



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

The Mountain Path

Vol. VI

APRIL 1969

No. 2

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

“Unasked Thou givest ;
this is Thy imperishable
fame. Do not belie Thy
name, Oh Arunachala !”

— *The Marital Garland
of Letters*, verse 22.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala !”

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

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GRACE IN WORDS: The Verses (UPADESA SARAM) in Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece in the fascimile of Sri Bhagavan's own handwriting. The translation is a new free rendering into English by Prof. K. Swaminathan.

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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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is dedicated to
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Grace in Words

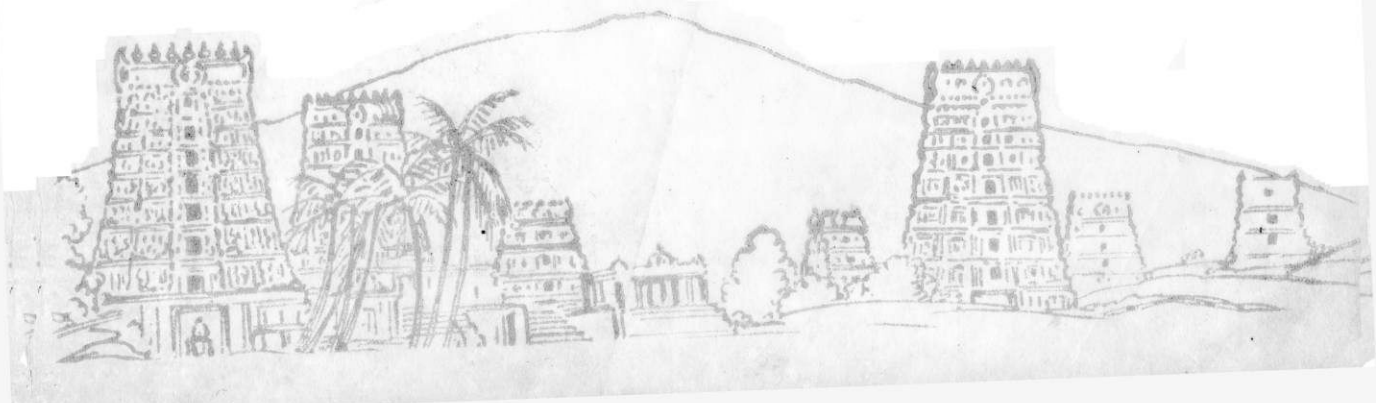
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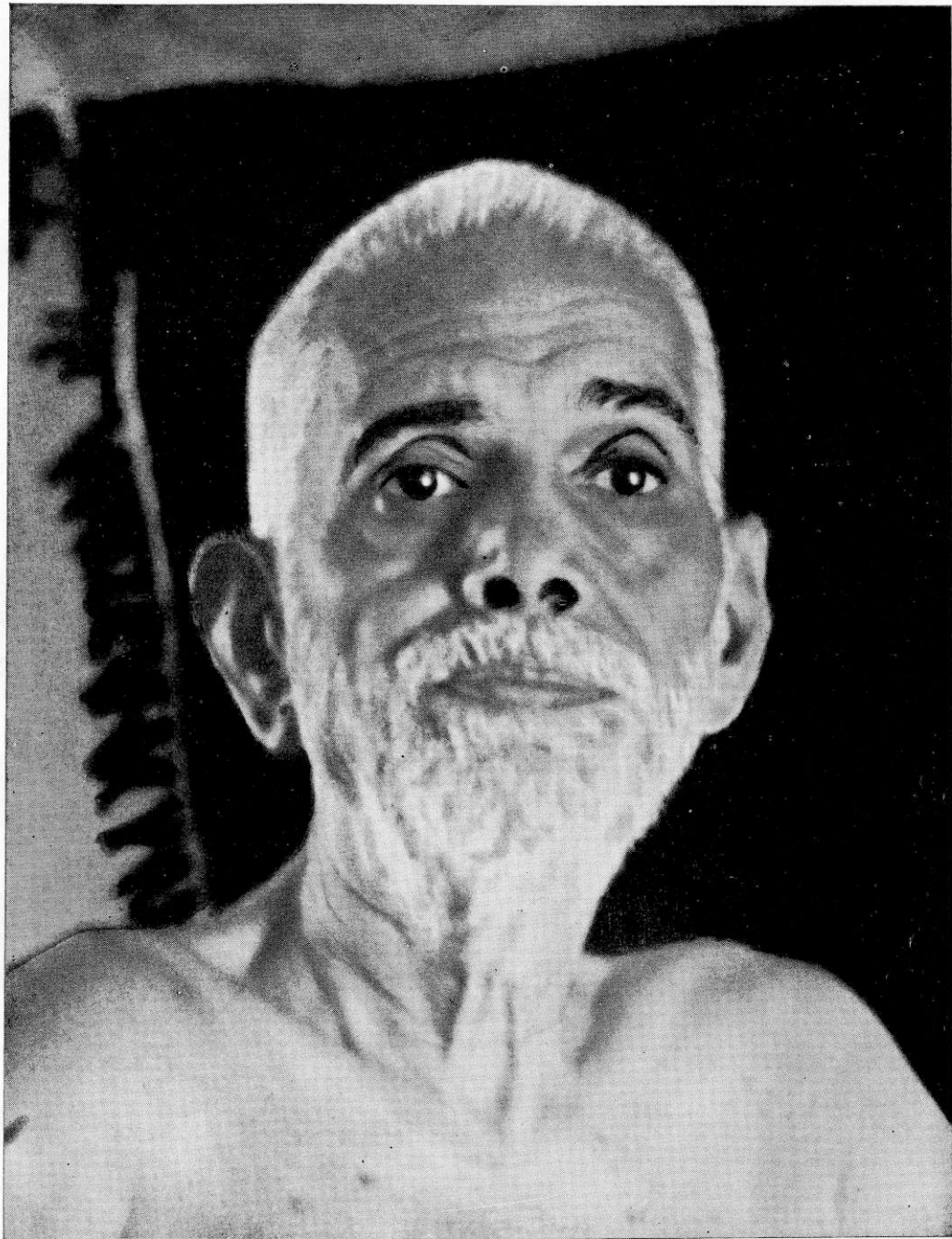
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கருத்தனுக் காக்குநிட் காமிய கன்மங்
கருத்தைத் திருத்தியஃ. துந்தீபற
கதிவழி காண்பிக்கு முந்தீபற.

1. *Action yields fruit,
For so the Lord ordains it.
How can action be the Lord?
It is insentient.*
2. *The fruit of action passes.
But action leaves behind
Seed of further action
Leading to an endless ocean of action ;
Not at all to moksha.*
3. *Disinterested action
Surrendered to the Lord
Purifies the mind and points
The way to moksha.*

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI







THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. VI

APRIL, 1969

No. 2

THE POWER OF COMPASSION

Editorial

COMPASSION is a tremendous force. Bhagavan indicated this when he explained, on being asked about cures which took place when ailments were brought to his notice, that it is enough for the Spiritual Master to turn his mind in any direction and "the automatic divine activity begins." This is a very important explanation. It indicates that it is not a question of one individual using certain power that he possesses to help other individuals but of a natural, impersonal harmonising force working, when unimpeded, to remove disharmonies. It was doubtless far more potent with Bhagavan than with ordinary people, but it was the same force working on the same principle; the difference was one of degree not of kind. What is needed is to turn one's mind calmly but steadily in a certain direction, say in the direction of one who is in sickness or misfortune. This, if unimpeded, sets up a sort of current or vibration which can be felt, and what Bhagavan called "the automatic divine activity" begins. The question to be asked is not so much why some people have the ability to awaken and harness this power as

why most people have not. Perhaps most people do not sit still long enough (mentally still) to allow this power to awaken in them at all but fritter it away in perpetual distraction. Perhaps also, of those who are awake enough to generate it, most impede its flow by constant interference. It should be, as Bhagavan said, 'automatic'; to try to direct its flow can impede it.

That is why I prefer the term 'compassion' to 'love' for this force. The term 'love' is more apt to include an element of possessiveness, and possessiveness, being egoistic, impedes the working of the power-current. All egoism does. That includes, of course, desire, even the desire to help or cure. When Bhagavan was asked about Christ's miracles he replied with the counter-question: "Did he think it was he who was performing them?" We have the answer in Christ's saying: "Of my own self I can do nothing." Many healers have found that the moment they try to appropriate the power or to will it into existence or say for whom or in what way it shall be used it disappears,

This was the secret (an open secret, for he offered it to all) of the extraordinary cures obtained by the late Joel Goldsmith. I found the following passage in confirmation of it in a Taoist book written as far back as 1914 and sent it to Joel, who was delighted. "... if meditation is aimed at curing an illness the practiser should forget all about the thought of curing it, and if it is for improving health he should forget all about the idea of improvement, because when mind and objects are forgotten everything will be void and the result thus achieved will be the proper one. . . . If the thoughts or curing an illness and of improving health are clung to, the mind will be stirred and no result can be expected." (By the Taoist Master Yin Shih Tsu, from his book published in 1914, quoted by Charles Luk in *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*, p. 180, Rider & Co.).

Furthermore, it is generally recognized by people who have the power either to influence or to foretell events that they should never use such powers in their own interests. If they do, the powers do not work and may even abandon them. On the other hand, a spiritual man who is quite unattached to life or death often does have foreknowledge of the time of his death, since this is free from desire and cannot harm him but may be convenient.

The question arises whether or why this power should work in the particular direction one has in mind if one does not try to force it. The answer is that it need not and that some subtlety of mind is needed in order, on the one hand, to canalise the power without, on the other, nullifying it by self-will. It works in a general way, though perhaps not so specifically, without being canalised at all. All that is needed is to remove the obstructions caused by egoism and allow a free flow to what Bhagavan called the 'automatic divine activity'. It will be remembered that when the Pandava brothers were spending one year in con-

calment and their enemies discussed how to find them, the wise Vidura declared that there would be signs enough where the saintly Yudhishtira lived. "The rains will be regular there. The land will have an excellent harvest. . . . the flowers will smell sweeter for his presence, the fruits will be more juicy and more luscious, the cows will yield sweeter milk where Yudhishtira dwells." (*Mahabharata*, p. 288, by Kamala Subramaniam, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.)

An example, though perhaps on a small scale, of this responsiveness of nature to the harmony of heaven is to be seen in such a phenomenon as 'green fingers', or in the healing touch or in the natural good fortune which attends one who refrains from fretting and trying to force his own pattern on events. The more unobstructed by self will the power remains the more it will flourish.

On the other hand it is natural to use some canalisation when cases demanding compassion are brought before one. It is necessary, even while doing so, to retain a certain aloofness so as to prevent the canalisation turning into obstruction. The story comes to mind of Moses who, on one occasion, struck a rock in order to provide a flow of water for the parched Israelites in the wilderness but brought the divine wrath on himself by claiming that it was he who had done it. All this may be personified, but actually it is an impersonal force which is vitiated by self-will.

Another complication is that the power may take various forms, dependent on a man's nature and temperament, like wine flowing into various bottles. It need not appear as healing or removal of misfortunes; it may appear, for instance, as the ability to write or speak or carry conviction silently. It will be remembered that St. Paul listed the various forms in which divine inspiration was liable to come upon the saints, implying that those in whom it took one form should not envy those in whom it took another.

MORE ABOUT NAGA BABA

By
JAGANATH CHATTOPADYAYA

IN India there is no dearth of naked sadhus roaming the country. They are generally called Naga Sannyasins. Naga Baba about whom a short note was written by S. P. Mukherjee in the second issue of *The Mountain Path*, April, 1964, was one; but he was quite a unique sadhu whose previous history and antecedent are shrouded in mystery. I would like to say a little more about him. His few followers used to refer to him as Yogeswara Srimat Digambara Paramahansaji. Physically he was a tall well built sadhu whose age was difficult to determine. Many presumed that he must have been a Punjabi. He spoke Hindi but in general spoke very little. In 1921 or 1922 Naga Baba was first discovered by my friend, the late Sri Radha Raman Lall, vice chairman of Rishra Municipality, District Hooghly, West Bengal. Sri Lall built him a small Ashram at Rishra. Naga Baba consented to live there for some years, but from 1926 he roamed about the country. In 1950 we found him again in Puri, at Girnaribanta near Lokenath. Here a small Ashram was built for him on a sand hill, a short distance from the sea and Baba stayed there for the rest of his life, that is till August 24, 1961, at 4-45 a.m.

Of all the persons I have come across in my life, I have not met with any one whose very life seemed to be so clearly an embodiment of Advaita Vedanta. My contact with Baba was very slight. I met him only twice in my life, the first time was on February 8, 1958 and the second on March 10, 1958. On both occasions my friend, the late Radha Raman Lall, was chiefly instrumental in effecting the contact.

On the first occasion, after hearing from my friend in detail about Sri Baba, I went alone on foot in the afternoon to meet him at his Ashram at Girnari Banta, near Loke-

nath, Puri. The serene and tranquil atmosphere of the place not only filled my mind with joy and peace but also helped to turn it inward. I arrived between two and three in the afternoon and was asked to wait for



Sri Naga Baba

some time as Baba would be coming from his little room shortly to take his seat on the outside porch. When he did so I approached him and made my obeisance to him. On this occasion I did not have much talk with Baba. Being always an ardent lover of Advaita Vedanta from an early age, I simply asked him whether it would be possible for me to attain the goal of Advaita Vedanta, namely the realization of my true Self. To this question Baba said that, engrossed as I

was in the objects of the senses, it was rather premature for me to talk about the realization of the Self. Although a little depressed by his somewhat discouraging answer, I could not bring myself to leave the place then and there, but I was told peremptorily to leave. My first visit to Baba thus came to an ignoble end and it left me wondering what could be the reason for his dismissing me in such a curt fashion.

The second and last time I had personal contact with Baba was on March 10th, the same year. My friend Radha Raman Lal accompanied me this time. We arrived at Puri in the morning and, after staying for some time at the Bharata Seva Ashram near the beach, we started out for Baba's Ashram and arrived there in the afternoon. On this occasion I spent the night in the Ashram as a guest. As on the first occasion, the charming repose and quietude of the place completely enraptured me. But what delighted me most was that I found Baba quite a genial, benign and kind hearted person with a pleasant smile. We cannot judge him from his outward behaviour and eccentricities. All my former misgivings regarding him were entirely gone. I took the liberty of asking Baba questions quite naturally. I did not ask him what lay in store for me in the future, but what course of action I should follow in my attempt to realize the Self. I had by this time acquired some knowledge about Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's teaching, having gone through some of the books dealing with it. To my intense delight I found Baba's teachings similar in all essential points. Naga Baba emphatically declared that it was a grievous mistake, nay a sin, for me to identify myself with the body. The body is jada or an inert object, whereas man in his essential nature is a spirit who controls the body. Like Maharshi, Naga Baba did not prescribe any particular technique such as breath control or yogic practices. What is of paramount importance is that we must always exercise discrimination in distinguishing the real from the unreal, the Atma from the anatma; this brings us naturally to the Supreme necessity of the Maharshi's Self-enquiry. I am

not this body, nor the senses, nor the mind, but I am the ever-present witness, the Self, the Seer of this phenomenal world — who remains the same in the sleeping, dream and waking states. As mentioned before, Naga Baba was as if the living personification of Advaita Vedanta. A realized Self who was entirely devoid of any kind of body sense whatsoever, who regarded the physical body as a veritable burden and therefore used to go about naked totally ignoring it, Baba was an uncompromising Advaitin. I incidentally mentioned the name of Ramana Maharshi, not knowing whether he had seen him or not, and to my great delight Naga Baba said Maharshi was a great sadhu, a Rishi as of old. No account of Naga Baba would be complete without mention of some of his important teachings. Some of the cardinal points have been compiled in Bengali by Sri Raman Lal in a booklet entitled 'Vedanta Bodh' published from Advaita Brahma Ashram, Girmari Banta, Puri.

To a question put to Baba whether it would be right to meditate on the thought "I am Atma" (*aham Brahmasmi*) while I remain in the body he said: "There is no other way. We must first meditate on consciousness (*chit*) which represents the mind by *jnana* and by the fire of discrimination (*jnanagni*) the mind will be burnt out and only then will the Self be revealed. This Self is beyond mind, speech and sight (*avang-manasagocharam*)." This teaching of Naga Baba is just like what Sri Bhagavan said: "This Self investigation annihilates the mind and itself gets destroyed eventually just as a stick used to stir the funeral pyre is itself finally burnt." (See *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, p. 19, 2nd Edition).

According to Baba's teaching, it is a mistake to take the dream body for the actor in a dream. Both these things — the dream and the dream body — are transitory and therefore unreal. Had it not been so, the fact of the dream could not have come to our memory. This proves that it is not the body that is the seer or the doer of all actions in a dream; it is the ever-present Self, the Witness which is consciousness itself. This

imaginary dream-world is erected by the Self by its own memory or *tejas* and therefore the Self in the dream world is called *tejas* Atma. In exactly the same way the ever present Self, which remains as a witness, creates this waking world also. He simply remains in the background (in the Maharshi's words, like a screen in a cinema show) to witness the drama that is being played on this waking stage. In reality the dream world and the waking world are the same. Only in the former case it is of short duration while in the latter it is of longer duration and common to all and has therefore empirical or practical (*vyavaharika*) value.

According to Naga Baba's teachings it is not at all necessary in order to attain salvation or *moksha* to stick to any particular sadhana or mode of action. Sadhana is necessary only for the removal of ignorance

which is the outcome of *maya* or nescience. This *maya* produces three positive defects: darkness (*mala*), distortion (*vikshepa*) and veiling (*avarana*). For the removal of darkness Baba prescribed disinterested good action (*nishkama subha karma*), for the removal of distortion he recommended meditation on either *saguna* (qualified) or *nirguna* (unqualified) Brahma, and for the dispelling of this veil or *avarana* he insisted upon the identification of the Self with Brahma. *Moksha* or Liberation in respect of the Self is itself meaningless. The Self is ever free. Bondage for the Self is meaningless. *Moksha* is therefore not a positive gain. It is only the shedding of the mistaken notion of individuality, a restoration of its own intrinsic nature. It is quite apparent from what has been stated that Naga Baba's teachings are an exact echo of those of Sri Maharshi.

SELF

The Self is only Being
 Not being this or that
 Just Be
 Pure Being
 Ending illusion.
 Reality is Being
 Being — Consciousness
 To know that is to be That
 In the heart-transcending thought.
 Surrender to the Supreme Being
 Destroys all thought of "I" and "Mine"
 Thus Immortality.
 The Supreme Being
 The one ultimate cause of creation
 Manifests as many
 Non-existent from Him
 To destroy the ego and Be as the Self
 Is supreme attainment.

A NEW APPROACH TO COMPARATIVE RELIGION

By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

IT is usual to divide up a study of comparative religion into the various religions, allotting a chapter to each, but that is not the only mode of approach. It would also be possible to divide it according to subject, allowing, for instance, one chapter for theistic and non-theistic religions, another for proselytising and non-proselytising, and so on. This would have the advantage of bringing out more clearly the affinities between the religions by showing the groupings into which they fall.

Let us see, for instance, how Christianity would fare in such a study. In the chapter on theistic and non-theistic religions it would be classed with Judaeism and Islam as contrasted with Buddhism and Taoism (Hinduism would stand apart as containing both possibilities). In the chapter on proselytism and its absence, on the other hand, Christianity would be grouped with Buddhism and Islam as contrasted with Hinduism and Judaeism. In the division into world-renouncing and world-sanctifying religions still another grouping would arise, with Christianity and Buddhism on the one side and Judaeism, Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism on the other.

