sri Sankara Seva Sangh, Kolar, Mysore State. There was a special puja in the morning at the shrine of Sri Sankara in the Sankaralaya. In the evening there was a 'satsang' when Sri K. Pattabhiraman, Advocate, spoke on Bhagavan's mission.

#### Poona

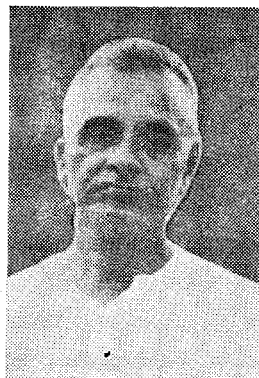
The Mahanirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated by Sri Bhau Saheb Y. N. Athavale at his residence in Poona in a fitting manner in the midst of a large gathering of local devotees. Prof. K. V. Belsare spoke about Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings.

#### Palghat

The Prem Sangh, Palghat, celebrated the Aradhana of Sri Bhagavan with puja, Upanishad and Gita parayanas, Sahasranama archana, bhajans and Arati. Smt. Kamala Murti gave a *Hari Katha* performance on Guru Bhakti. Lakshmi Ammal, a well-known Vedantin of Madras, attended the function.

#### VISITORS

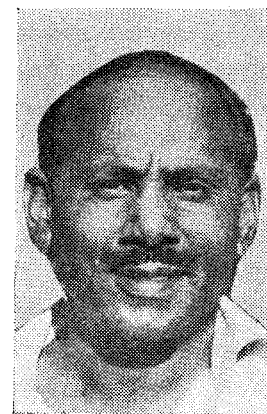
Sri Champaklal and party of Bombay, who had visited the Ashram earlier in August, 1966 (see *Ashram Bulletin*, Oct. '66) came for a second and short stay in the course of which they performed a bhajan in the Old Hall. It was highly appreciated.



Sri Champaklal

Some members of the Prem Sangh (for a full account of whose aims and ideals see our issue for July, 1964), visited the Ashram and spent ten days here. They also performed bhajans, most of the songs of which were composed by the late Dr. Padmanabhan, the founder of Prem Sangh.

Major Taneja, who is employed in Secunderabad, and who is a regular visitor-devotee every year, spent his annual holidays at the Ashram, as usual. He daily went round the Hill and he is convinced that Arunachala-Ramana is vibrantly and potently felt in the Ashram. His account of how he came to Bhagavan, which is very interesting, will be published in a later issue. We are very happy to have amidst us such sincere sadhaks like Major Taneja, who devote their time entirely for sadhana and for nothing else.



Major Taneja



### RAMANA KENDRA

On Sunday, May 16th, the Kendra celebrated Matru-bhuteswara-puja at C-I-5, Tilak Marg.

After Veda parayana, silent meditation and devotional music, Shri A. K. Iyer spoke in Hindi on the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan. The significance of "Mother's Day" was explained by Sri K. Swaminathan as part of Bhagavan's profoundly simple and universally acceptable message. Beauty is the common meaning behind Sundara, Alagu and Ramana, but how few recognize this identity of father, mother and child or the splendour and the wonder hidden in our familiar human lives and relationships. The secret revealed by Bhagavan is the open secret known

to all but forgotten by most. And Bhagavan himself is, like the sun, obscured by the abundance and normality of his light.

Shri V. G. Ramachandran congratulated the Kendra on being a "movement" rather than a centre and taking the message to various parts of Delhi.

At the Annual Meeting held on March 3rd, Shri Morarji Desai was elected President of the Kendra, and Shri Ramdhari Sinha Dinkar and Shri M. L. Sondhi, M.P., Vice-Presidents. Dr. C. Ramaswamy is the new Treasurer, with Shri C. G. Balasubramaniam as Jt. Treasurer. Shri K. Swaminathan continues as Secretary and Shri K. C. Subbiah as Jt. Secretary.

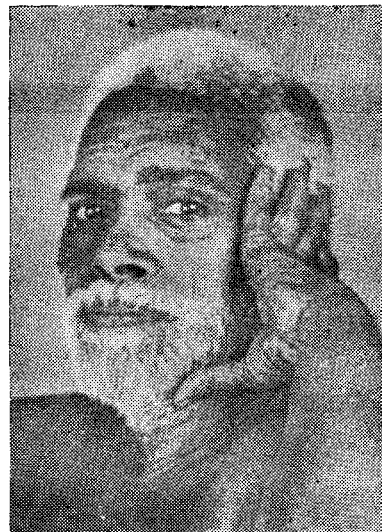
## INTRODUCING.....