The first division that would have to be taken up would be between the horizontal and vertical modes of religion to which I referred in my recent article on 'Comparative Religion as a University Discipline'.¹ This, however, does not involve any contrast between the religions but rather a definition of the very nature of religion (which is, after all, a necessary starting point) since every religion contains both modes. Horizontally every religion is (as the word *religio* implies) a binding together of a community into a pattern of life. This involves the organization of life, worship, society, education, etc. in such a way as to

facilitate conformity with religion and impede its rejection. Vertically it is an ascent to Beatitude by those few in each community who see the possibility and follow it.

Now let us consider the division into theistic and non-theistic religions. The three Semitic religions and Zoroastrianism are theistic, while Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Jainism and Shinto are non-theistic. Hinduism contains both possibilities. This at once faces one with the realization that on the whole the Western peoples tend to theism and the Eastern to non-theism. The question has to be carried farther, however, by the subdivision of theistic religions into monotheistic and polytheistic. By and large, the Aryan religions — Hindu, Graeco-Roman and Scandinavian — are polytheistic while the Semitic — Judaeism, Christianity and Islam — are monotheistic. This consideration, however, has to be modified by the reminder that, through Buddhist, the non-theistic form of Hinduism has overspread most of Asia, while through Christianity Semitic monotheism has dominated the West.

Both these facts need commenting on. In connection with the Christian domination of the West, it is to be noted that Christianity, affected by the cultural heritage it has absorbed, has remained less rigorously and exclusively monotheistic than Judaeism or Islam. Neither of these religions would accept the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity or veneration of the Virgin and saints as true monotheism. From the other side, the spread of Buddhism, that is of the non-theistic mode of Hinduism, through the East reminds us that Hinduism escapes all these categories, including in its scope the poly-

¹ Published in Jan. '69 issue, p. 3.

theism of the ordinary worshipper, the monotheism of the bhakta and the non-theism of the advaitin. And indeed, it is significant that the Hindu has never called it 'Hinduism' but simply 'Sanatana Dharma' the Eternal Religion. In general it may be said that monotheism concentrates on the Supreme Oneness of Being, polytheism on the endless possibilities and countless forms within that One, and non-theism on the Stillness transcending alike the affirmation of being and its negation.

Let us next consider the division into proselytising and non-proselytising religions. It has often been said that all religions seek to convert others to their view and condemn those who hold different views; but this is glib. It simply does not accord with the facts. Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are proselytising religions, Hinduism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaeism, Confucianism and Jainism are not. There are two possible attitudes that one can take up with regard to other religions. One is: "My religion is a true path and suitable to me; yours may also be a true path and suitable to you." The other is: "My religion is the best and therefore I have the moral duty of bringing it to your notice and doing what I can to induce you to follow it." The former attitude is the older. The latter, when deprived of understanding and allied with ignorance, becomes: "my religion is true and therefore yours is false and threatens you with spiritual destruction, therefore I have the moral duty of doing whatever I can to turn you away from yours and, in your own good, of inducing or forcing you to accept mine."

The question is vitiated by the general modern acceptance of the gratuitous postulate of progress. In spiritual life there is no progress. Religions do not progress, they decline. Every religion with a known historical origin was at its highest at that origin and has since declined. Any Christian who claims to have progressed beyond Christ *ipso facto* ceases to be a Christian. People know this and yet such is the allure of a false doctrine that they talk as though the opposite were true.

The same process of decline can be observed in religions which do not stem from a known historical origin. When Krishna proclaimed the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna he told him: "I proclaimed this imperishable yoga to Vivasvan, he to Manu and Manu to Ikshvaku. Thus handed down the royal sages knew it until it was lost through long lapse of time."¹ This is what happens spiritually: not progress but the opposite; the wisdom is lost 'through long lapse of time'. And then what happens? This also Krishna explained: "When righteousness decays and unrighteousness (adharma) prevails I manifest Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil and for the establishment of dharma (righteousness), I take birth from age to age."² And indeed, that is just what we see happening in the history of every religion: a long, gradual decline redressed periodically by a powerful spiritual readjustment (as, for instance, with the monastic revivals in Christendom or the Sufi orders in Islam). The readjustment, however, is normally on a lower level, so that it marks on the one hand a stabilisation but on the other a step downwards.

A point may be reached in the decline of a religion when its rehabilitation is hardly feasible. There is a providence, what might be called a 'divine economy' watching over the affairs of men, and when a religion has gone too far in its decline it is swept away and replaced by another. This brings us back to the question of proselytism. It is no question of the achievements of a civilization, for this fate can befall even the highest civilizations, as when that of Ancient Greece was superseded by Christianity, of Egypt first by Christianity and then by Islam, of Persia by Islam, and that of China greatly modified by Buddhism.

In the fifth century B.C. such a decline had already set in throughout the lands east of India. Hindu colonies were being established in Indonesia, Cambodia and other places. However, Hinduism has such a strong and closely knit dharma or horizontal pattern that it cannot well be adapted to different conditions of life; it would have

to be adopted as a complete whole. An alternative solution was provided when Buddhism arose as a sort of 'export variety' of Hinduism, supplying the necessary doctrine without the whole social and legal structure which in India went with it. That explains why Buddhism faded out in India but became established in the lands to the north, south and east, thus becoming the world's first proselytising religion. In India it was not needed because the sanatana dharma was still spiritually vigorous; in those other countries there was a vacuum to be filled.

The second proselytising religion arose when Christianity was needed to replace the spiritually bankrupt Graeco-Roman, Celtic and Scandinavian religions. In this case also it was not needed in its homeland where the indigenous tradition was still strong. Islam was the third proselytising religion, replacing those of Egypt, Arabia and Persia.

The question of proselytism calls for at least a reference to that of intolerance. The adherent of a non-proselytising religion has no difficulty in tolerating others. It never occurs to him not to. The fact that his religion provides a valid path for him is never taken to imply that yours does not for you. In the sanatana dharma a Hindu who worships God in the form of Krishna never thinks of opposing another who worships God in the form of Rama; why then should he oppose one who worships God in the form of Christ? However, proselytisation, by its very nature, implies a claim to superiority. And in fact the proselytising religions only arose when and where there was an effete religion which needed to be replaced, so that at the outset they had actual as well as theoretical superiority. All three of them went out with a mission to teach the ignorant or convert the heathen. This was a necessary part of their equipment. Without it they would never have had the incentive to carry their message over land and sea among peoples often ill disposed to receive it. Nor would they have carried conviction if they had. Their difficulty arises in later ages when they are claiming a superiority which no longer exists. Having lost the

inherent spiritual potency which made them superior, they have to find a spurious superiority in an allegedly superior doctrine. Actually, every true doctrine is an adequate instrument for spiritual achievement and none can be more than that, so there is no such thing as an inherently superior doctrine.

It is a striking testimony to Buddhism that even during its rapid expansion it never thrust itself on people by violence and persecution, as the other two proselytising religions did. Even in Buddhism, however, intellectual tolerance is not common. It requires real understanding, and in no religion is understanding a common commodity.

I have written at some length about proselytism, even though touching only on the salient features; let us now consider another difference of approach among the religions: that between a world-renouncing and a world sanctifying religion. Seeing the world so largely given over to egoism, exploitation and self-indulgence, I can adopt either of two attitudes to it: I can renounce it, lumping it with 'the flesh and the devil' as unholy, or I can dedicate myself to the high endeavour to hold at least my little fragment of it to accordance with divine justice. Christianity and Buddhist take the former path and are by nature world-renouncing religions. When the rich young man asks Christ what he should do he is told to give his property to the poor and become a mendicant; when Rahula asks Buddha for his heritage he is given a begging bowl. A Muslim, on the other hand, is told to pay the poor rate. When slaves ask Christ their duty they are told to obey their masters; in Islam masters are told to free slaves. Neither in Christianity nor Buddhism was an organization of life and religion established by the founder for his followers; each continued an 'Old Testament' of as much as had not been abrogated from the previous religion. It might be said that Christ's mission on earth was too short to allow for a complete organization of life, but such things are not decided by chance. If more time had been needed it would have been available. Also, that would not explain the parallel of the

Buddha who taught for close on forty years and yet established no organization of life for the laity, only for the monastic community.

Judaism and Islam are world-stabilising religions. Every Jew is expected to marry and work for his living, even though he may be a rabbi. A Muslim too. It is expressly stated in the Quran: "No monasticism in Islam". As one of our contributors pointed out, the Christian fear of 'the world, the flesh and the devil' does not apply in Islam, since the first two of these are not regarded as enemies but as bounties created by God to be used wisely and in due measure. Hinduism is a world-stabilising religion, but the institution of the sadhu and the sannyasin gives it the possibility of renunciation also, as a sort of safety-valve which Judaism and Islam lack.

The position of Christianity is particularly remarkable in this respect because it seems to have made a complete volte face. At its origin it was completely world-renouncing. Its followers were told that Christ's kingdom was not of this world, they were to take no thought for the morrow, they were to pay taxes to an alien and irreligious government. In modern times, however, Christianity, especially Protestant Christianity, though Catholicism also, has gone to the opposite extreme and become preeminently the religion of outer organization, practical work and social service. In this connection the Islamic interpretation may be mentioned as an interesting sidelight. That is that Christianity remained incomplete when Christ was taken from his disciples (as he himself told them), and that the "many things" which he still had to explain to them included also the outer organization of life. This was added by Islam and ought to have been accepted by Christians. Since it was not they were driven to hammer out such an organization for themselves in later centuries.

Let us also see how the question of renunciation or sanctification of the world interweaves with that of proselytism. Of the three proselytising religions two — Buddhism and Christianity — are world-

renouncing, while the third — Islam — is world sanctifying. This involves an important difference in procedure. A world-renouncing religion can infiltrate invisibly until even a powerful organization like the Roman Empire crumbles before it; a world-sanctifying religion on the other hand has to build an entire civilization with its civil and criminal law and whole framework of life. This involves breaking up any old order that may exist and replacing it by a new one from the ground up. Therefore Islam had to destroy the Persian Empire by war before it could replace it, whereas Christianity could build up the New Roma gradually within the crumbling framework of the old.

These are only fragmentary suggestions for the study of comparative religion, but they should suffice to show that it is possible to group such a study round central themes and not merely treat each religion as a separate case. Before leaving the subject, there are three cases of recognition of an alien religion which are particularly difficult and therefore merit special consideration: that is for a Jew to recognize Christianity, for a Christian to recognize Islam and for a Buddhist to recognize Hinduism. All three of these recognitions are, however, possible, as I shall show.

A Jew who recognizes Christianity invites the retort: "That means that you recognize Christ to have been the Messiah, so why don't you become a Christian?" His reply can be that he awaits a Messiah whose kingdom will be of this world also, as Christ's is to be at his Second Coming, and that that is therefore the consummation which both he and the Christian await.

A Christian who recognizes Mohammed to have been a genuine prophet is faced with the Quranic claim to be the completion of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and may be similarly challenged to explain why he does not become a Muslim. Without descending, as most Christians do, to the low level of denying another religion in order to affirm his own, he can say that Islam has indeed constructed a world-sanctifying religion but that for those who renounce the world, the

flesh and the devil, as Christ bade, this is not needed. They can continue to follow the path of renunciation that Christ laid down for them and that remains valid so long as Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Only in order to justify this claim he should indeed be a world renouncer. It is a path for the monastic rather than the lay follower and would incidentally explain a paradox in Islam : that on the one hand the Quran states : "No monasticism in Islam" ; while on the other it states that the Christians are the closest to the Muslims because they have monks among them.

A Buddhist who recognizes Hinduism may feel called upon to explain why then Buddhism broke away from it and became a separate religion instead of remaining one of its many schools. The answer to that has been indicated already. A Buddhist can admit the doctrinal traditions which Buddha neither denied nor confirmed but declared that he is not concerned with them but with a world-wide religion stemming from the Enlightened One. To seek grounds for attacking a religion whose long tradition of spiritual achievement speaks louder than any doctrine would obviously be a regrettable policy. As Christ said, "By their fruits you shall know them" ; and the fruit of religion is Realization.

The Hindu attitude to Buddhist also calls for consideration. On the whole it has been one of recognition. The basic doctrine of Buddhism is anatta, no-ego, which is the same as advaita — not that the ego will not continue after death but that it is not now. The possibility of following a formal path to a formal but transient heaven is recognized in both religions, but the possibility of transcending this is also recognized. Some Hindus have indeed given an unfavourable interpretation to Buddhism, but this was at a time when Buddhism was trying to replace Hinduism in India, and that was not its dharma ; its dharma was to carry the sanatana dharma in a new form to the world outside India.

In general, if the followers of any religion compare another with their own they are likely to do so from the viewpoint of

their own and will therefore find the other inferior. If one wishes to compare religions one should be willing to regard each from its own viewpoint. If not one can treat them all respectfully from a distance. To suggest that all the people who happen to have been brought up in one's own religion are rightly guided and all those who happen to have been brought up in any other are misguided does not speak highly for one's intelligence. And yet a man's own viewpoint is usually so natural to him that it is not at all easy to see beyond it. For instance, a Christian once wrote a book entitled 'The Buddha, the Prophet and the Christ' considering the claims of each of these to be considered a Divine Incarnation and came down in favour of the Christ. In his examination he was trying to be impartial and to a large extent was ; where he was not impartial was in taking the conception of the Divine Saviour, which is the very essence of Christianity, as his starting-point. It would probably never occur to a Christian that any other starting point for a comparison was possible. But if a Muslim had written the book he would probably have entitled it 'The Gospels, the Tripitaka and the Quran' and shown that of the three the Quran had the best claim to be considered a revealed scripture. That would have been his starting point for comparison. If a Buddhist had written the book it might have been called : 'The Sermon on the Mount, the Shariat and the Noble Eightfold Path' and argued which of the three showed most clearly the path from darkness to light, from death to immortality. Thus, beneath an appearance of impartiality and without any deliberate partiality, each of the three would have picked out that aspect of doctrine which was most developed in his own religion and on the basis of that proclaimed his religion the best.

From the Hindu viewpoint, comparison between the religions requires reference to the doctrine of Avatars. An Avatar is a Divine Descent or Incarnation for the purpose of "protecting the good, destroying evil and establishing right." Many such are recorded but ten are listed in the Puranas

as principal Avatars. The Seventh of these was Rama and the Eighth Krishna. The Tenth is the Avatar of the White Horse who is to bring about the closing of this cycle and the opening of the next and is identified with the Second Coming of Christ in the West and Maitreya Buddha in the East. It is recognized that the Ninth has appeared already but there is no unanimity as to his identity. Most Hindus identify him with Buddha, some with Christ. My own conviction is that, as I have explained elsewhere, he is the twofold appearance of Buddha for the East and Christ for the West, represented by the dual sign of Pisces. It is noteworthy that the two currents (Buddhism in the East and in terms of non-theism and Christianity in the West and in terms of

theism) performed the same function of introducing a new religion based on the love and compassion of its Founder to supplement the ancient tradition, Semitic in the West and Aryan in the East, and that both proved unnecessary in their doctrinal homeland but essential in the lands beyond.

Many matters have been touched on in this article; let us end by saying that at this time when most people in the world have rejected religion altogether and a fervent few are ardently seeking spiritual guidance beyond the ordinary level of religion, to confuse the issue by praising one religion at the cost of another is worse than futile. It is culpable folly which can benefit only the adversary.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

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

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|--|---|
| <p>85. Like the simpleton bestriding
A crocodile to cross the flood
Are those who pamper the body
And at the same time claim
To search for the living Self.</p> | <p>88. When will he find peace, the fool
Who deems the body and the world
As permanent and clings to them?
Only when this folly leaves him
And he trusts and like a limpet clings
To the living truth within.
Then indeed his bliss is permanent.</p> |
| <p>86. Forgetting Being-Awareness-Bliss
Too subtle for speech and thought
And toiling and moiling for the gross
body
Is like treading up and down a tall,
steep sweep
To water coarse, useless grass.</p> | <p>89. Why do people call me learned?
What is the mark of one who truly
knows?
The knowledge that all garnered
knowledge
Of things is empty ignorance
And that true knowledge is the search
For the Knower.</p> |
| <p>87. Forgetting the grim harm the false
world brings
And trusting to its glittering goodness
Is to hug a bear afloat
As a raft to cross the deep,
Only to be crushed and drowned
In the sea of births.</p> | |
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THE RAMA GITA

By
SWAMI EKATMANANDA

The Rama Gita or the *Song of Sri Rama* consisting of sixty-two melodious stanzas is an extract of the seventh chapter of the fifth canto of the *Adhyatma Ramayana*, a work forming part of the *Brahmanda Purana*. Though short it contains the essence of the non-dual (Advaita) philosophy and we therefore publish it here for the benefit of the readers of *The Mountain Path*.

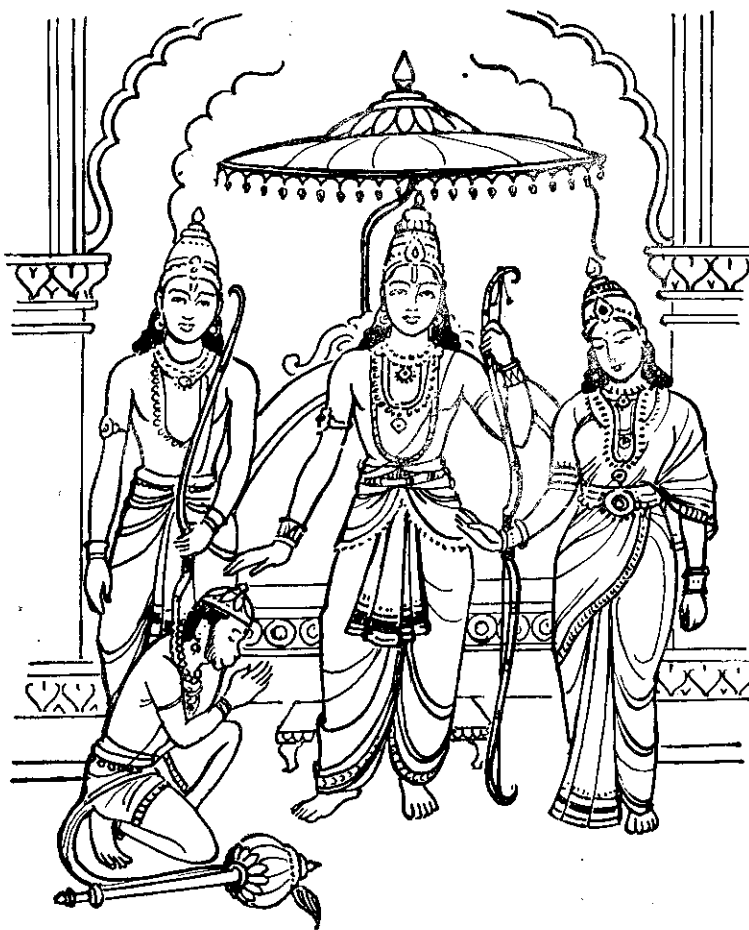
To Rama, the Lord of the line of Raghu, whose body is dark and beautiful like the blue lotus, who has Sita seated on his left, and who carries the mighty arrow and the elegant bow in His hand, I make this obeisance.

I bow down to Lord Hari bearing the name of Rama, who is beyond all causes, to whose magic sway the entire universe with all the gods beginning with Brahma and all the demons is subject, through whose existence everything seems quite real, as does the illusion of a serpent in a rope and whose feet are the only raft for those who wish to cross this ocean of SAMSARA (relative existence).

1. Mahadeva (Siva) said :

After that excellent descendent of Raghu (Rama) had established, for the supreme good of the world, the unequalled fame of the Ramayana, He conducted Himself in the manner of the foremost royal sages of yore.

2. When Lakshmana, the generous son of Sumitra, questioned Rama now and then, he narrated to him ancient and elevating stories. He narrated the story of the negligent king named Nriga, who, by the curse of a Brahmana, was born as a low creature.



3. Once, finding Rama seated in a solitary place, Lakshmana who had gained purity of mind humbly prostrated himself with great

devotion before him, whose lotus feet had been fondled by Ramā (a name for Lakshmi whose incarnation was Sita), and said :

4. "O Soul of great wisdom ! You are pure Consciousness. You are the Self of all embodied beings, their overlord. You have no form of your own, but you are perceived by those who possess the eye of wisdom and are ever attached bee-like to your lotus-feet and also by those who associate with them.

5. O Lord, I seek refuge at your lotus-feet which are meditated upon by Yogis and which bestow Liberation from *samsara*. Pray teach me how I may easily and quickly cross over the boundless sea of ignorance."

6. Upon hearing these words of Lakshmana Rama, the best of kings, the remover of the distresses of the suppliant, the man of clear intellect, imparted to him the supreme knowledge taught by the *Sruti* (Vedas) for removing the darkness of ignorance.

7. (Rama said) :

"First of all one should carry out the duties prescribed for one's caste and stage of life and thereby acquire purity of mind. Later on one should give them up and proceed to acquire the necessary qualifications. Then, in order to realize one's Self, he should earnestly seek a realized Guru.

8. It is admitted that action is the cause of the birth of the body. Actions are, in the case of those who are swayed by attachment, of two kinds, namely agreeable and disagreeable, righteous and unrighteous. These result in further embodiment and further performance of action and thus *samsara* goes on revolving like a wheel.

9. The root cause of this is nothing but nescience (ignorance). Therefore the destruction of the latter alone is prescribed by the Vedic injunctions (for its destruction). Only knowledge (of Brahman) is capable of destroying it, not action which is the result of it. For it is declared that these

two, knowledge and action, are opposed to each other.

10. Action does not destroy ignorance ; nor does it reduce (one's) attachment. It generates more action attended with more evil. And that again brings in the unavoidable *samsara*. Hence an intelligent person should take to the path of enquiry and knowledge.

11-12. (Here an objection is raised) : Surely action is enjoined by the Vedas in the same way as knowledge is prescribed for attaining the goal of life. Action is insisted upon in the case of one who is alive (i.e., so long as one is alive) and it is an auxiliary to knowledge. The scriptures regard non-performance of action as sin. Therefore it (action) should always be performed by one who seeks Liberation. (To this the following reply is made) : But certainly knowledge being independent and capable of producing a definite result (i.e., Liberation) does not stand in need of help even in the form of a thought.

13. (Objection) : It is not so, for, just as a sacrifice which produces a definite result (i.e., the heavenly life), very much needs accessories (for its performance), even so, it is laid down that knowledge produces Liberation only when it is attended with prescribed action.

14. Some false disputants argue in this manner. But this (their argument) is incorrect as it is contrary to observed facts. Activity increases as a result of the belief that the body is the Self, while knowledge, it is well-known, is the outcome of the extinction of the ego.

15. Wisdom which results from extremely pure and subtle knowledge is said to culminate in Self-knowledge (*Atmavritti*). While action arises from the various instruments of action, wisdom destroys all of them.

16. A wise man should, therefore, give up all actions, since wisdom and action which are mutually opposed cannot co-exist. Leaving aside all activities of the sense-

organs, he must be ever intent on the quest of the self.

17. As long as there is the idea 'I am the body' etc., as a result of *maya* (nescience), so long is one bound by the prescribed duties. But when one has rejected everything as 'not this' on the strength of the scriptural saying and known (realized) the Supreme Self, he should give up action.

18. When true knowledge which destroys the distinction between the Supreme Self and one's Self shines brightly within oneself, then and there *maya*, the cause of one's *samsara*, along with its instruments, completely disappears.

19. When once it (the *maya*) is annihilated, with the help of the scriptural conclusions, how can it again become the cause of action? As only the pure, non-dual wisdom then remains nescience does not rise again.

20. If *maya* is destroyed and does not come into existence again, how can there be the thought 'I am the doer?' Therefore knowledge is independent and does not require anything else; it is quite sufficient for Liberation.

21. The Taittiriya Sruti (Upanishad) has clearly and graciously declared (the need for) the renunciation of all actions which have been praised so much. The Vajasaneya Sruti (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) has also said: "This much is enough (for Liberation)". Thus knowledge is the means of Liberation, not action.

22. (The example of) sacrifice has been advanced by you (the opponent) to show that (action is) on the same plane as knowledge, but this example is not correct. For sacrifice is accomplished with the help of many accessories and the result is different (in the case of each kind of sacrifice), but knowledge is entirely different.

23. It is well-known that the thought 'I am indeed a sinner (because of my acts of omission)' occurs only to the ignorant person who does not know the Self, not to the

perceiver of Truth. Therefore acts prescribed by the scriptures should be renounced formally by the wise who have realized the actionless Self.

24. A man of faith whose mind is pure realizes the identity of the individual self (*jiva*) and the (real) Self (by hearing) the saying 'That thou art' or by the grace of the Guru and thereby attains bliss and remains unshaken like the Meru mountain.

25. In order to understand the import of the scriptural text (That thou art) it is first necessary to know the meaning of the words (in it). 'That' and 'thou' denote the Supreme Self and the individual self respectively. The word 'art' establishes their identity.

26. Rejecting the difference between the innermost (Self) and the obvious self (i.e., the *jiva*) and taking into consideration only their common characteristic of consciousness one should, through the method of *lakshana* (secondary meaning), realize the Self and become non-dual.

27. As they ('That' and 'thou') are identical the method of *lakshana* known as '*jahati*' (or *jahad*) cannot apply to them. Nor can the method called '*ajahati*' (or *ajahad*) apply as they are opposed to each other. The method known as *bhaga lakshana*¹ must be applied to the words 'That' and 'thou' as in the case of the words 'this' and 'he' in the sentence

¹ There are three kinds of *lakshana* or implied meaning, the *jahati*, the *ajahati* and the *bhaga*. The first is that in which one of the terms has to give up its primary meaning. For example, 'village on the Ganges' does not mean a village situated in the middle of the stream but a village situated on the bank of the Ganges. The second kind is that in which the primary meaning is retained, but something is supplied to make it clear, as, for example, in the sentence 'The red runs' meaning 'the red horse runs'. In the third kind each of the terms has to give up part of its connotation. For instance, in the sentence 'This is he', the associations of time and place are eliminated and the person referred to is retained. Similarly in the Vedic dictum 'That thou art' the contradictory factors of remoteness and immediacy, omniscience and nescience, associated with 'That' and 'thou' respectively should be given up and pure consciousness which is common to both retained.

'This is he (that person)', as it is unobjectionable.

28. The unreal body which is a quinquepartite² product of the five elements of water, etc., is the centre of experience of happiness and misery which are the results of actions. It has a beginning and an end. It comes into existence as a result of primordial action. It is the gross limiting adjunct of the Self.

29. The subtle body is made up of the five undivided elements, together with the mind, the intellect, the ten sense-organs (five sensory and five motor) and the (five) *pranas* (the vital forces) and is an auxiliary centre of experience of happiness, etc., for the experiencer (*bhokta*). It is another adjunct of the Self. The wise have realized this.

30. The beginningless and indefinable *Maya* or *Pradhana* is a separate causal body. As the Self stands apart from the various adjuncts it should be realized by itself gradually.

31. Just as a crystal (appears to possess the colour of the object which is in contact with it), even so the Self appears to have the shapes of the sheaths with which it is in contact. A thorough enquiry, however, reveals that It (the Self) is unattached, formless, unborn and non-dual.

32. The concepts (activities) of the intellect made up of the three *gunas*³ are also observed in different states like dream, etc. These states are mutually contradictory and unreal from the standpoint of the eternal, Supreme, Absolute and auspicious Brahman.

33. Owing to the mixing up of the body, the sense-organs, the vital airs, the mind and the conscious Self, the mental concepts constantly change. As long as these concepts characterised by ignorance and produced by nescience (*tamas*) continue to exist, so long does this relative existence remain.

34. After renouncing everything as 'not this' in accordance with the (scriptural)

conclusion and tasting with the heart (i.e., inwardly) the nectar (of Brahman) one should reject the world from which its essence consisting of Existence (*sat*) has been extracted just as one throws away a fruit after sucking its juice.

35. The eternal Self never dies, nor is it ever born, neither does it decay, nor, again, does it grow. It is devoid of all qualifications, is of the nature of bliss self-effulgent, all-pervading, and without a second.

36. In such a Self of absolute knowledge and bliss how can the world which is full of misery appear? It appears owing to ignorance and superimposition. It will vanish in a moment in the presence of knowledge, its opposite.

37. When a thing (seen somewhere) is perceived at another place owing to delusion it is called superimposition by the wise. Just as one perceives a snake in a rope, etc., where there is no snake at all, so also the world is superimposed on God.

38. In the Pure Consciousness which is devoid of delusion and ignorance, egoism (*ahamkara*) is first postulated. This is nothing but a superimposition on the Absolute and Supreme Brahman which is the cause of all and free from misery.

39. Desire, attachment, pleasure, etc., are the constant characteristics of the intellect and are the cause of *samsara* to the Supreme Self. For, in the absence of it (intellect) in deep sleep, the Supreme Self is experienced by us in the form of bliss.

40. The reflection of consciousness (Self) in the intellect caused by the beginningless ignorance, is called the sentient individual (*jiva*). When the Self stands aloof as the

² The five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether are supposed to combine with one another in a particular manner to form the objects of the world. One half of each element is supposed to combine with one eighth of the remaining four elements.

³ A full description of the *gunas* will be found in Chapter XIV of The Bhagavad Gita (see pages 299 to 301 of the October '68 issue of *The Mountain Path*).

witness of the intellect and is not conditioned by it, It is nothing but the Supreme Self.

41. Just as iron becomes hot (when it is in contact with) fire, so also when the intellect and the witnessing Self consisting of consciousness come into contact with each other there ensues a mutual superimposition of the inert and the sentient, namely the intellect and the Self which is consciousness.

42. After acquiring knowledge from the Vedic sayings or from the Guru and realizing that the Self exists within oneself without any limiting adjuncts, one should reject everything which is inert and the object of the Self.

43. "I am self-effulgent, unborn, non-dual, constant awareness, extremely pure, a mass of pure consciousness, free from misery, the whole, the blissful and inactive.

44. "I am always free and endowed with inconceivable power. I am consciousness which cannot be grasped by the sense-organs (i.e., I am transcendental knowledge). I am wholly inactive, without end or limit and am contemplated in their hearts day and night by the wise students of the Vedas."

45. When one constantly contemplates, in this manner, the Self which is Existence and Whole he gets rid of his ignorance and its effects, even as one gets rid of a disease by taking a (proper) medicine.

46. Sitting in a solitary place, with the senses indrawn and the mind subdued and completely purified the man who possesses the eye of wisdom and is established in himself should solely contemplate the One (Self).

47. He should merge this universe, the manifestation of the Supreme Self, with his own Self, the source of all, and remain as the infinite consciousness and bliss absolutely unaware of anything outside or inside.

48. Prior to (such) samadhi the entire world of animate and inanimate beings should be regarded as nothing but OM

(or AUM). It (the world) is what is expressed by *pranava* (the sound OM). It is only in the state of nescience that it is seen, not in the state of enlightenment.

49. It is declared by all that, before the attainment of samadhi, the person (*purusha*, here consciousness) who is identified with (the sound) 'A' (i.e., he whose sphere of activity is the waking state) is called Viswaka (or Vaiswanara or Viswa), while the experiencer of (the sound) 'U' (i.e., he whose sphere of activity is the dream state) is Taijasa and the experiencer of the (sound) 'Ma' (i.e., he whose sphere is deep sleep) is Prajna. But this is not really so.

50.-51. Viswa who is identical with (the sound) 'A' and appears as multiplicity must be merged in (the sound) 'U' which is in the middle. Taijasa, the second letter of the *pranava* should be merged in 'Ma', the last syllable. Prajna, who is 'Ma' and the cause of all, should likewise be merged in the absolute consciousness. (And one should feel): "I am that supreme Brahman, the ever-Liberated consciousness, the seer, free from limiting adjuncts and devoid of impurity."

52. Attaining such constant identification with the Supreme Self, content with his own bliss and completely forgetting everything else, the really Liberated man remains like the unruffled ocean, radiating the joy of the Eternal Self.

53. The Yogi who constantly practises samadhi in this manner and has withdrawn from all sense-objects and conquered all the six foes⁴ and the six gunas constantly sees Me (in his heart).

54. Absorbed thus in the Self day and night, the contemplative man (*muni*) lives freed for ever from all bondage, undergoing the *prarabdha karma* (karma which has begun to fructify) without the sense of egoism, and eventually merges completely in Me.

⁴The six foes are desire, wrath, avarice, delusion, pride and malice.

55. Knowing that the relative existence (*bhāva*) is the cause of fear and grief, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, one must give up all the prescribed actions and adore (be devoted to) one's Self, the Self of all beings.

56. When one looks upon this (the universe) as not separate from the Self, one becomes completely identical with My Self, like water with the sea, milk with milk, ether with ether and air with air.

57. While living in the world the man of contemplation (*muni*) should always think in this manner and look upon the world, which has been rejected by the scriptures and reasoning, as unreal like the appearance of two moons (to a diseased eye) or the confusion regarding the directions of space (like mistaking the east for the west, which sometimes occurs).

58. As long as one does not see everything as My Self so long should he wholeheartedly worship Me. To him who is endowed with faith and firmness in devotion I am always visible (present) in his heart.

59. Dear brother, after having come to a decision I have imparted to you this secret, the essence of the scriptures in brief. An intelligent person who reflects on it will be freed from a host of sins in a moment.

60. Brother, if you (still) perceive this world renounce it mentally as nothing but *maya* (illusion) and, with a pure heart attained through intense meditation on Me, be happy, free from misery and completely blissful.

61. He who wholeheartedly adores Me, conceiving Me as devoid of *gunas* or at times as endowed with them and yet transcending them, is truly Myself. By the dust of his feet he purifies the three worlds like the sun.

62. He who studies with faith and devotion to the Guru, as well as confidence in My words, this supreme teaching, the sole essence of all scriptures, communicated by Me, the truth to be known by Vedanta, attains My form (Godhead).

Wake Us Up!

.....

By R. Narayana Iyer

I once asked Sri Bhagavan: "If all that we see is mere illusion, and no more real than a dream, what about the form before us, on the couch talking to us about Truth and Reality?" He remained silent for a few seconds. I repeated the question. He called for a Tamil book *Ozhuvil Odukkam* and read out and explained the second verse in it, which said that a Jnani is, to his disciple in jagrat (our state of wakefulness), like a lion in the dream of a mad elephant. The dream lion startles and wakes up the elephant—the lion, the dream and the elephant vanish and what is, remains.

Even so the enlightened Guru wakes up the adept disciple to absolute Reality in which there is neither guru nor sishya. "Bhagavan, we are still asleep. Wake us up." I said "Who is it that is asleep, and who is it that wants to be woken up. Find that out first, and all doubts will vanish," said Sri Bhagavan. I was not satisfied. Then Sri Bhagavan said: "Last night you met a number of persons in your dream. Now, how would it look if I were to ask you to go and tell everyone of them, 'you are not real', 'you are not real', etc. What you say now is similar to that.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By
SWAMI VISHADANANDA

ONE of the great achievements of Sri Ramakrishna was his insistence on the harmony between the religions. He was born a Hindu and conformed to an orthodox Hindu way of life. He worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses. Yet he worshipped and proclaimed the One Supreme God underlying them.

He did not write theory but used to expound his teaching in homely little stories, many of them (like the two that follow) being of older origin. Four travellers all wanted water (or, as another version has it, all went to the market and each asked for a different kind of fruit) and only when they received what they wanted did they realize that they had all asked for the same but each in a different language. Or a group of blind men all tried to describe an elephant. One felt its leg and declared that an elephant was like a pillar, another its ears and said it was like a winnowing basket, another its trunk and said it was a kind of rope, another its tail and said it was a kind of brush. Finally a man with sight came along and told them that they were all right in their own way, as far as it went, but the elephant was all this and more. Similar is the case of followers of the various religions who quarrel among themselves about the nature of God. Truth is God but is beyond the definitions of its votaries. As is said in the Rig Veda, "He is One but they call him by various names." All religions are paths leading to God.

This sort of declaration was not mere theory on the part of Sri Ramakrishna. With intense effort, so intense as to bring him to the verge of madness or despair, he realized God, attaining to the supreme state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Having once attained this divine state, he frequently fell into ecstasy and would utter words of revelation. He wanted to experience personally the



Sri Ramakrishna

unanimity of the religions, so, after attaining this highest state through Hinduism he began to concentrate whole-heartedly on Christ and Christianity. He had a vision of Christ walking in the garden and experienced the same truth in Christian terms. He also concentrated on Islam and experienced (not understood but experienced) the same truth.

He used to receive revelations from gods or divine forms of higher regions and from the Divine Mother. His own revelations were also authority for him and he used to utter them in an exalted state of trance. Not only in other religions but within the various schools of Hinduism also, he experimented with various paths — Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta and so on — and realized through

them the same ultimate divinity, peace and blessedness. He himself said that he felt the same divinity while realizing Christ or Islam or some Hindu manifestation of God. He declared that although God is One the paths leading to Him are many. What is needed is direct personal experience, and that each one must get for himself. Again he used a homely and well known image. Sweets are made of the same sugar in however many shapes and colours they may be. The thing to do is not to argue about the shape and colour but to taste them. He used to say that religions are like paths and from whatever distant country a person might come he could find some path to take him to his goal. Only he had to follow it steadfastly and with faith and leave others to follow theirs. Only hatred for any path and obstruction to those who follow it means obstruction to the Path-maker Himself, who is God.

Sri Ramakrishna did not argue about religions. He was illiterate and had no inclination for discussion. He worshipped God as the Universal Mother or as Jagadamba, the Source of the Cosmos. But that does not mean that there cannot also be more contingent deities and heavens. There may be superstitions and unworthy prac-

tices, but there are true ones also and no one knew more about them than Sri Ramakrishna. He knew that there are heavens or divine states with form and without form. Hindus speak of Vaikunta as a heaven of celestial forms. Beyond that is Brahmaloaka where a personal God reigns but without form; and beyond even that Sri Krishna speaks in the Bhagavad Gita of the Supreme Unmanifest, which is his ultimate Abode. Although Buddhism does not speak of God, it teaches similarly of higher regions where the purified can experience light and joy in the company of devas and other enlightened beings. But the final state of Enlightenment to which both Hinduism and Buddhism lead is that called Nirguna Brahman by the Hindus and Nirvana by the Buddhists in which no individual experience remains. Sri Ramakrishna did not encourage people to theorise about this but to strive for experience of the state of cosmic enlightenment extending infinitely. He confirmed that it can be attained through whatever religion one follows wholeheartedly. The paths may differ but the ultimate experience is the same. He lived at a time when there was much contact between the religions and this personal assurance of his was peculiarly needed. Let us hearken to it.

Clinging to Body?