### G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

**G.** V. SUBBARAMAYYA an educationist, professor and poet is one of the older devotees whose approach to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was exceptionally spontaneous. It was a pleasure to listen to their talk so free of constraint. There were some who trembled before Sri Bhagavan when speaking to Him. Such was His majesty.

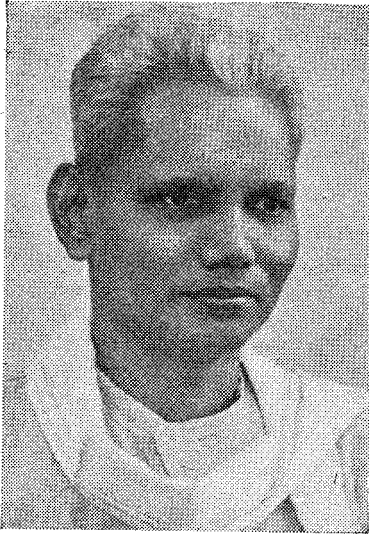
The "stars" or predominant influences in his life before the advent of Sri Bhagavan were his ancestors and nearest relatives; his mother about whom he speaks in terms of highest praise and whose presence to-day is his greatest blessing particularly after the death of his beloved wife, Sundaramma, who was for him the ideal of womanhood, a paragon of virtues so far advanced spiritually that her example deeply influenced and inspired his own spiritual life.

The turning point and the greatest influence was of course the coming into his life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Let's quote what he himself has to say about it: "The pole star of my life is of course my gurudev Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. At a time of distress in 1933 I was drawn to Him and the very first darshan plunged me into the ocean of peace and bliss. Ever since He has been the light of my life. He is my mother, father, guru and goal. He is my all-in-all; and in Him my little self and all its moorings were consummated and sublimated. In



a word He is the embodiment of grace. At every step in the least incidents of my life I have come to feel with a growing consciousness the guiding hand of that Divine Grace that is Sri Ramana."

G. V. Subbaramayya has recorded in his *Ramana Reminiscences* how a sthitaprajna or Jnani like Sri Bhagavan appears to react to the happenings of the relative world of phenomena that we see and experience and how a Jnani could



G. V. Subbaramayya

appreciate love and devotion such as G. V. Subbaramayya evinced towards Sri Bhagavan. "Self-realization", Sri Bhagavan used to tell his devotees "is not a new acquisition but only a removal of the clouds that hide the Reality that we always are by the extinction of the super-



Ten days before Mahasamadhi

imposed non-real ego, that makes us see and experience diversity in the one Universal Self, through the process of Self-enquiry."

A few days before the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan, G. V. Subbaramayya together with another of the early devotees, Narayana Iyer, (introduced to our readers in Jan. '68 issue, p. 83) went to see Sri Bhagavan and implored Him for grace; "Bhagavan, Abhayam yeevala" (Bhagavan, you must give me protection) and quick came the reply "Yichanu" (I have given it)!

## Cry of a Destitute

By "Vishnu"

One day when I was sitting by the side of Sri Bhagavan, I felt so miserable that I put the following question to him: "Is the sankalpa (wish) of the Jnani not capable of warding off the destinies of the devotees?"

Bhagavan smiled and said: "Does the Jnani have a sankalpa at all? The Jivan-mukta can have no sankalpas whatsoever. It is just impossible."

I continued: "Then, what is the fate of all of us who pray to you to have grace on us and save us? Will we not be benefited or saved by sitting in front of you or coming to you? What use is there then for family men like me to gain by coming here to you?"

Bhagavan turned graciously to me and said: "Just as a trouble (or arrow) that comes to destroy the head goes away carry-

ing with it only the turban, so a person's bad karma will be considerably reduced while he is in the presence of a Jnani. A Jnani has no sankalpa but his sannidhi (Presence) is the most powerful force. He need not have sankalpa but his presiding presence, the most powerful force, can do wonders, save souls, give peace of mind, even liberation to ripe souls. Your prayers are not answered by him but absorbed by his presence. His presence saves you, wards off the karma and gives you the boons as the case may be, involuntarily. The Jnani does save the devotees, but not by sankalpa, which is non-existent in him, only through his presiding presence, sannidhi."

I was filled with joy. Even today his presence is the most powerful thing and that alone, I am confident, saves me!

**SRI RAMANA MANTAPA NIDHI,  
SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI**

**Receipts and Payments Account for the period from 1956 to 31-12-1967**

RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS*			
	Rs.	P.	Rs.	P.		Rs.	P.
To Athayam — Interest			5,859	73	By Mantapa Nidhi Expenses:		
To Donations — Mantapa Nidhi					Cost of Stones	11,139	40
General	1,65,575	70			Wages for stone workers	1,09,070	13
Book Depot	15,000	00			Polishing charges	15,136	05
The Mountain Path	5,000	00			Sundry expenses	28,661	04
			1,85,575	70	Supervision charges	1,165	00
To Kumbabhishekam:					Vimanam workers	24,679	90
Donations	27,533	04					
Pictorial Souvenir	21,204	72			By Kumbabhishekam Expenses	1,89,851	52
			48,737	76	By Book Depot A/c.	4,637	31
					By Closing Balances:		
					On hand	208	47
					Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd.,		
					S.B. A/c.	146	92
					State Bank of India —		
					Current A/c.	2,427	86
						2,783	25
Total			2,40,173	19	Total	2,40,173	19

\* Payments are inclusive of  
(1) Renovation and painting of Gopuram and Vimanam, and Kumbabhishekam of Sri Mathrubhuteswara Shrine; and  
(2) Construction and consecration of Sri Chinnaswami's Samadhi.

**Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1967**

LIABILITIES				ASSETS			
	Rs.	P.	Rs.	P.		Rs.	P.
GENERAL RESERVE:					ASSETS—		
Donations for Mantapa Nidhi	1,85,575	70			Sri Ramana Mantapam	1,89,851	52
ADD: Athayam	5,859	73			BOOK DEPOT A/c.	4,637	31
Surplus from Kumbabhishekam A/c.	5,836	65			CASH & OTHER BALANCES:		
			1,97,272	08	On hand	208	47
					Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd.,		
					S.B. A/c.	146	92
					State Bank of India—		
					Current A/c.	2,427	86
						2,783	25
Total			1,97,272	08	Total	1,97,272	08

BANGALORE,  
Dated: 26th June, 1968.

Examined and found correct,  
(Sd.) J. SRINIVASAN,  
Chartered Accountant.

(Sd.) T. N. VENKATARAMAN,  
President,  
1-7-1968

## The Traveller

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

The traveller touches his goal when he turns empty-minded,  
 Forgetful even of the very goal of his seeking  
 Oblivious of way and purpose towards such self-oblivion  
 As in which ultimately stand obliterated  
 All codes, all roads, all standards of comprehension,  
 Preconception, prejudice ; all sense of both mileage and measurement  
 Cancelled completely — memory of by gone, present and future ;  
 Sense of ancestors, contemporaries, unborn generations ;  
 Of prayer, of worship of ecstatic genuflexion,  
 Of saint and sinner, of poet and politician.  
 Of cities and portals creating on vanishing hinges,  
 Of cradles, cremations ; of abstinence, prostitution,  
 Of account ledger and Koran and Bible and Gita,  
 Of hoary cults and modernest superstitions,  
 Of standstill techniques and staggering proud inventions,  
 Of beloveds and rivals, of comrades and antagonists.....  
 The traveller reaches his Destination only when destination  
 Vanishes into distances, dissolving mirages  
 Immeasurably close, without immeasurably distant  
 Embodied in traveller-trance, invisibly enveloped,  
 Beyond relationship — beyond being born, beyond dying.  
 The traveller reaches his goal when he turns empty-minded  
 Oblivious even on his quest, of both travel and traveller.

## Certainly

By G. N. Daley

Involvement in *any* kind of activity is karma. Karma is ego and ego is Path. Why lengthen the Path by being attached to activity, concepts and possessions ? The feeling that 'this is mine', 'I do this', 'I feel this' and 'I think this' impels one to possess more, to do more, to feel more and to think more. This is time, endless Godless anarchy. Stop the mechanism, get out and JUST BE. This is NOW, eternal harmonising Love.

# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

## NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS both Indian and Overseas

Our quarterly journal was inaugurated in 1964 with the willing co-operation of several honorary workers, and considering that its aim is to disseminate Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's message, along with other genuine spiritual teachings, we fixed the subscription rates at the minimum possible, viz., (original rate) Indian — Rs. 5.00 ; Foreign — Sterling £ 0-10-0 or U.S. \$ 1.50.

Being a quarterly, our journal cannot claim the special postal concessions available to monthly journals and periodicals issued at more frequent intervals.

Since 1964, there has been a steady rise in the cost of paper, materials and printing charges ; and the postal charges have been steeply increased twice. The devaluation of the British Pound, soon following the devaluation of the Indian Rupee has further added to our costs. We are, therefore, unwillingly compelled to REVISE the subscription rates, as follows : effective from January 1969 for renewals and new enrolments :

<i>Annual</i> :	INLAND :	Rs. 6.00 ;	FOREIGN :	Sterling £ 0-12-6 or U.S. \$ 1.50
<i>Per copy</i> :	„	Rs. 1.75 ;	„	„ £ 0- 3-6 or 45 cents
<i>Life</i> :	„	Rs. 125/- ;	„	„ £ 12-10-0 or U.S. \$ 30.00

*The rates for the U.S. Dollars remain unchanged.*

The above are rates for despatch by surface mail and by unregistered book-post ONLY.

*Registration* : Rates for sending the journal by registered post are :

Indian — Rs. 3.00 ; Foreign — 4 sh. or 50 cents.

### AIR MAIL SURCHARGE :

	Rs.	£	\$
(1) Nepal, Pakistan, Ceylon ..	6.80	..	..
(2) Aden, Kuwait, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Phillipines ..	..	15 sh.	1.80
(3) Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, U.K., Greece, Israil, Italy, Monaco, East, South and West Africa, Switzerland ..	..	22 sh.	2.70
(4) Australia, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden ..	..	30 sh.	3.60
(5) North, Central and South America, Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand ..	..	37 sh.	4.50

## INSEEING AND OUTSEEING

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By

WEI WU WEI

Sri Ramana Maharshi is sometimes described as a great Vedantic saint. That no doubt is true, but is it not rather like describing the Ocean as the Bay of Bengal? Of course he is called Bhagavan also, by his devotees, but did he not say "There is no Bhagavan outside yourself"? That is, perhaps, one of his great statements, those in which he said in half-a-dozen words everything that can be said in relative language. So the Ocean simile will not 'hold water', for if it applied it would require that we should be 'Land', and thereby separate from what he is. In fact only one simile is applicable, only one will hold both the Maharshi and Bhagavan, and that one is Light, for then we are 'darkness', and there is no such thing as darkness, for 'darkness' is only apparent absence of light.

With Light there is no darkness, for light is universal, and what Sri Ramana Maharshi represented conflicts with no true teaching in any part of the world or at any period of suppositional 'time'. Bondage to any specific denomination, or to any particular manifestation representing a 'faith', may obscure this fact to the blindfold, but whoever can free himself will find the light represented by Bhagavan shining also in his own vision.

His own way of seeing, be it traditional or otherwise, may suit him better, but he cannot fail to benefit by this simple and direct teaching via a Sage of our own times,

whose words were recorded by our contemporaries and are accurately reported in our own tongues. To anyone who has had to deal all his life with scholarly translations from ancient languages, by specialists who understood nearly everything in question except the meaning of what they were translating, the words of a contemporary Sage are precious indeed.

It would be a mistake, however, to oversimplify the situation. In the first place the Maharshi in his manifestation — or Bhagavan via that manifestation — taught much by 'silence' or in the form of what has been called 'grace', and in the second place he spoke to each devotee according to his degree of understanding, which means that to some he spoke as directly from pure noumenality as relative language permits, while to others he replied to questions in a perfectly dualistic context. Two such answers to a similar question are often contradictory, as they must necessarily be, for undivided mind needs no concepts, cognition is absolute and not relative, so that what relatively appears to be incomprehensible absolutely may be apperceived as the truth, and what absolutely is truth appears relatively as incomprehensible.