By R. Narayana Iyer

One day in the last weeks of Sri Bhagavan's illness a devout lady prostrated herself before him with her two children, and entreated: "Bhagavan, you must not leave the body. You must continue to give us darshan." Bhagavan smiled and said: "Yes, yes, see there." He pointed to the sculptor at work on a statue of the Maharshi in granite. "They are chiselling a Bhagavan who would give you darshan always." Then he turned to the rest and said: "Now these people have become my gurus. I have been

saying 'give up your *dehatma-buddhi* (identification with the body.)' They now want me to cling to the body." After a pause, he continued: "You see what it means? I must not leave this body so that I can give her darshan always. To have darshan she too must not die. And what about her children? They too must always have darshan. So, nobody should die." The truth was grimly portentous, and told in his own unique way.

THE SUBJECTIVITY OF TIME

By
WEI WU WEI

THE Maharshi said "What is *eternal* is not recognised as such, owing to ignorance."¹ Ignorance of what is eternal is due to the concept of 'time', and so ignorance of eternity is a definition of that concept, since the eternal and a time-concept are interdependent counterparts, i.e. intemporality and temporality.

He continued: "Ignorance (the concept of 'time') is the obstruction. Get rid of it and all will be well. This ignorance (the concept of 'time') is identical with the 'I' thought. Seek its source and it will vanish."

The "'I' thought" is entirely a temporal product, depending upon and exclusively appearing to exist subject to temporal extension (duration). If you apperceive what 'time' is it must simultaneously disappear as an object in mind. It is then revealed as the essential element in the constitution of an I-concept or conceptual 'I', and the I-concept as an object in split-mind must go with it, for neither what 'time' is nor what 'I' am can have any objective quality whatever.²

An 'I-concept' and the 'time-concept' are inseparable, neither can appear to exist without the other: they are dual aspects of what is erroneously conceived as objective, and are themselves believed to have objective existence as such. That assumed objective existence of what is a concept-of-sequence in mind is precisely the foundation of the notion of 'bondage'. Seeking to dispose of one aspect without the other is a labour of Sisyphus, for the one that is left will inevitably bring back its fellow on which it depends. As long as the concept of 'time' as an objective existence, as a continuity independent of the continuous perceiver of it, is left untouched, that object must retain its subject—and its subject, the perceiver of it, is precisely the I-concept in question.



That is why the nature of 'time' should be revealed. In the distant past an analysis of the nature of 'time' was not in accordance with current modes of thought and of

¹ *Teachings*, p. 118.

² In case there should be any misapprehension: "What 'time' is" is what split-mind tries to conceive as 'Intemporality', just as "What I am" is what split-mind tries to conceive as 'I' which respectively are only cognisable in relativity objectified as 'time' and as 'me'.

general knowledge, so that no tradition of it was handed down by the Masters, who certainly understood it since they refer to it obscurely but quite often, but this is not a valid reason for us to ignore it. For us it should be readily comprehensible, and its comprehension is urgent, the more so since it will hardly be denied that many of the ancient traditional approaches to the essential problem have lost much of their force through unending repetition and the auto-hypnosis that accompanies the repetition of all kinds of popular concepts.

If the I-concept can be disposed of for a moment, and the concept of duration remains, the latter will restore the former which is extended therein and which remains with it. This, indeed, is a familiar occurrence, but its mechanism is not recognised. On the other hand, if the concept of

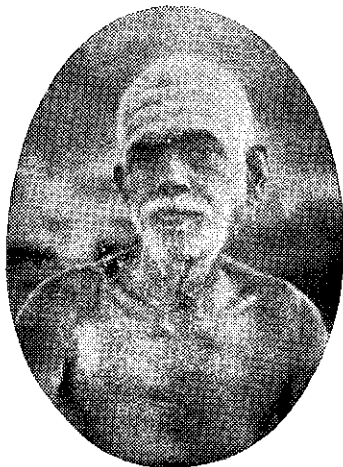
duration is seen as invalid, as not an objective existence to which 'we' can be bound, but as an essential part of our appearance, extended therein, being our-extension, its removal must necessarily carry away with it all that is extended in it. Then the supposed objective character of both lapses, and the process of objectification ceases, leaving 'us' as what intemporally we are.³

³What is termed 'an I-concept' is a symbol of the splitting of whole-mind into relative duality, which consists in conceiving 'other-than-self' as a space-time entity, whereby its interdependent counterpart 'self' becomes another. This dual, or divided, functioning of mind (just termed 'mind' by the Maharshi) appears as the conceiver or functioning 'I', temporally extended as 'duration'. Therefore the Maharshi states "The mind is only the thought 'I'".

As long as we continue to regard 'space-time' as objectively factual we are not merely 'bound' — we are *trussed!*

The Direct Path

By 'Vishnu'



Bhagavan Sri Ramana taught that Vedas and Upanishads are not mere book-lore or dry script, that moksha or Liberation is not something to be attained in a distant future or after death, but that it is our ever-present nature, to be known and experienced HERE and NOW, that we are ever realized and that the simple and direct method is introspection and self-enquiry. I once asked him: "Bhagavan, it is said that all roads lead to Rome. All religions lead to the same goal. How, can it be said that the quest *Who am I?* is the only way and the direct way?" He replied: "Yes, all roads lead to Rome. But, on reaching Rome, you have to go to the citadel — the *sanctum*. What I say is just that."

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By
M. L. BHATT

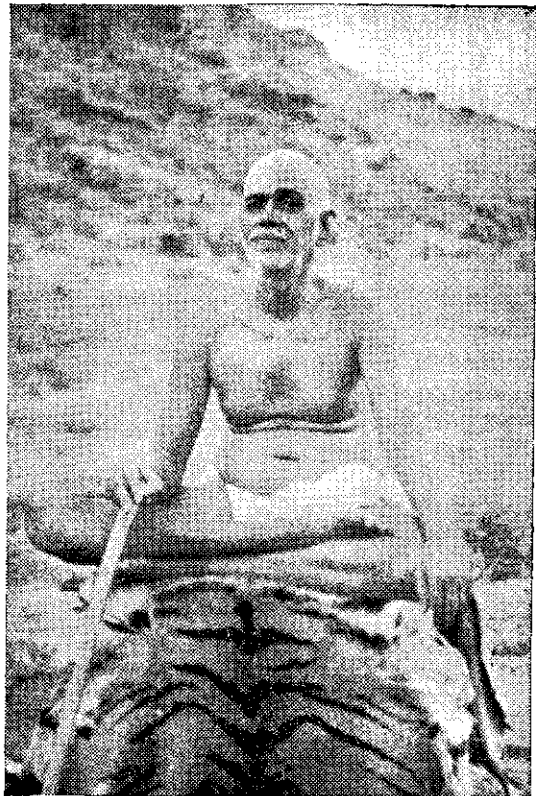
I AM an individual from the common lot with not much of religious or spiritual background by way of environment or education. Brahmin by birth, brought up to an unrigid, flexible way of life, I developed a broad, even indifferent way of looking at things religious.

I was staying at Matunga (Bombay). In the building known as Tejoo Kaya Park, the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Ramana Maharshi (in 1947) were being celebrated with great eclat. Few of us went there and we humourously named the celebrated one "Madrasi God Ramana".

I cannot describe how and why, but the word "Ramana" got planted in me somewhere there and then grew within me. Four years passed by. I visited a relation's office in November, 1952 at Ahmedabad. He had put on exhibition many books of a famous Indian Ashram and invited me to have a look and purchase some books which were brought to his office by an inmate of the ashram. Books were lying on the long table. I went through the line of them and at the end of it saw six books published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

I forgot about the other books I had intended to get and instead picked out all the six and went with them to my brother's house.

I was fully engrossed, you could say buried, in the currents flowing without knowing or understanding what electric charge was developing within me. On my return to Delhi, I requested a learned friend to help me understand the spirituality I was being pushed into by my new books. He invited me to his residence. At 4 p.m., I started to read and he to guide me, or cross-examine my understanding. We were going through the Gujarati book, *Ramana Vani* (Maharshi's Gospel, in English) and Swami

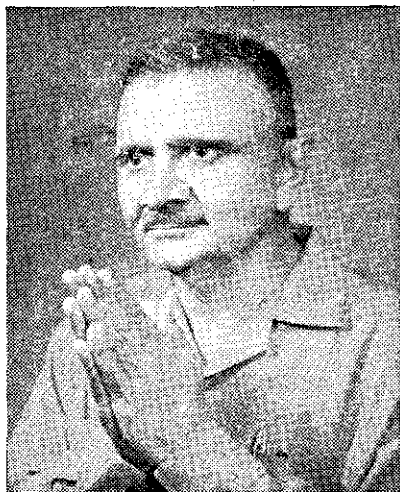


Madhavtirth's *Ramana Maharshi*. I must have lost all outward consciousness, as, when I finished the reading, I asked the time, saying my wife must be waiting for dinner. My friend, Sri Mohanbhai Shah, who must have been watching me with the utmost patience for the last few hours, told me very kindly that it was 11 p.m. He added: "You have had your meal already at 9 p.m. with me, and, look, my wife and children are already asleep." They were fast asleep on beds made up on the floor.

I was fully unaware when I took my meal or when the beds were made up. My friend added "Ramana Maharshi has possessed you." My eyes became wet and I went home. Since that day, I have never for a day for-

gotten Ramana, the God. I have had living experience of HIM. I am narrating these episodes after GOD RAMANA has left his body at Tiruvannamalai. I had not the privilege to see him in his physical body.

Since then, I have visited the Ashram twice. It became my habit when travelling



Sri M. L. Bhatt

to recite "Ram" "Ram" "Ramana" "Ramana" with the running of the moving train. I felt the vibrations in my veins. Sometimes, I felt his presence and one day (to be exact at 7 p.m. on 18-12-1952), while travelling by train from Modinagar to Delhi, a poem came to me.

"Let me remember you
God Ramana
A hundred times in a day."

"You came as a flash
Once in my life and OM Ramana
Current flowing ceaselessly
By your grace LORD RAMANA,"

"I close my eyes and you come
And keep the current flowing.
I pray now, come,
In recesses of my sleep, and
Give me your benevolent flash
Let me remember you GOD
Within my heart LORD RAMANA
In my dreams."

My narration will be incomplete if I do not give the vivid experiences I have had of HIS presence felt and my prayers miraculously answered.

1. I was serving a big textile group and suddenly resigned on a question of prestige in July, 1955. Mental depression followed: "who will give you employment, you fool, now at the age of 47?" I prayed and got the answer "Why worry" "Be STILL". I cannot say why but I decided that I would not make any frantic efforts or seek influence but wait for the call from unknown quarters. I pledged myself to stay at home for 30 days and seek help only from prayer to the master. I do not do any puja or ritual of any sort; my puja is only mental remembrance of HIM, by rhythm of which life may come and go at HIS WILL.

Twenty-nine days passed, my courage diminishing day by day. But not my faith. Exactly on the thirtieth day, a casual acquaintance came to my house, seeking me and bringing an offer of a better job. I thanked the Master.

2. I had another vivid experience in 1964. By now I had become a confirmed *Prarabdhavadi* (or believer in destiny) according to my friends. Once again when I resigned at the age of 55 in similar circumstances another position came of its own accord; my colleague, Sri Gulabchand Jain, exclaimed: "It is a miracle; Ramana Maharshi is protecting you."

3. There have been more such happenings in my life, some are very personal and it is not my intention to narrate my own life.

In conclusion, most humbly, I say that my prayers to the Master, have been amply rewarded, that I have been a chosen one for such blessing, I am all submission to Him, trying to propagate his teachings in my humble way.

"Let me Remember you
GOD RAMANA,
A hundred times a day,
Let me."

YOGA VASISHTA SARA¹

THE ESSENCE OF YOGA VASISHTA

.....

Based on a translation made By SWAMI SURESANANDA

CHAPTER II

UNREALITY OF THE WORLD

1. Just as the great ocean of milk became still when the Mandara Mountain (with which it was churned by the Devas and the Asuras) became still, even so the illusion of samsara comes to an end when the mind is stilled.

2. Samsara rises when the mind becomes active and ceases when it is still. Still the mind, therefore, by controlling the breath and the latent desires (*vasanas*).

3. This worthless (*lit.* burnt out) samsara is born of one's imagination and vanishes in the absence of imagination. It is certain that it is absolutely unsubstantial.

4. The idea of a (live) snake in a picture of a snake ceases to be entertained when the truth is known. Similarly samsara ceases to exist (when the Truth is realized), even if it continues to appear.

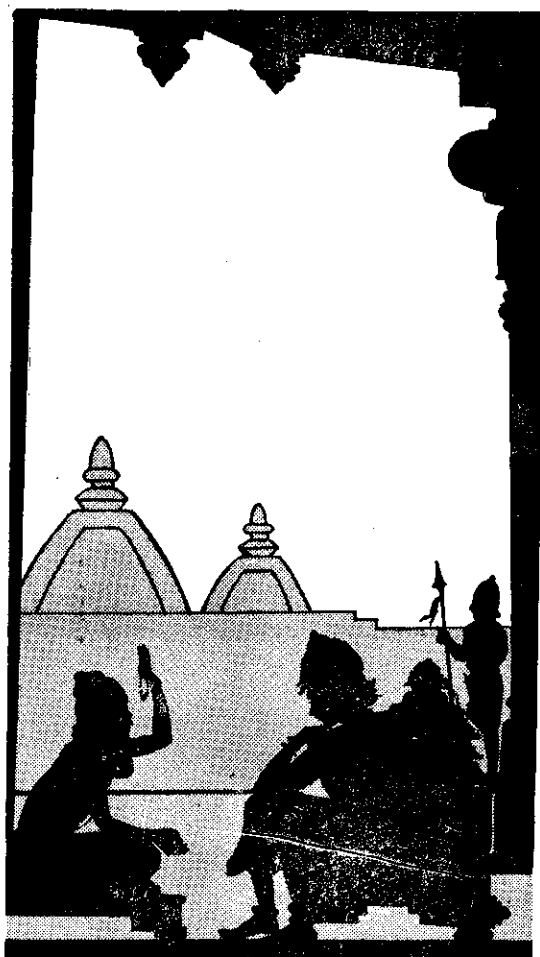
5. This long-living ghost of a samsara which is the creation of the deluded mind of man and the cause of his sufferings disappears when one ponders over it.

6. O Rama, maya is such that it brings delight through its own destruction; its nature is inscrutable; it ceases to exist even while it is being observed.

7. Dear boy, wonderful indeed is this maya which deludes the entire world. It is on account of it that the Self is not perceived even though it pervades all the limbs of the body.

8. Whatever is seen does not truly exist. It is like the mythical city of Gandharvas (*fata morgana*) or a mirage.

9. That which is not seen, though within us, is called the eternal and indestructible Self.



10. Just as the trees on the bank of a lake are reflected in the water, so also all these varied objects are reflected in the vast mirror of our consciousness.

11. This creation, which is a mere play of consciousness, rises up, like the delusion of a snake in a rope (when there is ignorance) and comes to an end when there is right knowledge.

¹ Continued from our last issue.

12. Even though bondage does not really exist, it becomes strong through desire for worldly enjoyments; when this desire subsides bondage becomes weak.

13. Like waves rising up from the ocean the unstable mind rises out of the vast and stable expanse of the Supreme Self.

14. It is because of that which always, of its own accord, imagines (everything) quickly and freely that this magical show (of the world) is projected in the waking state.

15. This world, though unreal, appears to exist and is the cause of life-long suffering to an ignorant person, just as a (non-existent) ghost (is the cause of fear) to a boy.

16. One who has no idea of gold sees only the bracelet. He does not at all have the idea that it is merely gold.

17. Similarly towns, houses, mountains, serpents, etc. are all in the eyes of the ignorant man, separate objects. From the absolute point of view this objective (world) is the subject (the Self) itself; it is not separate (from the Self).

18. The world is full of misery to an ignorant man and full of bliss to a wise man. The world is dark to a blind man and bright to one who has eyes.

19. The bliss of a man of discrimination, who has rejected samsara and discarded all mental concepts, constantly increases.

20. Like clouds which suddenly appear in a clear sky and as suddenly dissolve the entire universe (appears) in the Self and (dissolves in it).

21. He who reckons the rays as non-different from the sun and realizes that they are the sun itself is stated to be *nirvikalpa* (the undifferentiated state).

22. Just as the cloth, when investigated, is seen to be nothing but thread, so also this world, when enquired into, is (seen to be) merely the Self.

23. This fascinating world rises like a wave in the ambrosial ocean of consciousness and dissolves in it. How then can it be different from it (consciousness) in the middle (i.e. when it appears)?

24. Just as the foam, the waves, the dew and the bubbles are not different from water, even so this world which has come out of the Self is not different from the Self.

25. Just as a tree consisting of fruits, leaves, creepers, flowers, branches, twigs and roots, exists in the seed of the tree, even so this manifest world exists in Brahman.

26. Just as the pot (ultimately) goes back to mud, waves into water and ornaments into gold, so also this world which has come out of the Self (ultimately) goes back to the Self.

27. The snake appears when one does not recognize the rope; it disappears when one recognizes the rope. Even so this world appears when the Self is not recognized; it disappears when the Self is recognized.

28. It is only our forgetfulness of the invisible Self which causes the world to appear just as (the ignorance of the) rope (causes the) snake to appear.

29. Just as the dream becomes unreal in the waking state and the waking state in the dream, so also death becomes unreal in birth and birth in death.

30. All these are thus neither real nor unreal. They are the effect of delusion, mere impressions arising out of some past experiences.

(To be Continued)

“The inner Silence is self-surrender. And that is living without the sense of ego.”

— SRI RAMANA

PEAK AND PLATEAU

SOME REFLECTIONS ON SAHAJA SAMADHI

By

Prof. U. A. ASRANI

The R. M. Bucke Memorial Society *Newsletter-Review* edited by Dr. Raymond Prince and D. H. Salman, O.P. of Montreal is making a very interesting attempt to find common ground between mystics and psychologists. We reviewed its inaugural issue in April 1967. We now have pleasure in reproducing an article from it by Prof. U. A. Asrani.

MUCH confusion and debate about mysticism appears to me to be due to the fact that the true goal of mysticism is in dispute. Two main goals have been suggested.

1. The enjoyment of 'peak experiences' or samadhis, as we call them in India.

2. The attainment of the 'mystical plateau' as Osborne calls it (*Newsletter-Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 13). This plateau has a variety of names in various traditions, for example, *Sihita Prajna* or *Jivan Mukta* by the Hindus, *Baqua* or *Haqiqat* by the Sufis the *Bodhisatva* state by the Buddhists, the *Vita-Raga* state by the Jains and the *Unitive* state by the Christians.

Peak experiences are such striking phenomena that many consider them to be not only the *sine qua non* of genuine mysticism, but also its final goal. But, as Osborne's letter indicates, this view is questionable. The enjoyment of peak experience tends towards escapism or quietism. It has historically failed to meet squarely the challenging situations of history, even in India and Tibet, where peak experiences of various types have been pursued to the utmost limits.

Peak experiences are also claimed to bring the mystic face to face with Reality. But one must face the question whether this description is just a mere figure of speech; whether the intuitions derived are not mere expressions of ineffable joy, from which no realistic core of philosophy can be derived.

Furthermore, it is a moot point whether our language and logic are adequate vehicles for a description of this synthetic whole which we call Reality; their inadequacy has been exposed even by the sciences of physics and biology.

Hence if we disregard the claims of the benefits derived from peak experiences after death because they are not verifiable, there is reason to argue that the second state, the *sahaja* state, should be regarded as the true final goal of the mystic's endeavours.

Osborne, a disciple of Ramana Maharshi, the great South Indian mystic of recent times, confirms this. In fact, apart from the contrary opinion held by certain emotional mystics such as the Bhaktas among the Hindus, Sufis among the Muslims, and certain Christian mystics, it is the consensus of mystics the world over that peak experiences are mere means to the final end which is the *sahaja* state. Peak experiences vary from one mystic school to another, but the plateau of *sahaja* is very nearly the same in all. Peak experiences simply demonstrate to the mystic that the entire world of desires, emotions, fears, anxieties and attachments can be merged into one all-absorbing experience, or even rolled up like a map at will. The peak experiences are thus only an aid in attaining that perfect unselfishness and detachment of the *sahaja* state.

What are the characteristics of the *sahaja* state? The following seem important. It is a state of ideal or optimal mental health far

superior to that of the normal mental health which is the goal of psychoanalysts. Osborne very rightly distinguishes the two. This ideal mental health consists of all the traits of positive mental health described by Western specialists (see Marie Jahoda, *Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health, Basic Books*, 1958, and other literature on the subject). The only qualitative difference between the Eastern ideal and the Western specialists' ideal is a matter of emphasis.

1. Unselfishness or detachment or freedom from gnawing desires or ambitions is the very basis of the *sahaja* state; without it *sahaja* is impossible. Mental Health specialists on the other hand only mention these traits along with the absence of self-consciousness, but they do not give them a fundamental position. 2. Accurate perception of reality which is so characteristic of mental health according to specialists in the West is distinctly stressed only in some mystic texts, (for example, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Yoga Vasishtha*, among Hindu mystic texts) but not by all. This may be due to escapist tendencies which have been rampant in all schools of mysticism or it may be due to the fact that such detached realism as envisaged in the *sahaja* state is not possible for the ordinary mystic votary. It is possible only when one reaches the *sahaja* state itself. Emphasising realism at lower stages might enhance egoism, which has to be considerably reduced for the achievement of the *sahaja* state.

The *sahaja* state yields equanimity, a heightened frustration-tolerance and a sense of freedom; one begins to live in the present. It leads to concentration and efficiency in every activity, impartiality and freedom from bias in all judgments; elimination of all mental and emotional tensions; and an elimination of an over-concern with metaphysical questions. That state also enhances aesthetic appreciation and simplifies the pursuit of ethical values because of the unselfish detached attitude which is at the root of that state.

I say this not merely on the basis of the writings of others, but also on the basis of

personal experience (please see my article on "A Clue to the Missing Link between Science and Mysticism" in *Psychic International of Moradabad, India*, May 1965). I entirely endorse the statement of Dr. Assagioli that the debates on the nature of the mystic experience are confused by the fact that those who write on the topic have had no personal experience. Hence I believe that those interested in mysticism as an intellectual study should attempt to attain personal experience.

Only on one point as regards behaviour in the *sahaja* state would I beg to differ with Mr. Osborne. The equanimity of the *sahaja* state is not rigid or static; it is more like the dynamic equilibrium of a man running stably on two bicycle wheels. There may be desires and drives, very strong ones too, like playing a football game or fighting on a battlefield. But the outlook is altered to the extent that as soon as the game is over, whether it is won or lost, the mind is relaxed like that of the perfect sportsman. One may even run away from a situation of danger. In one story it is reported that the great Sankara ran away on the approach of a large elephant. It all depends upon circumstances. The reactions of a Sage in the *sahaja* state are disproportionate, not exaggerated by inordinate desires, fears or anxieties.

Such a Sage sleeps very soundly and needs less sleep. With his habit of concentration on every act he eats with gusto, even water tastes sweet to him. Sleeping, eating and drinking are natural needs and he neither exaggerates nor avoids them. After each natural drive is fulfilled he is relaxed; he takes all drives — their fulfilment as well as their frustration — with ease. A box dragged along a road meets with a considerable amount of friction but one hundred times the load can be pulled along on a wheeled vehicle with ease. The Sage in the *sahaja* takes all the burdens of life on the wheeled vehicle of unselfishness.

Finally, as regards mystic experience and regression, I would support Reza Arestah

who calls peak experiences "natural" other hand, even after having developed it (*Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 19-20). Progress in any line may be spiral and in mysticism it also appears to be like that. Even a *sahaja* mystic behaves innocently as a child ; but he does so in spite of being an adult and his innocence and detachment are superior to those of a child. An infant has yet to develop his ego ; the *sahaja* mystic on the other hand, even after having developed it once, succeeds in pruning it to such a basic minimum that it cannot cause any fears, anxieties or frustrations to him. He can relax after every drive. The *sahaja* state is not a mere return to a primordial state, it is a discovery after alienation from one's true nature caused by 'undesirable child rearing, schooling and social situations'.

City of Brahman

.....

Within the city of Brahman, which is the body, there is the heart, and within the heart there is a little house. This house has the shape of a lotus, and within it dwells that which is to be sought after, inquired about, and realized.

What then is that which, dwelling within this little house, this lotus of the heart, is to be sought after, inquired about, and realized ?

As large as the Universe outside, even so large is the universe within the lotus of the heart. Within it are heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, the lightning, and all the stars. What is in the macrocosm is in this microcosm.

All things that exist, all beings and all desires, are in the city of Brahman, what then becomes of them when old age approaches and the body dissolves in death ?

Though old age comes to the body, the lotus of the heart does not grow old. At death of the body, it does not die. The lotus of the heart, where Brahman exists in all his glory — that, and not the body, is the true city of Brahman. Brahman, dwelling therein, is untouched by any deed, ageless, deathless, free from grief, free from hunger and from thirst. His desires are right desires, and his desires are fulfilled.

As here on earth all the wealth that one earns is but transitory, so likewise transitory are the heavenly enjoyments acquired by the performance of sacrifices. Therefore those who die without having realized the Self and its right desires find no permanent happiness in any world to which they go ; while those who have realized the Self and its right desires find permanent happiness everywhere.

— CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD.

TWO GREAT MEN MEET BHAGAVAN

By
Viswanathan¹

Achyuthadasa was one of the earliest to discern Sri Bhagavan's spiritual greatness. He was known as Abboy Naidu before he renounced the world, and was skilled in playing upon the *mridangam*.² He has composed Tamil *kirtanas* (songs) of great merit, which are devotional and advaitic. Having heard about Sri Bhagvan he went to Gurumoortham, the Samadhi temple of a sadhu,³ where Sri Bhagavan was living deeply immersed in *nirvikalpa* samadhi, during the closing years of the last century. He sat in front of Sri Bhagavan and waited. As Sri Bhagavan who was then a young lad, opened his eyes, he paid his respects to him, massaged his feet and exclaimed with great devotional fervour, "One may be a great scholar, an author or composer and everything else in the world. But it is indeed very rare to come across any one actually established in the Self Supreme like you." He then announced to his own disciples that there was "something very rare at Tiruvannamalai", meaning Sri Bhagavan. Achyuthadasa's Samadhi is at Kannamangalam, a few miles north of Arni in the North Arcot district of Madras State.

This is an instance of how spiritually minded people were impressed with Sri Bhagavan's greatness at the very sight of him even in his early years at Tiruvannamalai.

* * *

Another great man who visited Sri Bhagavan and was greatly impressed was Sri Narayana Guru⁴ of Kerala. The latter is well-known in South India as a man of great tapas and a great social and religious reformer. He visited Sri Bhagavan when he was living at Skandashram. After paying his respects to Sri Bhagavan he sat silently watching him. People, young and old, paid their respects to him and sat or passed on,



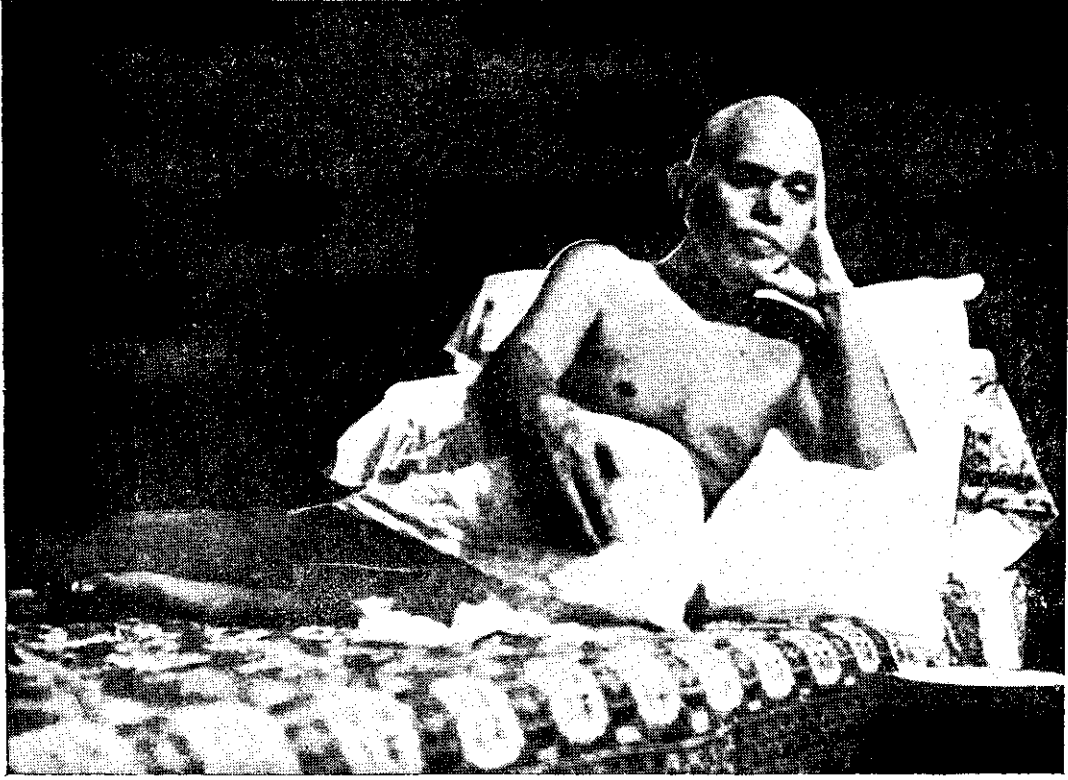
while Sri Bhagavan sat silently with unwinking wide-open eyes. He took no particular notice of anybody. He did not enquire, about the whereabouts of anybody. There was no welcome and no permission to go. But all the while he was beaming with blissful joy and the audience was partaking of it. At the invitation of Sri Bhagavan Sri Narayana Guru took his lunch with him and his devotees and later took leave of him, saying : "May it be the same way here

¹ Introduced to our readers in our issue of Jan. '67, p. 82.

² A small drum-instrument used at Karnatic musical concerts.

³ Situated near the village Kinathur, an eastern suburb of Tiruvannamalai.

⁴ An article on whom appeared in our issue of July. '66, p. 243.



also", meaning that he might also be blessed so as to be established in the Self as Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan gave a gracious smile.

On reaching his place Sri Narayana Guru wrote five verses in Sanskrit, known as *Nivritti Panchakam*, and sent it to the Ashram. The theme of the composition is

that he alone enjoys the Peace of Release (*moksha*) who does not allow his mind to observe or enquire about the differences pertaining to relative (mundane) existence and has risen above all formalities of worldly life. Sri Narayana Guru used to be greatly pleased whenever any of his disciples visited Sri Bhagavan, and used to listen with delight to the details of the visit.

The wise call thee the impersonal, without attributes ;

They also call thee the personal God with divine attributes ;

Thou art both, and thou dost manifest thyself as the one or the other,
According to our understanding.

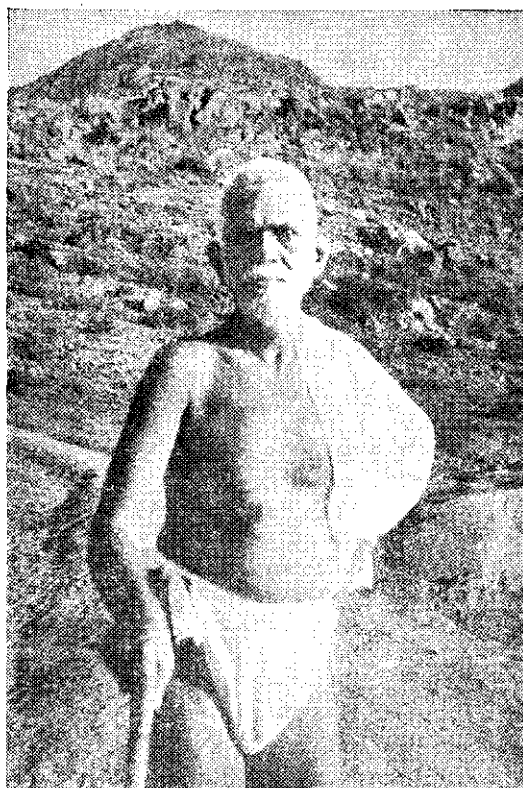
— SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM.

INTO SRI BHAGAVAN'S FOLD

By
K. PADMANABHAN¹

IT was in the year 1918, when I was thirteen years old, that my uncle who was the Tahsildar of Tindivanam celebrated the *Upanayanam* (investing a boy with the sacred thread) of his eldest son at Tiruvannamalai. The *Upanayanam* of my elder brother was also celebrated along with his cousin's *Upanayanam*. The function gave me my first opportunity of going to Tiruvannamalai. I had not till then heard of the place or the temple, much less about the Maharshi who was then living at Skandasramam on the Hill, Arunachala. While the ceremony was going on a few of us boys who were not interested in the rituals began to climb the Hill from the side of the temple. There was no regular pathway at that time as it is today and we had to make our way through thorny shrubs. The climbing was also tiresome, but at last we reached Skandasramam. We were not particularly eager to see the Maharshi, but having gone up to the Ashram we were curious to see Him. After seeing Him we returned. I was limping with a thorn in my foot and bleeding from several cuts and bruises. I was cross and cursed the day. Little did I know that it was the most auspicious and blessed day in my life!

Ten years later, in 1929, when I was a graduate-engineer undergoing practical training under the well-known firm of Gannon Dunkerley & Co., building contractors, and supervising the construction of the Turinjalar bridge at Tirukoilur, a small town twenty miles distant from Tiruvannamalai, I paid my second visit to Tiruvannamalai. I was one of a party of four tennis players who had been invited by the Tiruvannamalai Club to play a few matches there. After play we had to wait a few hours to catch our train back to Tirukoilur. So we decided to go to Sri Ramanasramam and have darshan of Sri Bhagavan. This



time also I was not particularly anxious to see Him. We reached the Ashram at about 8 p.m. and sat in the meditation hall in front of Sri Bhagavan for about half an hour. Although His glance fell on me for a moment I was not impressed at all by Him or the complete silence in the Hall. However, before leaving the Hall I prostrated myself before Him although rather reluctantly. I was too young and immature then to understand His greatness in spite of the pious and religious spirit in which I had grown up.

¹ He is now one of the Trustees of the Ashram, for a reference to whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of April '67, p. 162.

The train was late and, when we alighted at the railway station of Aragandanallur, it was nearly 11 p.m. We had to cross the river Pennar over a narrow causeway of irregular stones, before we could reach Tirukoilur. When we came to the causeway there was only a few inches of water flowing over it. But, as we proceeded, the water began to rise very rapidly to our great alarm! We had covered only 100 feet and had almost the same distance to cover to reach the other bank of the river. We could not go back; nor could we hurry forward on account of the irregular stones and the force of the stream. We became panicky and caught hold of one another to prevent ourselves from being washed away. In complete silence we waded through the water upon which were now floating all sorts of things. My thoughts went back to Sri Bhagavan. I feared that I had offended Him and that this was His punishment for my disrespect. I prayed for His forgiveness. At last we reached the other bank half dead with fright. We stood for some time looking at the flood which was now carrying away bullocks, carts, bundles of straw and hay etc. I was convinced that it was Sri Bhagavan's Grace which had saved us from a similar fate. But this conviction was short lived. I did not even go to the Ashram to

show my gratitude to Sri Bhagavan. However, I did not forget the incident and I went to the Ashram again only in 1962, more than thirty years later!

This time also it was sheer chance which took me there. A friend of mine took me to Chingleput to look at the new hospital that was coming up there. After examining it we suddenly decided to go to Tiruvannamalai. We spent the night at a hotel and next day proceeded to the Ashram where the President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, after making kind enquiries, suggested us to assist him in preparing a layout for a few small buildings² on a plot of land which had been acquired by the Ashram across the road. This was a turning point in my life. My association with the Ashram has ever since been growing stronger day by day.

Looking back upon the incidents narrated above I feel convinced that Sri Bhagavan's Grace was evident throughout. I have no doubt that it still exists strongly although He is no longer with us physically.

Blessed am I to be in His fold again!

² Sri Padmanabhan has also constructed and donated a building in the Ashram land outside its premises, for the convenience of ladies' stay. It is named after his late wife, Kamala Padmanabhan.

Time

.....

By V. Venkataraman

In the years when I used to sleep on the floor of the hall, beside Bhagavan, I woke up one night to see him reclining on his couch. Seeing that I was awake, he said: "In my early years at Tiruvannamalai I sometimes opened my eyes and found that it was dark, and sometimes it was light. That was all that I knew of the passing of day and night."

The Way of Chuang Tzu

.....
By
Fr. Thomas Merton

THE KINGLY MAN

My Master said :

That which acts on all and meddles in none, is heaven . . .

The Superior Man realizes this, hides it in his heart
Grows boundless, wide-minded, draws all to himself.
And so he lets the gold lie hidden in the mountain,
Leaves the pearls lying in the deep.
Goods and possessions are no gain in his eyes,
He stays far from wealth and honour.

Long Life is no ground for joy, nor early death for sorrow.
Success is not for him to be proud of, failure is no shame.
Had he all the world's power he would not hold it as his own
If he conquered everything he would not take it to himself
His glory is in knowing that all things come together in One
And life and death are equal.

HOW DEEP IS TAO !

My Master said : Tao, how deep, how still its hiding place !
Tao, how pure !
Without this stillness, metal would not ring, stone when struck
would give no answer —

The power of sound is in the metal and Tao in all things.
When they clash, they ring with Tao,
And are silent again.
Who is there, now, to tell all things their places ?
The king of life goes his way free, inactive, unknown,
He would blush to be in business
He keeps his deep roots down in the origin, down in the spring,
His knowledge is enfolded in Spirit,
And he grows great, great, opens a great heart, a world's refuge.
Without forethought he comes out, in majesty,
Without plan he goes his way and all things follow him :
This is the kingly man, who rides above life.

This one sees in the dark, hears where there is no sound.
In the deep dark he alone sees light
In soundlessness he alone perceives music
He can go down into the lowest of low places
And find people
He can stand in the highest of high places
And see meaning.
He is in contact with all beings :
That which is not, goes his way,
That which moves is what he stands on.
Great is small for him, long is short for him,
And all his distances are near.

THE LOST PEARL

The Yellow Emperor went wandering
 To the north of the Red Water
 To the Kwan Lun mountain, He looked around
 Over the edge of the world. On the way home
 He lost his night coloured pearl.
 He sent out science to seek his pearl, and got nothing
 He sent analysis to look for his pearl and got nothing.
 He sent out logic to seek his pearl and got nothing
 Then he asked Nothingness, and Nothingness had it!
 The Yellow Emperor said:
 "Strange indeed: Nothingness
 Who was not sent
 Who did no work to find it
 Had the night coloured pearl!"