To whoever has apperceived what the difference is — there is no longer any 'difference'. It is only when you don't know the difference that the apparent 'difference' appears.

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... IT HAPPEN

By L. P. Yandell

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What a difference between 'make' and 'let'!  
 In 'make' the arrow can miss the target;  
 In 'let' the target comes to meet the arrow.

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## to the EDITOR

APRIL 1968

Greetings! Happy to hear from Jacqueline and Yvonne (see *Ashram Bulletin* of April '68), who I am glad to learn, found the most understanding friends in our Ashram. How homesick I got for the Ashram; just wish I could be there also! So also I am interested to read the various accounts of the visitors about their stay in the Ashram in *The Mountain Path*, which we carry in our public Library and there are quite a few devotees here in Santa Barbara who are devoted to Bhagavan. Hope sooner or later I will find another opportunity to come to Ramanasramam and stay for a longer time. I am still teaching at the Japanese Buddhist Church; an activity I enjoy.

WILHELM H. EITEL,  
Santa Barbara, California, USA.

(2)

Last year a friend gave me a yearly subscription to *The Mountain Path*. I was simply delighted. My only wish is that I had known of its existence sooner. It is by far the best religious periodical I have come across. It was there I read of your request for material pertaining to experiences with the Maharshi. Hence this small contribution. One of the things I particularly appreciate in *The Mountain Path* is the great variety of points of view expressed . . . yet allowing of no compromise with essentials. I also find the "Letters" section interesting, but especially your fine comments which are always extremely valuable to me, and most helpful. Do please give us more of them.

MAUD A. PIGGOTT,  
California, U.S.A.

(3)

Each issue of the *Mountain Path* makes Maharshi more clear to me, and seems to draw me nearer to Him. Each article appears to have been written specially for me! And this is a sign of the success of *The Mountain Path*.

A. M. SAGANE,  
Pandharkavda, Maharashtra.

(4)

This is my chance to say at the same time how important *The Mountain Path* is to us and how delighted we are when it arrives in our mailbox. Thank you for this unique magazine and its desperately necessary message.

ROBERT HURLEY,  
Kyoto, Japan.

(5)

Thoughts in my mind have been suspended for some time after having read the poem "Silence and Sound" written by Walter De La Mare in the April issue. I am a dull student like a horse in the field of spiritual life. The traveller knocks the door irrespective of the absence of response. I find myself in the position of the traveller performing my duties towards God as designed by Him without any response, but with the positive hope that it will pave the way for solace for my soul later. Please do publish such poems in future also.

MADHAVI, Madras.

*We publish good poems which we receive them or when occasion arises.*

EDITOR,

### DIVINE EYES

Some months ago a friend passed on to me a photograph of Bhagavan, with no information, so I did not know who it was. Nevertheless, I was fascinated by the photograph and find myself meditating on it every night.

With no knowledge of the person whose photo I was observing, even his name, I found the eyes coming to life and stirring my soul. They seem to unify everything — bringing me into contact with all the universe in some mystical way.

I have never been so overwhelmed by a photograph and I feel that, in some way, the spirit of Bhagavan is captured by his pictures and transferred to his observers. He seems to be a focus on the eternal. Without ever having met Bhagavan, I can well believe that he was a fully enlightened human being, where the rest of us are fortunate to receive the grace of an instantaneous (timeless) "glimpse" of reality to give us perfect faith the rest of our days.

I hope that I shall be able to visit your ashram sometime in the future.

CHARLES D. HORING,  
California, U.S.A.

*Many have been moved by Sri Bhagavan's photographs as you have. We hope you will be able to visit our ashram. The best months are from October till the end of March with regard to climate.*

EDITOR.

### A JNANI AND AN AVATARA

What is the difference between a Jnani and an Avatara? You have written in your 'Incredible Sai Baba' how Sai Baba used to command the rain to stop or poison not to 'come up' or express his overt sankalpa on a hundred other occasions. Do you think he 'possessed' a mind, or that he was not a Jnani? And in case of Sri Satya Sai Baba who is believed to be a continuity of the Sai Incarnation, this sankalpa is always expressed. Sri Satya Sai Baba speaks of his sankalpa and creates a variety of objects from space as it were. I myself have experienced it and yet preserve a gift from him. Sri Maharshi has been reported to have said one who has any sankalpa is no Jnani. Would you like to account for the miracles performed by Sri Maharshi and Sri Sai Baba or Sri Satya Sai Baba?