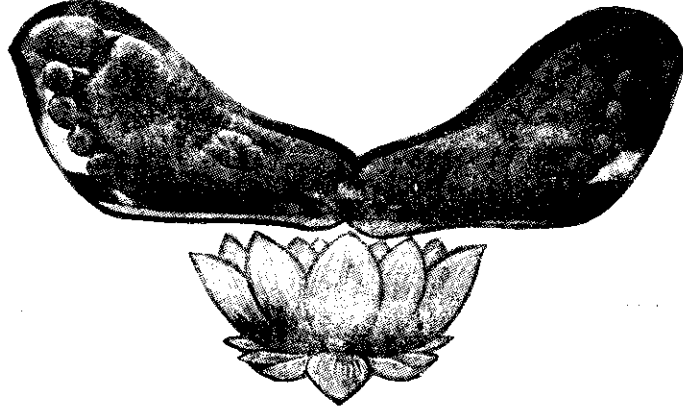
IN MY END IS MY BEGINNING

In the beginning of beginnings was Void of Void: the Nameless.
 And in the Nameless was the One, without body, without form,
 This One, — This Being in Whom all find power to exist,
 Is the Living.
 From the Living: comes the Formless, the undivided.
 From the act of this Formless, come the existence, each according
 To its inner principle: This is Form. Here body embraces and
 cherishes spirit.
 The two work together as one, blending and manifesting their
 Characters. And this is Nature.
 But he who obeys Nature returns through Form and Formless to
 the Living
 And in the Living
 Joins the unbegun Beginning.
 The joining is Sameness. The sameness is Void. The Void is infinite.

The bird opens and sings its note
 And then the beak comes together again in Silence.
 So Nature and the Living meet together in Void.
 Like the closing of the bird's beak
 After its song
 Heaven and earth come together in the unbegun,
 And all is foolishness, all is unknown, all is like
 The lights of an idiot, all is without mind!
 To obey is to close the beak and fall into Unbeginning.

"That State which transcends speech and thought is *Mouna*; it is
 meditation without mental activity."

— SRI MAHARSHI.



At His Lotus Feet

The following three short articles were published in the RAMANA PICTORIAL SOUVENIR, brought out in commemoration of the *Kumbhabhishekam* of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi shrine in 1967. They are now reproduced here for the benefit of our readers.

I

Identity with the Universal

By

Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni*

LORD, my present inner experience achieved by Sri Bhagavan's look of grace, I understand as inherence in the *Vijnana Atman* — the sphere of Pure Intellect. I clearly experience myself in the cave of the Heart quite distinct from the body; yet I have not ceased to look upon the world as different from myself. And so I consider that this is not the complete and ultimate inherence in the Self. May Sri Bhagavan himself bless me with that *Purna Nishta*, by his gracious look capable of traversing any distance. My experience of ecstasy hitherto was particularly dynamic — it was pure and simple flow of power; but now it is perceived to be a flow of light giving a sense of utmost lightness. My faith is getting strengthened that the Deities are working upon me for the fulfilment of

the great task, impelled by Bhagavan Sri Maharshi's look of grace. May Sri Bhagavan send me as reply his Look of Compassion!

The *Sat-darsana* Sanskrit verse-rendering was finished on Saturday From that Saturday my vision became distinct. I appear to see all things as One Real Existence. It is my prayer to Bhagavan that this vision may culminate in permanent experience. I see as bubbles in water all changing forms in One Existence; and I try to discard the former and experience pure existence alone everywhere.

* Extracts from letters written by Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni in 1931 to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, from Anandashrama, Sirsi, Mysore State.

Bhagavan, Slayer of Maya's offspring, the sense of separate existence in me has not yet vanished. I know that one flash of your wish could bless me with the experience of absolute identity with the Universal. I also know that no wish whatsoever could consciously set foot in your heart.

My Lord, I consider everything achieved when on full maturity of one's *tapas* the ego gets annihilated, spontaneous Self-awareness is well established and all the senses are entirely dedicated to the Divine. May my inherence in the *Vijnana Atman* (Pure Intellect) show me the way for abidance at the Source, the Reality!

II

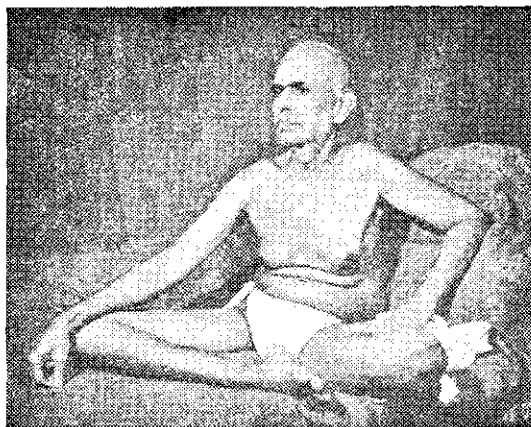
The Turning Point

By

Natanananda

I WAS twenty years old in 1917-18 and a school-master. Being naturally of a pious disposition I used to go about from place to place frequently to have darshan of the deities installed in temples. A noble soul who saw this brought to me of his own accord the two books (in Tamil), *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* and *Sri Vivekananda Vijayam*, and asked me to read them. As soon as I had read them I was seized with an intense longing for obtaining the vision of God and for finding out the guru who would show the way to it. While I was engaged in this search I heard about the extraordinary greatness of Bhagavan Sri Ramana through a holy person whom I happened to meet at Sriperumbudur. On 2nd May 1918, I saw Sri Ramana for the first time at Skandasramam on Arunachala.

I beseeched him fervently thus: "It is my great desire that I should actually experience your gracious wisdom. Kindly fulfil my desire." In those days Sri Ramana was not speaking much. Still he spoke kindly as follows: "Is it the body in front of me which desires to obtain my grace? Or is it the awareness within it? If it is the awareness, is it not now looking upon itself as the body and making this request? If so, let the awareness first of all know its real nature. It will then automatically know God and my grace. The truth of this can be realised even now and here."



Besides speaking thus, he also explained it as follows through my own experience. "It is not the body which desires to obtain the grace. Therefore it is clear that it is awareness which shines here as 'you'. To you who are of the nature of awareness there is no connection during sleep with the body, the senses, the vital airs and the mind. On waking up you identify yourself with them, even without your knowledge. This is your experience. All that you have to do hereafter is to see that you do not identify yourself with them in the states of waking and dream also and to try to remain yourself as in the state of deep sleep—as you are by nature unattached you have to convert the state of ignorant deep sleep, in which you were formless and unattached, into conscious deep sleep. It is only by

doing this that you can remain established through long practice. This experience will in your real nature. You should never forget that this experience will come only make it clear that your real nature is not different from the nature of God."

III

Beyond Categories

By

"*Sein*"

THERE is one section of the devotees of Bhagavan who attach great importance to his being an avatar, while others overlook or even deny such overemphasis. Why should we worry? We know that he is more than an Avatar. Indeed, Bhagavan himself once said: "The Jnani is more than an avatar."

There are Hindus who make much of his being a Hindu. Of course, he was brought up a Hindu. He participated in a certain amount of Hindu ritual. But then, as others point out, he did not exclusively advocate Hindu ritual or expect any of his followers to become Hindus. What does it matter? He was more than a Hindu.

Even within Hinduism, was he a Brahmin or a sannyasi? Once again, what does it matter? He was brought up a Brahmin; he left his family and came to Arunachala; but he never took sannyas. He himself declared that he was '*athiasrami*', outside the castes and categories, neither Brahmin nor non-Brahmin, neither householder nor sannyasi.

Was he a Guru? He gave no formal initiation, he sometimes denied that he was a guru, but he joined in singing 'Ramana Sat-Guru', and many experienced his Grace and guidance and still do.

Did he teach prayer and belief in God? He said that it is always good to pray and that without God's Grace even the movement of a blade of grass is impossible; but on another occasion, speaking to a different type of person, he said: "Why worry about God? Let him worry about himself; find out who it is that asks whether there is a God."

I do not wish to argue that Bhagavan was a Hindu or not a Hindu, an Avatar or not an Avatar, a theist or a nontheist; what I say is that his purpose was to divert our minds from all forms and categories to the pure Truth of the Self. Let us not waste our time trying to define what Bhagavan was but try to follow him to what IS.

Many great Teachers throughout the ages have set up signposts to the Truth, but what multitudes have gathered around these signposts and built churches and temples there, marvelling how beautifully they were painted, and forgetting that they were only indicators to the Truth beyond. Therefore Bhagavan constantly warned us not to be enthralled by the beauty of any path or any scripture but to turn our minds inwards to find out who it is that follows the path or scripture. All the signposts point to the One Truth, and that is to be found within. That is why Bhagavan said that Truth is simple but men do not want truth, they want mystery. Let us, therefore sacrifice to Bhagavan the mind that seeks to build doctrines and turn instead to the simplicity of Truth that is the very Self of us.

"My obeisance to Thee

I bow down to Thee, O Lord!

Thou facest the south.

Thou art the Ancient One. I bow down to Thee.

Thou art Supreme. I bow down to Thee.

Thou art Mighty. I bow down to Thee

Thou art Time. I bow down to Thee.

Thou art the Word that is in the beginning. I bow down to Thee.

Thou art the Ruler of the mind. I bow down to Thee."

— *Yajur Veda.*



THE UDDHARAVANA

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

(Continued from our last Issue)

BHRIGU VALLI

(Section dealing with Bhrigu)

May (Brahman) protect both of us. May (Brahman) sustain both of us. May we work together intensely. May our study be illuminating. Let us not bear illwill towards each other.

OM PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

The celebrated Bhrigu, son of Varuna, approached his father Varuna saying: "Revered Sir, please tell me about Brahman". The (father) told him "Food, the vital forces (prana), the eyes, the ears, the mind and speech". He added: "That from which these beings are born, that by which those that are born live, that into which they completely go back on departing (from this world), try to know that. That is Brahman."

He (Bhrigu) practised austerities (*tapas*; deep and intense thinking). After practising *tapas* he came to the conclusion that food was Brahman. For (he thought that) all these beings were really born of food, that those that were born lived on food and that they completely went back to food on departing (from this world). Having realized this he (again) approached his father Varuna saying: "Revered Sir, tell me about Brahman." The (father again) said to him; "Seek to know Brahman through *tapas*: *tapas* is Brahman."

He (again) practised *tapas* and, having practised *tapas*, came to the conclusion that the vital forces were Brahman. For (he thought that) all these beings were really born of the vital forces; that those that were born lived by the vital forces and that they completely went back to the vital forces on departing (from his world). Having realized this he again approached his father Varuna saying: "Revered Sir, please tell me about Brahman." The (father again) said to him: "Try to know Brahman through *tapas*; *tapas* is Brahman."

He (again) practised *tapas* and, having practised *tapas*, came to the conclusion that mind (*manas*) was Brahman. For (he thought that) all these were really born of mind, that those that were born lived by mind and that they completely went back into mind on departing (from this world). Having realized this he again approached his father Varuna saying: "Revered Sir, please tell me about Brahman." (The father again) said to him: "Try to know Brahman through *tapas*; *tapas* is Brahman."

He (again) practised *tapas* and, having practised *tapas*, came to the conclusion that the intellect (*vijñana*) was Brahman. For (he thought that) all these beings were really born of the intellect, that those that were born lived by the intellect and that they completely went back to the intellect on departing (from this world). Having realized this he again approached his father Varuna saying: "Revered Sir, please tell me about Brahman." (The father again) said to him: "Try to know Brahman through *tapas*; *tapas* is Brahman."

He (again) practised *tapas* and, having practised *tapas*, came to the conclusion that bliss is Brahman. For (he thought that) all these beings are really born of bliss, that those that are born live by bliss and that they completely go back to bliss on departing (from this world). This is the esoteric knowledge (*vidya*) of Bhrigu son of Varuna. It is established in the highest *vyoman* (ether or space; Brahman). He who knows this is firmly established. He becomes the possessor of food as well as the eater of food. He becomes great by virtue of his progeny, cattle and the lustre of his spiritual knowledge. He becomes very famous.

Food should not be despised. This should be observed as a vow (pious resolution). *Prana* indeed is food. The body is the eater of food. The body is established on *Prana*, *Prana* is established on the body. Therefore food is established on food. He who knows this food which is established on food is firmly established. He becomes the possessor of food as well as the eater of food. He becomes

great by virtue of his progeny, cattle and the lustre of his spiritual knowledge. He becomes very famous.

Food should not be wasted. This should be observed as a vow. Water, indeed, is food. Fire (*lit.* effulgence; *jyoti*) is the eater of food. Fire is established on water; water is established on fire. Therefore food is established on food. He who knows this food which is established on food becomes firmly established. He becomes the possessor of food as well as the eater of food. He becomes great by virtue of his progeny, cattle and the lustre of his spiritual knowledge. He becomes very famous.

Food should be kept in abundance. This should be observed as a vow. The earth, indeed, is food. *Akasa* (space) is the eater of food. Space is established on the earth; the earth is established on space. Therefore food is established on food. He who knows this food which is established on food becomes firmly established. He becomes the possessor of food as well as the eater of food. He becomes great by virtue of his progeny, cattle and the lustre of his spiritual knowledge. He becomes very famous.

One should not turn away anybody who comes to his house. This should be observed as a vow. Therefore plenty of food should be obtained (and stored) by some means or other. "The food has been prepared", says (the host). If the food is prepared with great care it will be prepared (for the host also elsewhere) with great care. If the food is prepared with middling care it will be prepared (for the host also elsewhere) with middling care. If the food is prepared with little care it will be prepared (for the host also elsewhere) with little care. He who knows this (obtains the benefits mentioned above).

Brahman is to be meditated upon as safety (*kshema*) in speech, as the acquisition and preservation of wealth (*yoga kshema*) in *prana* and *apana*, in the form of relief in the anus. These are the methods of meditation in respect of the body. Now in regard to what is divine, (Brahman is to be meditated

upon as) contentment in rain, as force (or strength) in lightning, as fame in cattle, as lustre in the stars, as the imperishable bliss of progeny in the generative organ and as everything (all) in space (*akasa*). If one meditates upon it as support he obtains support. If one meditates upon it as great (*maha*) he becomes great. If one meditates upon it as mind (*manah*) he acquires the power of thinking. If one meditates upon it as obeisance (*namah*) all desires bow down before him. If one meditates upon it as Brahma (the Vedas) he becomes the knower of the Vedas. If one meditates upon it as the destructive power of Brahma (*Brahmanah parimarah*) his enemies and rivals die around him.

He who is in this man and he who is in the Sun are one. One who knows this transcends the body of food (*annamaya atma*), transcends the body of vital forces (*pranamaya atma*), transcends the body of mind (*manomaya atma*), transcends the body of the intellect (*vijnanamaya atma*), trans-

cends the body of bliss (*anandamaya atma*) and wanders about this world eating what he likes and wearing what he likes, singing this *saman* (song) : "Ha! Uha! Uha! U! I am the food, I am the food, I am the food. I am the eater of food, I am the eater of food, I am the eater of food. I am the one who puts everything together (creates), I am the one who puts everything together, I am the one who puts everything together. I was born of *Rta* (the eternal law of the universe) even before the gods. I am the centre (*nabhi*) of immortality. He who gives me away saves me thereby. I am the food and I eat the eater of food. I overcome the entire world. My splendour is equal to that of the Sun."

May (Brahman) protect both of us. May It sustain both of us. Let us work together intensely. May our studies be illuminating. Let us not bear illwill towards each other.

OM PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

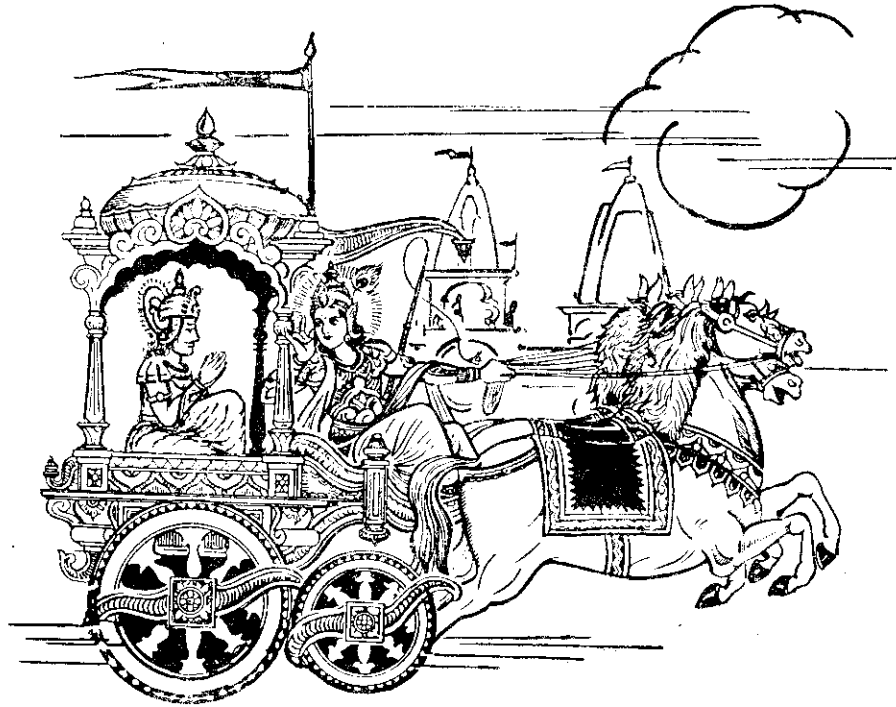
(To be continued)

Telepathy

.....

By V. Venkataraman

I once searched for the Tamil dictionary to look up a word in a text that Bhagavan had told me to copy out. Before I could do so he suddenly looked at me and told me the meaning of the word both generally and in that context, although I had never mentioned what word I wanted to look up. It often happened with me, as with other devotees, that the moment a thought crossed my mind he was aware of it, and there was no need to tell him about it.



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

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

1-3

O Bharata, one born with virtues of a divine nature is endowed with fearlessness, absolute purity of mind, establishment in the serenity of wisdom, charity, self-restraint, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, penance, straightforwardness, non-violence, truth, freedom from wrath, resignation, peace (of mind), absence of malice, compassion towards beings, non-attachment (to sensual pleasures), softness, gentility, want of indiscretion, brilliance, forgiveness, forti-

tude, purity, lack of hatred and absence of undue pride,

4

While one born with properties of a demoniac nature is marked by hypocrisy, arrogance, pride (self-conceit), anger, harshness and ignorance, O son of Pritha.

5

It is deemed that attributes of a divine nature lead one to salvation, while those of a demoniac nature to bondage.

6

There are two types of beings in the world—divine and demoniac. The divine type is spoken of at length. Listen about the demoniac (asuric) type from Me, O son of Pritha.

7

Men of a demoniac nature understand neither performance of right nor prohibition of wrong action (or the ways of action and renunciation). Among them, there is neither purity, nor character, nor truth.

8

They say that the world is unreal, baseless, devoid of God, mutually ill-conceived (or not brought about in the regular causal sequence) and is the product of desire (i.e. sexual impulse). What else (they say), is there?

9

Holding such views, these wretched souls of little understanding perform fierce actions, and ill-disposed, lead the world to chaos.

10

These (men) of impure vows, obsessed by insatiable passion, full of hypocrisy, self-conceit and self-intoxication, adopting false doctrines through confusion, set out to act (accordingly).

11

Entertaining endless desires resulting in death, they consider the enjoyment of the objects of sense as the highest good, being cocksure of the same as the highest purpose (of life).

12

Held in bondage by hundreds of ties of hope, desire and anger, they seek to amass wealth by unjust means for the sake of enjoying the objects of sense.