B. K. MITRA,  
Bhubaneshwar.

*An Avatara is the incarnation of a deity, especially Vishnu, not always in human shape. In the puranas there is mention of a fish-avatara incarnated in this form to save the seventh Manu and progenitor of the human race from destruction by a deluge; a boar-avatara, Varaha; the man-lion Narasimha etc. The first five incarnations are purely mythological, in the next avatars the heroic and religious element are predominant as for instance in Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, Dattatreya etc.*

*A Jnani is the all-pervading Brahman, or God or the Self manifested in human form to lead us back to the inner Guru, the Self in the heart.*

*If a Jnani's attention is drawn in a certain direction there is divine automatic activity out of compassion and a miracle might happen without any sankalpa. Miracles can be performed with or without sankalpas. As you yourself mention in your letter, according to what Sri Maharshi said, one who has any sankalpa is no Jnani. Sai Baba's miracles find a very good explanation in his own words: "I give people what they want in the hope that they will begin to want what I want to give them."*

EDITOR.

### RETENTION OF BREATH ?

This is in continuation of my letter of Nov. 14th in which I stated that I had been experiencing glimpses of Bliss when I do kevala kumbhakam, that is absolute retention of breath. From the next day after posting that letter to you I have been experiencing a kind of burning sensation at the right side of my chest. At first it lasted a very short time without causing physical pain. The next day it spread like a wave or current up to the head and down to the feet. I felt this experience only during meditation. Since then the burning sensation has been present most of the day. Even in sleep I am aware of it. I am afraid where this practice will lead me. I request you earnestly to advise me whether it is the right experience that I am having.

P. SUBBARAO,  
Khammam.

*You did not tell me in your previous letter that you were practising kevala kumbhakam. Bhagavan did not encourage this and there is no one here who gives guidance that way. If you want to go that way you should find a guru who specialises in it and follow his guidance. It can be dangerous. It is safer to concentrate on the heart at the right side and practise Self-enquiry.*



If you concentrate on stilling the mind the breathing will take care of itself and be appropriately stilled if and when necessary. If you start with the breathing the results may be more spectacular but are not so fundamental and may be harmful.

EDITOR.

If someone should knock at your door in the middle of the night you would become one-pointed and ask with urgency "Who are you?" With even greater urgency and one-pointedness one should turn inwards and ask "Who am I?" You do not know who you really are. You want to know. The more determined you are to know the more alive becomes this quest. It should never be repeated mechanically. One can ask this question once or twice or thrice and then be aware or meditate or remain silent. If thoughts arise ask yourself "to whom?" and again "Who am I?" If persisted in this quest with all sincerity and one-pointedness after some time sooner or later there will be a response not in so many words. From the very depth of your being there will come a reply in a feeling of Self-awareness of Certainty. You will know.

EDITOR.

### 'WHO AM I?'

When meditating "Who am I?" does one repeat it in repetition? Or does one repeat it a few times and remain silent for the rest of the time in meditation?

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 H. Burger  
 Heinz Niedrig, Bonn  
 Brother Dhammapala, Utting

 On walking round Arunachala
 

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By 'David'

Going round Arunachala is not unlike going to a church or temple; it should be done intelligently, aware of what we are doing. Bhagavan definitely assured us that there is inherent power in the Hill, which benefits us even if we do not believe in it, just as a fire warms you whether you know it is there or not; but it is better if we co-operate. There may also be siddhas, men of power, still living on the Hill, as there were in ancient times. Bhagavan said that in his day there were. There is an old man in town who says that he has encountered a living siddha on the Hill. He adds that we should walk round in a meditational mood, allowing thoughts to arise but remaining

alert and watching them, not getting carried away by them. Thus they enable us to see our present state. That is a sort of self-confession prior to self-cleansing. The divine power of Truth acting through Arunachala will help the cleansing. He adds that the process may have to go on for months or even years. The aspirant must strive to retain self-awareness and the Power will give him glimpses of Truth in its various aspects and thus encourage him on his path. Furthermore, the old man says that we should sit in meditation for half an hour immediately on our return from a walk round the Hill.

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