13-16

Deluded by ignorance, saying, "Today I have attained this and (tomorrow) shall fulfil that desire of mine; this wealth is already mine and that also will become mine; this foe I have already killed and others also I shall do away with. I am the Lord, enjoyer, perfect, strong and happy. I am wealthy and born in a noble family; who else is like me? I shall sacrifice, give in charity and shall rejoice," these men, with their minds distracted in various ways and involved in numerous delusions, extremely attached to the enjoyment of objects, reach their doom in the deepest hell.

17

Self-conceited and stiff, these wealthy, proud and intoxicated (persons) perform sacrifices only in name with ostentation and without observing rituals.

18

Resorting to egoism, force, pride, passion and anger, these malicious persons hate Me, dwelling in their own bodies, as well as in those of others.

19

Into demoniac wombs alone, I forever cast these cruel haters, degenerate and unholy, to be reborn in the world.

20

These fools, O son of Kunti, born in demoniac wombs again and again, reach the fallen condition without coming to Me.

21

This is the threefold gate to hell leading to one's ruin: Passion, Anger and Greed. Therefore one should abandon this trio.

22

A man free from these three, O son of Kunti, works out his own good and hence reaches the highest state.

23

He who abandons the injunctions of the scriptures and behaves according to the impulses of his desires, attains neither perfection nor happiness nor the highest state of salvation.

words of the scriptural injunction, you should act in this world.

(‘Scripture’ is defined as that which gives pure means of attaining the purpose of life and also states the contrary ones which defile this purpose.)

24

Let the Scripture, therefore, be your authority in deciding what is right and what is wrong action. Having understood the

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita entitled ‘*The Yoga of the Division of Attributes of Divine and Demoniac Natures*’.

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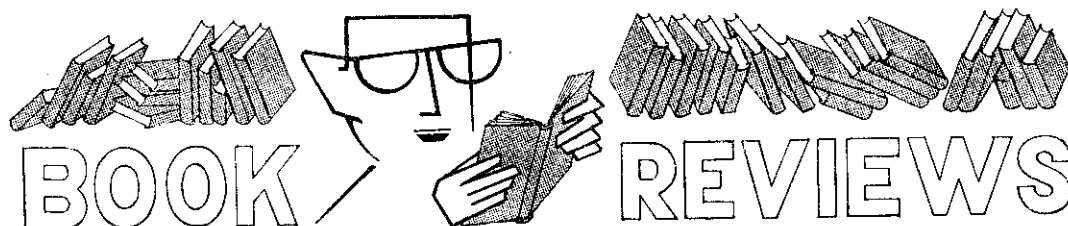
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THE PHILOSOPHY OF PANCHARATRA: By Dr. S. R. Bhatt, Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pp. 136. Price: Rs. 5.

Dr. Bhatt studies the school of Pancharatra—a notable system of Thought and Discipline in the Vaishnava Cult—with a view to prove that its philosophy is more *advaitic* (monist) than normally conceded. In fact the popular understanding is that this system is wholly of *visishtadvaita* persuasion; the present work seeks to show it is not so and that there are fundamental differences between the philosophy and practice of the Pancharatra and the teachings of Ramanuja.

In giving a historical account of the Pancharatra and the salient features of the system e.g. Parabrahman, Vyuha Manifestation, Concept of Lakshmi 'who subsists but not exists', Avatara, Antaryamin, Archa, Dr. Bhatt dwells at length on the treatment of the Absolute, the Reality (Transcendental)—both in the earlier Narayaniya and the later Samhitas—in terms that remind one of the descriptions of Nirguna Brahman in the Upanishads and considers this as sufficient evidence of the *advaitic* character of the philosophy. He does not take due notice of the descriptions in the same texts of the other aspects of the Reality which would warrant a totally different interpretation if taken by themselves. In fact, like most Indian systems in Agamic tradition, here too the Reality is presented in more ways than one in keeping with its integral character. All ways of being, monistic, partially monistic, pluralistic, can be affirmed of the Reality as verified in spiritual experience.

There is much in this book that throws light on the concepts of *vyuha*, *avatara*, *prapatti*, *sakti* etc. but the spirit of approach and presentation is too one-sided to invite serious study of the book. We do not think the author is right in his remarks

on Ramanuja's appreciation of the role of surrender, Grace and Bhakti.

THE ENCOUNTER OF MAN AND NATURE: By Seyyed Hoosein Nasr, Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 151. Price: 30 sh.

The theme of this book is best stated in the words of the author: "Although science is legitimate in itself, the role and function of science and its application have become illegitimate and even dangerous because of the lack of a higher form of knowledge into which science could be integrated and the destruction of the sacred and spiritual value of nature. To remedy this situation the metaphysical knowledge pertaining to nature must be revived and the sacred quality of nature given back to it once again." (p. 14)

In a cogent exposition of his study of the problem, Dr. Nasr traces the growing divorce between the mind of man and life in Nature under the influence of Positive Sciences in the West. He points out how the spiritual content of the older Knowledge relating to Nature, both in the East and the Middle-East, has been gradually displaced by sciences that give the 'knowledge of accidents but not of the substance', how Philosophy has become a mere reflection of Science, Christian Theology has become individual-centred and moved away from the context of Mother-Nature. He pleads for a revaluation of the factors that enter into the study of God, Man and Nature. "There is no peace possible among men unless there is peace and harmony with nature. And in order to have peace and harmony with nature one must be in harmony and equilibrium with Heaven, and ultimately with the Source and Origin of all things. He who is at peace with God is also at peace with His creation, both with nature and with man."

A well-thought thesis commending itself to every serious mind.

INDIA IN THE TIME OF PATANJALI: By B. N. Puri, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 272. Price: Rs. 20.

In seeking to reconstruct the political and social history of India on the basis of the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali (commentary on the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini the grammarian), Dr. Puri has drawn upon several corroborative sources like the accounts of contemporary foreign visitors, pillar inscriptions, literary works of other celebrities etc. Whether he agrees with the conclusions of other scholars or not he has mentioned their views in adequate detail. The author holds that Patanjali lived in 150 B.C., he was a contemporary of Pushyamitra, he was from the North, and that he was not the same person who wrote the Yoga Sutras.

Working with skill and discrimination, Dr. Puri draws an extensive picture of the geographical and economic lay-out of the country as suggested by the observations, illustrations and citations in the writings of Patanjali. The chapters on Educational life and Religious conditions are specially well done. Literature, art and architecture are also covered in detail. Here and there there are peeps into the occult side of things e.g. "For the vital airs of a young man mount upwards to leave his body when an elder approaches; but by rising to meet him and saluting he recovers them." (MB. 6.1.84)

M. P. PANDIT.

TRANCE AND POSSESSION STATES: Edited by Raymon Prince. Published by R. M. Bucke Memorial Society, Montreal, Canada. Pp. 200. Price: Not stated.

Such terms as Trance, Possession, Obsession, Suggestion, Hypnotism and the like have been too long left to pseudo-definition and application. While scientists have regarded them with contempt, religionists have looked upon them with compassionate condescension. The modern cynic, who is interested in neither, has tolerated such states with supercilious complacency, tolerating them as victims of delusions.

The R. M. Bucke Memorial Society which is devoted to the study of areas common to religion and psychiatry, with particular reference to the state of mystical or transcendental states of consciousness, has in this valuable publication brought out the detailed proceedings of the Second Annual Conference of the Society held in March 1966. The conference has clearly brought out the conclusion that native explanations of spirit possession, generally involved elements of fantasy, and that there are in fact no such things

as disembodied agencies which mount their devotees, and cause them to behave in the manner we have heard described time and again.

Contemporary middle class opinion usually dismissed the spirits, and regarded them as primitive interpretations of social, psychological or physiological forces. But, in the sacred books and the dogma of the higher religions which form a basic root of our culture, the belief in spirits is clearly evident. It therefore poses a difficult problem to the modern mind and this timely publication has tackled this difficult subject in a scholarly manner.

One salient question brought out by the conference is that possession states are to the more archaic forms of religious life, what mystical states are to its more evolved forms. By expanding our knowledge on the nature of possession states and primitive religions, this book has not only focussed the arc-light on the more primitive states but also illuminated the meaning and function of mystical states. For, does not one know that beneath man's thin veneer of consciousness lies a relatively uncharted realm of mental activity, the nature and function of which have been neither systematically explored nor adequately conceptualised?

Despite numerous studies by scholars and psychologists from the days of Freud on day-dreaming, sleep and dream-states, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, hysterical states or dissociation and depersonalisation, pharmacologically-induced mental aberrations and so on, there has been little attempt made to organize this scattered information within the framework of a comprehensive theoretical system. The objective of the present publication is to integrate and discuss current knowledge of various altered states of consciousness and they have been discussed under the following heads, namely:—

- (1) The conditions necessary for their emergency;
- (2) The factors which influence their outward manifestation;
- (3) Their relatedness and or common denomination, and
- (4) The adaptive or maladaptive functions which they serve.

Analysis of hypnosis has been ably undertaken in this study by Peter H. Van Der Walde, Instructor in Psychiatry in Boston University, which reveals certain basic characteristics of the Phenomenon. These elements comprising individual, inter-personal and cultural variables have

been utilised by the professor (p. 3) in a trans-cultural comparison so as to demonstrate the fact that trance phenomena are goal-oriented behaviours expressed by individuals within a given culture by methods which are culturally sanctioned for achieving these ends. If there are differences between trance states they can be taken as representing cultural variants of similar psychological mechanisms.

Arnold Ludwig, in his paper on altered states of consciousness, refers to William James' description of subjective experience associated with such alterations and quoting his description of "The Charm of Drunkenness", remarks that 'loss of self-control' and 'grip on reality' also happen in the case of mystical, revelatory or spirit-possession states, where the individual relinquishes such control in the hope of experiencing divine truth, clairvoyance, cosmic consciousness, communion with spirits or super-natural powers, all in the hope of serving as temporary abode of Gods. He adds:

"Although this feeling of increased significance and import may be encountered during dressing, hypnosis, aesthetic experiences, creative states and auras preceding seizures it also represents consciousness, whether that state of consciousness is induced by 'natural' or by 'artificial' means (i.e. peyote, LSD, marijuana and various anaesthetics). I would surmise that this 'raw' sense of significance, which lends import and conviction to the 'revelations' attained during mystical consciousness or religious possession states, has been a major factor in the stabilisation of many religions, sects and cults."

Throughout history, one must have noted that altered states of consciousness have played a major role in various healing arts and practices. One has only to go back to what Socrates has remarked in the *Phaedrus* where he remarks: "Our greatest blessings come to us by way of madness." Socrates has defined four types of divine madness, i.e., altered states of consciousness. These are (a) prophetic madness, whose patron is Apollo; (b) telestic or ritual madness, whose patron is Dionysus; (c) poetic madness, inspired by the Muses; and (d) erotic madness, inspired by Aphrodite and Eros.

While modern psychologists may glibly debate the rational justification of such activities or dismiss the scientific validity of their concomitant theologians, this book has emphasised the fact that the devotees do believe in things spiritual and that they do endeavour to relate them

to their deities in the most favourable way. Their intentions and their beliefs are very real factors in the causation of their behaviour. The authors have rightly dismissed any elaborate explanations overlooking the general psychology of religion as inadequate an account of possession states as the description of a painting by one who is colour-blind or analysis of music by one who is stone-deaf.

PHILOSOPHY FOR EVERYMAN: By Dagobert D. Runes, The Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 148. Price: \$ 4.75.

This small, but comprehensive volume presents a panorama of the great philosophers of all times from Socrates to Sartre, tracing their background and impact on modern civilization. As man with ever expanding interests to guide him, remains a mystery to himself, it has become necessary for him to seek such crutches as super-natural instructions to reveal his ignorance, order his life and regulate his interests along with the sciences which serve him. This handbook of philosophical thought is helpful to the extent that it describes the decline and fall of the supernatural instruction as it not only lacks historical justification but ignores the other side of the human being, namely, that part of him which for all his ignorance declares his needs and obligation to think independently, to choose and remain free and to cope, however poorly, with the problem of life.

There is no gainsaying the fact that however much science may have progressed, with all the energies of the people whipped into "action", human life is surely deprived of all value unless man is able to withdraw into himself and consider quality, direction and intent of his life; and this in short is the message of this publication of less than one hundred and forty pages, which offers a clear comprehension of the fundamental theories and issues that have kept thinkers—oriental and occidental—from the days of Thales 600 B.C. down to Otto Neurath and Jean Paul Sartre. Throughout this long period, philosophers have been divided into those who have wished to tighten the social bonds and others who wanted to relax them. When the disciplinarians advocated some system of 'Dogma' and therefore were being compelled to oppose science, the 'Libertarians' (we use Bertrand Russell's phrase) have tended to be scientific, utilitarian, realistic and hostile to violent passion and enemies of the more profound forms of religion. This conflict existed even in pre-Socrates' Greece and in changing forms it has persisted to the present

day and will surely persist for many ages to come. It is this conflict and anguish that underlines man's intense awareness to his contingency and freedom which is the keynote of existentialism, on which note the book ends.

Rightly has the author titled the book "Philosophy for Everyman"; for the uniqueness of man has created the obscurity of philosophy. Each individual sees 'truth' as a function of his own becoming, of his own private rhythms and break-throughs which are unpredictable. As 'truth' is an act of his being it will accordingly never have a precise identity with the truths discerned by every other man. Philosophic truth must always be chosen, not borrowed or accepted from tradition.

As down the ages man remains uncertain as to what he has really chosen, the act of choosing must be performed over and over again, and it is this effort of man that D. D. Runes has described in detail in this interesting book which can serve eminently as a philosophic reference manual.

ARGUS.

SEQUEL TO THE MYSTERIES OF GOD IN THE UNIVERSE: By H. S. Spencer and others. Compiled and edited by Tony Rigsdale Sherwood. Publishers: S. V. Vaswani, 1 Rajkamal, 795/3 Padamjee Park, Poona-2. Pp. 181. Price: Rs. 10.

As the title of the book announces, this compilation of essays is meant to supplement the main work of Hormusjee Shapoorjee Spencer entitled: "The Mysteries of God in the Universe." In the present work, only the Preface is his contribution—illuminating pieces of philosophical disquisitions.

Though the title is couched in general terms, the essays deal mainly with the all-engrossing subject of reincarnation. Christ is quoted to have said that John the Baptist was Elijah. Prophets and philosophers alike—Buddha, Pythagoras, Plato and Goethe among others—have accepted the thesis. The belief has been erected into a solid structure of closely reasoned doctrine.

The great Parsi scholar, Dastur Khurshed S. Dabu, expounds, with chapter and verse and with all his deep learning, the doctrine of reincarnation in Zoroastrianism. Reincarnation, however, should not be deemed one of the basic tenets of the Zoroastrian religion.

In his Preface, Spencer rises to heights of pure inspiration in his essay: "Aum Tat Sat—Tat Twam Asi". These are, he points out, the great

fundamental Mantras of Existence—and existence is the most fundamental fact.

In Hormazd Yasht, God, while giving His names to Holy Zarathustra, says: "My First Name is I AM."

The quotation shows how near is Zoroastrianism, in its essential tenets, to the Gita and the Upanishads.

And how near is Christ: "Be Ye holy as I AM holy. Be ye Universal as I AM universal."

And Ramana Maharshi: "The jnani knows that the Self is the only Reality."

Spencer soars to rare eloquence in his conclusion: "It is the affirmation of Oneness with God which is the panacea for all the present-day ills of the world. Men have forgotten the source from which they come... the Soul is everything and the only True Self in Man..."

Knowing this one and only Truth, my dear Spencer, why should the books in the series be entitled "Mysteries"?

ZOROASTER'S INFLUENCE ON GREEK THOUGHT: By Ruhi Muhsen Afnan. Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 436. Price: \$7.50.

The book is a most beautiful and masterly exposition of the way by which even the intellect can arrive at Truth just as faith can. The proviso is that the intellect in question should be illumined by, and identified with, the Eternal Self. All the postulates that flow from this illumination become automatically Eternal Truth; for the Eternal Self is the one and only Eternal Truth.

This is not what Afnan says in so many words, but this is the inevitable conclusion.

Afnan shows, through a well-reasoned logical sequence, the close proximity of religion and culture when both are viewed in the broadest sense. "Religion", he says, "is the revelation of God's purpose in stimulating the spiritual and cultural growth of man."

And he adds: "Culture is the sum-total of these higher values and institutions that effect and guide that growth."

All deductive logic is not faulty. Induction alone, it may be argued, based on mathematical precision of data collected by individual instances, can lead to scientific truth. But deduction, too, can be no less scientific if based on the uniformity of nature and human experience. Faith, too, says Afnan, ceases to be blind when it is not only asserted but verified by experience.

Afnan visualises four ways of arriving at the ultimate reality:

(a) When the ultimate reality is conceived to be in the nature of mind and knowledge but separate from physical nature and transcendent to it, the path is through idealistic culture;

(b) When the ultimate reality is conceived to be in the mind and knowable but also immanent in nature, naturalistic culture shows the way;

(c) When the ultimate reality is conceived to be in the nature of spirit and unknowable but immanent in the human soul and physical nature, the culture becomes mysticism; and

(d) When the ultimate reality is conceived as the spirit but transcendent to the human soul and physical nature, this becomes religion in the form of a revelation establishing the relation between God and man.

One of the most illustrious exponents of Greek thought was Plato and to him reality did not dwell in appearance or 'image' or 'shadows'. This is also the famous Kantian dichotomy of phenomena (appearance of reality), and noumena, the realities themselves.

Reality, according to Plato, is "the unchanging and universal Form, Idea or conception located in the intellectual world, which is identified with the human soul."

Zoroaster, says Afnan, was a contemporary of early Greek thinkers. The former expounded a religion divine in origin through faith and the Gatha hymns, while the latter sought truth rationally.

But the difference is superficial. Afnan observes the close resemblance of the Platonic identification of Good with God and Zoroaster's deification of the Amesha Spentas, who are natural bodies.

The right book to understand the pure spirit of Zoroastrianism,

G. R. KAPADIA,

ST. THYAGARAJA, THE DIVINE SINGER: By Kaviyogi Maharshi Shuddhananda Bharati, Shuddhananda Library, Yoga Samaj, Madras-20, pp. 60, Price Rs. 1.50.

This small book contains a good deal of information which will be of interest to lovers of South Indian or Carnatic music, especially admirers of the great saint-singer Thyagaraja. It gives brief accounts of the various events associated with his life and the circumstances in which several of his songs were composed. A number of his well-known songs are reproduced in Roman characters and their meaning given for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the Telugu script and language. The book shows signs of hasty writing and inadequate revision. There are also numerous printing mistakes.

SRI VENKATESWARA: The Lord of the Seven Hills, Tirupati: By P. Sitapati, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, pp. 209. Price Rs. 2.50.

This is neither a guide book proper nor a critical account of the famous shrines of Tirupati and Tirumalai in Andhra Pradesh. The author has collected a good deal of information from books and other sources, but he has not brought out an interesting and readable book. It requires some patience and ingenuity on the part of the reader to co-ordinate the various bits of information scattered throughout the book. There are, however, some fine photographs.

M. C. SUBRAMANIAN,

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SRI RAMANA JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS

AT THE ASHRAM

THE eighty-ninth jayanti or birthday of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at His shrine on 4th January 1969 in the presence of a large gathering of devotees. The day started with Mahanyasam (the consecration of the waters) and was followed by Vedaparayana (the chanting of Taittiriya Upanishad) by a group of persons well-versed in chanting. Next came the puja at the shrine with the pouring of the consecrated waters over Sri Rameswara Mahalingam and the decoration of the lingam with flowers, clothes, etc. A sahasranama, or the offering of flowers and bilva leaves to the accompaniment of the one thousand sacred names of Sri Bhagavan followed this. Then came the final ceremony in which lights burning camphor, etc. were waved before the linga. South Indian temple music was played by a fine band at appropriate intervals. The puja was followed by the usual feasting of visitors and devotees. A large number of poor persons were also fed, as usual. In the afternoon there was a discourse in Tamil by Sri Kumaraswami Dikshitar. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Regional Director, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, spoke about the spiritual path shown by Sri Bhagavan. The films of Sri Bhagavan taken during his life time were exhibited in the night. The celebrations attracted a larger crowd than usual this year.

AT RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The Jayanti was celebrated on January 5. After Vedaparayana and Upadesa Saram, Sri Ramdhari Sinha 'Dinkar', the Hindi poet, gave a talk, describing the state of a jnani who is one with

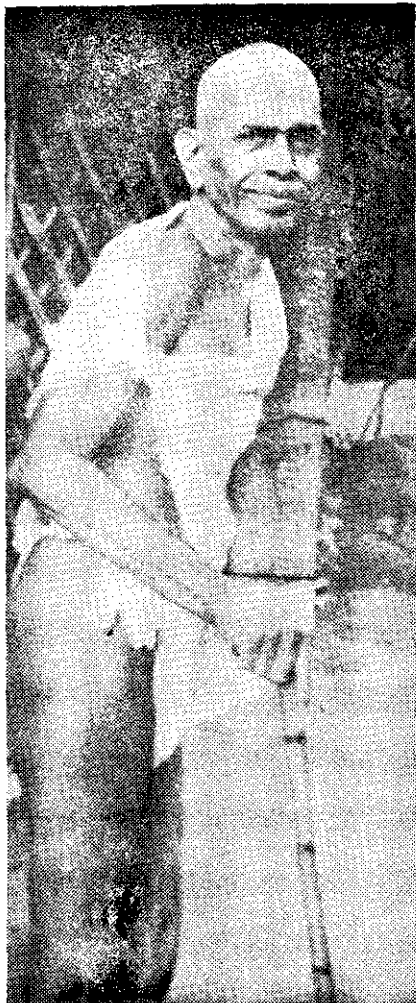


DELHI: Sri Ramdhari Sinha speaking at the Ramana Jayanti celebrations.

the Self and neither recognizes nor disowns any act performed by him. Devotees knew that Maharshi did perform miracles. A Nepalese Raj-Guru found only Maharshi when he visited the temple. Others had got over their difficulties by just remembering Bhagavan and declared that he appeared before them and saved them mira-

culously from calamitous situations. But Maharshi insisted that the greatest miracle of all is to realize the Self.

Maharshi's friendliness with animals was remarkable. He knew them intimately and they had immense faith in him, for they knew beyond doubt that he was absolutely non-violent and would do them no harm. On his shoulders



birds perched; monkeys sat by his side in peace; snakes felt at ease even while creeping on him. The monkey chiefs came to him for settling their disputes. The cow Lakshmi's behaviour towards him would suggest that she had known him even in previous lives.

The Maharshi gave no quarter to unhappiness. He would say, "When you feel unhappy, ask the question, who feels the pain and pleasure?"

Everyone is happy while in deep sleep. This is because our real state is one of happiness and while asleep we are not aware of our body and its surroundings which were the cause of the so-called unhappiness during our wakeful state.

The life of those who do not believe in atma-jnana is full of sorrow riddled with problems. When they get atma-jnana they live in peace and find every problem easy of solution.

Continuous sadhana, the vichara-marga as taught by Maharshi, brings one nearer and nearer to self-realization. The progress may not be apparent to the sadhaka; none-the-less, he grows steadily upwards and there is no going down for him.

Sri A. K. Iyer gave in Tamil a resume of Shri Dinkar's speech.

After music and aarati, the function concluded with distribution of prasadam.



BELGAUM: Devotees singing 'Ramana-Sad-Guru' at the Jayanthi celebrations.

AT BELGAUM

Ramana Jayanti was celebrated on the 5th January 1969 with enthusiasm at a well-attended meeting at Shri P. R. Suryanandan's quarters at the Civil Aerodrome, Samba, Belgaum. After Vedaparayana and the recitation of *Upadesa Saram*, songs by Shri Bhagavan, Shri Muruganar,

Sadhu Om, Kavyakantha and others were sung. The meeting ended with aarati and distribution of prasadam.

AT RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA, MADRAS

The Sabha celebrated Ramana Jayanti on 5th January 1969 at Dharmalayam, 94, Mowbrays Rd., Madras-18. After Vedaparayanam, Shri Avvai Natarajan, of the Ramalinga Mission, gave a talk on the experience and philosophy of Bhagavan viewed as the continuation of the long Tamil tradition flowing from Tiruvalluvar throughout the Nayanars and Tayumanavar to Ramalinga-swami.

Songs were sung by Mrs. Annamalai, Mrs. Lakshmi Sivaraman, Mrs. Natesa Iyer and others. The meeting ended with aarati and distribution of prasadam.

AT SECUNDERABAD

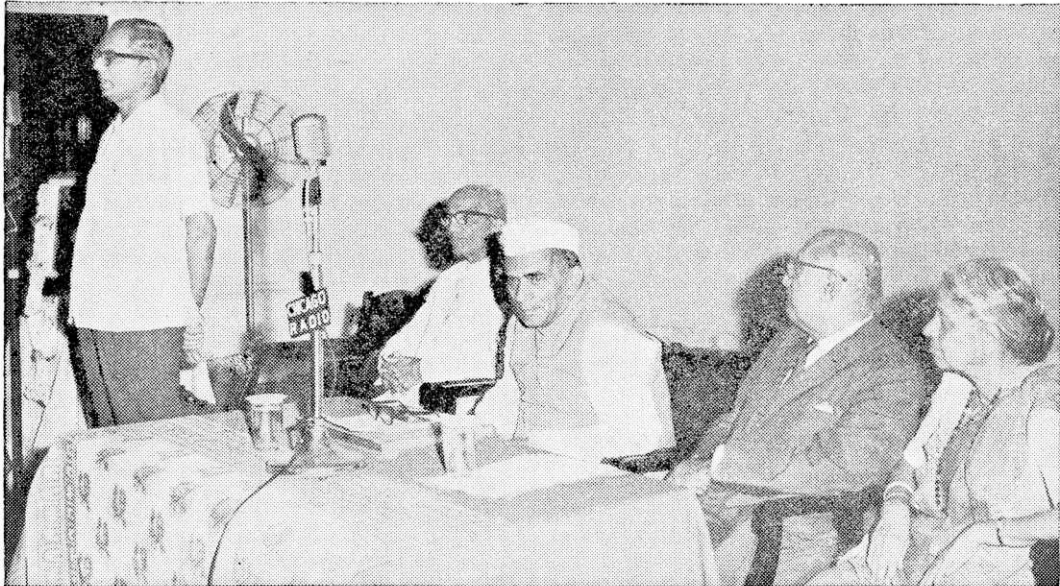
The 89th birthday of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was celebrated by the Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandali, Secunderabad, on Sunday the 19th January, 1969 in the new hall of the Gujarati Seva Mandal, Secunderabad. The proceedings

began with the singing of Arunachala Siva and *Parayanam* in the morning. In the evening Sri B. K. Bhatt, Professor of Sanskrit, Osmania University, spoke about the passing away of Sri Bhagavan and the events that followed it. Sri C. C. Modi, the well-known retired businessman, next explained briefly the philosophy of Sri Bhagavan. Baba Sri Muktanand Paramahansa of Ganeshpuri who followed him explained lucidly and fully Sri Bhagavan's teachings with particular reference to the first part of the well-known stanza composed by Him and beginning with the words "*Hridaya Kuhara Madhye*". Finally Sri Shivmohanlal, retired Professor of Philosophy, Osmania University, spoke on the path of surrender advocated by Sri Bhagavan as an alternative for those who cannot follow the path of Self-enquiry. Srimati Shanta Sarur entertained the audience with a number of devotional songs. The function came to a close with the distribution of prasada.

AT VIJAYAWADA

Sri Ramana Jayanti was celebrated at Ramana Sadanam, the residence of Suri Nagamma, situated in Maruthi Nagar, Vijayawada, on 5th

RAMANA JAYANTHI AT BOMBAY



The 89th Birthday of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at Bombay in all grandeur. Photo: Sri Shantikumar J. Bhatt speaks. Seated are (l. to r.) Sri Jamnadas K. Ladiwala, Sri V. S. Page (Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative Council, who presided over the function), Sri Nariman D. Sahukar and Mrs. Mani Sahukar.

January 1969, in the presence of a large gathering of devotees. Sri Ramana Ashtotharam, Sahasranamam and Taithiriya Upanishad were recited and prasadams distributed in the morning. In the evening *Upadesa Saram* was recited. This was followed by talks on Sri Bhagavan's teachings by Sri S. V. L. Narasimham, Principal, Vidya Niketan, and Sri B. Hanumantha Rao. The celebrations concluded with Arunachala Sankeertan and the distribution of prasadams.

AT MADURAI

The 89th Jayanti of Bhagavan Sri Ramana was celebrated from 1st January to 5th January 1969 at Sri Ramana Mandiram situated in Chokappa Naicken Street, Madurai. Sri A. R. Raghavachari, Joint Director of the well-known firm of Chari and Ram, opened the celebrations with a speech in the course of which he said that every one can become a jnani if he could get rid of his ego, that the life of Sri Ramana is a model for others and that we should do our work with the conviction that everything happens by the will of God. On the second day Sri A. Ramasubramania Sarma spoke about the need to keep always in mind our goal and the grace of the Guru. Sri A. Visvanathan, Additional First Class Magistrate, Madurai, who addressed the devotees on the third day, on 'The Gita and Ramana', explained how the teaching of Sri Krishna agreed with that of Sri Ramana. On the fourth day Swami Shantananda of Haridwar and Sri K. Vanamamalai spoke on Sri Bhagavan's greatness at the Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar South Adi Street Devotees' Sat Sangh. Srimati Sivananda Vijayalakshmi sang several songs on the same day. On the fifth and last day of the celebrations Sri Santhanam, News Editor, *Dinamani*, emphasised the need to meditate daily for some time even in the midst of our activities. Sri Ramana Prasad, Lecturer, Sri Thiagaraja College, also addressed the gathering. The celebrations concluded with exhortation to all devotees to take part in the activities of Sri Ramana Mandiram.

VISIT OF SRI ACHARYA TULSI

Acharya Sri Tulsi, the well-famous Jaina Guru and the founder of the Anuvrata movement, paid a visit to the Ashram in the beginning of January. The Acharya, who is covering the country on foot, propagating the ideals of Jainism and the Anuvrata movement, was passing through Tiruvannamalai and took the opportunity of visiting the Ashram of Sri Bhagavan and meeting the inmates and devotees. He was accom-

panied by a small band of Jaina monks and nuns, some of whom spoke about the mission of the Acharya. The Acharya also addressed the gathering for a few minutes. In the course of his talk he pointed out that apart from Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, no great Acharya of India had been bold enough to give a high status to women and that it was left to Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi to declare unequivocally that women were entitled to seek and obtain Liberation just like men. The Maharshi, he said, had sublimated his mother's life and enshrined her within the Ashram precincts. The speeches of the Acharya and his followers which were in Hindi were interpreted by one of the followers.

THE DISPENSARY

The Ashram Dispensary, which had ceased to function ever since the departure of Dr. Ramaswami Ayyar in 1966, has been opened again for the treatment of simple cases of illness among the inmates of the Ashram and the poor persons in the neighbourhood. Dr. K. R. Srinivasan, B.Sc., M.B.B.S., D.D., a practising doctor of Tiruvannamalai, visits the Ashram on Wednesdays and Saturdays and attends to patients for an hour in the afternoon. We are very grateful to him for kindly assisting the devotees of Sri Bhagavan in this manner.

FAREWELL

Sri L. P. Koppikar, well-known to the visitors and inmates of the Ashram, has left the Ashram with the object of spending the remaining years of his life with his sons. He had been staying in the Ashram for the last sixteen years and helping the Ashram in numerous ways, especially in looking after all important correspondence and attending to the heavy publication programme. He was actively associated with *The Mountain Path* ever since it was started. It will be difficult to replace him. We wish him a long and peaceful life.

VISITORS AND PILGRIMS

Mrs. Barbara Rose, who is again here, has the following to communicate to fellow-devotees and readers of our journal:

Full swing on beloved Arunachala. Yes, we've circled a full round with this 'glorious Mountain of Love, celebrated by Gautama and each one before and since who has been blessed with Its Darshan.' 'As a lode-stone attracts iron, magne-

tizing it and holding it fast, so do Thou to me, Oh Arunachala!'

In August it was red and blasting heat itself, the stillness of unapproachable grandeur—omnipotent Father. 'Oh Undefined, abide Thou in my heart so that there may be everlasting joy, Arunachala.'

In October it had rained, so the lemon grass was a foot high and playfully blowing its fragrance for each child to catch with glee. 'Play, child, grow; Try, bird, fly; Know, be joy.'

In December brought ripeness of parenthood: two/three foot high stalks laden with heavy grass-flowers borne with maternal graciousness. 'Kinder indeed art Thou than one's mother, such is Thy Love, Oh Arunachala!'

Now in March harvesters pile the quiet brown grass on their heads and moving slowly on their Lord, all at one, descend. 'Let me, Thy prey, surrender unto Thee and be consumed, and so have Peace, Oh Arunachala!'

As for the last scene: the burning black of the Hill as preparation for the next crop—pregnant symbol of this spiritual idyll which unfolds here at this spiritual home of homes which is Bhagavan's Ashram. 'Fiery Gem, shining in all directions, do Thou burn up my dross, Oh Arunachala!'

* * *

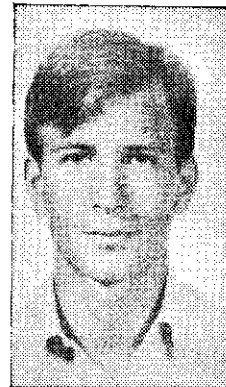
Mr. John B. Dawson, who came from U.S.A. and was referred to in our previous issue, has been with us for the past few months. He wishes to stay for some more months. He says as follows to fellow-devotees:

While touring my native country last year as a musician, I chanced to come across two of Bhagavan's staunchest devotees; after some visits and talks with them, they introduced me to the spiritual world in general, and gave me Bhagavan's photo specifically, in respective order. Then, after a few weeks of prayer and meditation, together with the silent and steady influence of our Master's picture, my job began to take on a new light — that of selfless service to the Lord; gradually the old thoughts became replaced by the driving spirit of desire to obtain His grace first-hand.

To enter the Ashram gates is to be struck by immediate, instant peace. The purity and peace pervading not only the Ashram, but the entire Arunachala area, is more than I have ever experienced, and is far beyond my original ideas of exactly how it would have its effect upon my soul.

Out of the varied and many-sided personalities who have chosen to call it home, the Ashram community itself operates peacefully and smoothly, through efforts on all levels of all; each one derives peace and grace according to his own need, for indeed the Ashram becomes for each one exactly the way he sees it, due to Bhagavan's immense grace, and to the many functions and facilities in it. As Muruganar says in his poem, 'The Sustainer': 'Whatever quality marks you and me — He seems to share alike with you and me—But He is in truth neither this nor that — He simply IS without a particle of any quality'.

For all, however, the same law is in effect: he who attentively pursues his own chosen course of discipline with the qualities of diligence, discrimination, sincerity and cheerfulness, always holding love and regard for one's fellow beings, receives, in due accordance to the level of the manifestation of these qualities in him, the grace of the Lord.



John Dawson

For Bhagavan's grace is none other than our own Self, as He taught many a time. So, always striving to look inwards, pursuing the path so clearly laid down by Him in His teachings, those desirous of obtaining this grace cannot fail to obtain it.

* * *

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Reeder (see *Ashram Bulletin* of January 1969 issue, p. 66), returned from their north India tour and spent a few weeks more at the abode of Sri Bhagavan and with a heavy heart they left for their home land. They said:

'We give no farewell parties here,' one of the devotees said to us, 'because here there are no farewells!' To say good-bye to Bhagavan is surely a paradox, for where is He not? And yet we are regretful to be leaving the Ashram after a short stay of just a few months. In our lives we have found no finer place to practise quiet sitting, where a deep peaceful joy always lies just beneath the surface. Here sadhana is the most natural way to live, and here we begin to sense Bhagavan's great compassion, his grandeur, and his gift of peace to all beings.

The Tamil Spring is short, and any stay at Arunachala, however long, is short too. On leaving we say 'Bhagavan! Please bring us back again!'

* * *

Mrs. Annie Alt and Mr. Gerald H. Stofsky, the famous pianists, spent a week at the Ashram. They then left for Calcutta to give a concert. Mrs. Alt wrote from there: "I want to tell you that on the last evening in the Ashram I received in the Nirvana room a blessing of Sri Bhagavan which I certainly do not deserve: during meditation suddenly I saw waves of golden light changing to bright white light and again golden and always changing on Sri Bhagavan's face of the picture. I could hardly believe it and I began to test myself but it went on and did not disappear until I had to go out of the room. This experience helped me when I had to leave the Ashram the other morning." Mr. Stofsky wrote: "The Ashram was so wonderful (I should say is). The peace and serenity that Sri Bhagavan gives to His children is *more* than words can express!"

* * *

Mrs. J. Guerineau, who is translating some of the works of Sri Bhagavan into French and has been following His teachings for more than two decades, took pains to come to the Ashram all the way from France at the age of 74. She was so kind and affectionate to everyone that her devotion and tranquillity was noticed by everybody. She wished to see Tiruchuzhi, the birth-place of Sri Bhagavan as well as the place at Madurai where he had his famous experience of death. She was therefore taken to these places by our *Managing Editor*. On return from these pilgrim centres Mrs. Guerineau said: "My life's one long cherished wish is fulfilled today!"

* * *

Miss Jane Hiroko Nishi, a Japanese lady, residing in Canada, came to the Ashram at the instance of our devotee, Mrs. deLancey Kapleau (see the *Ashram Bulletin* of Oct. '67, p. 336). She spent a few weeks in contemplation and meditation. She is expected to be back in June.

* * *

Sri Ramesh Chandra Kapoor of Kanpur, who had been with us four years ago, came again and stayed for a fortnight. When he left he said that his stay had helped him very much to understand and follow Sri Bhagavan's teaching. He wishes to come back soon.

* * *

Miss Jacqueline Leprince and Miss Yvonne Dauguet, (see *Ashram Bulletin* April 1968 issue,

p. 161) are still with us and they continue their sadhana as taught by Sri Bhagavan with sincerity and perseverance. They wish to stay with us even through the hot summer!

* * *

The following pilgrims also came from abroad.

Mr. David Allan Colston Powell (British)
 Mr. Johannus Jacobus de Reede (Dutch)
 Mr. Van Den Berg (Dutch)
 Mr. Frank Maxwell Clift (New Zealand)
 Mr. & Mrs. Doornekamp (New Zealand)
 Mr. Fagan Philip (U.S.A.)
 Mr. Wilhelm Hermann Eitel (German)
 Mrs. Maria Proske (Austria)
 Miss Anne Rowe (British)
 Mr. Dietrich Bartels (German)
 Miss Nancy Jean Finney (U.S.A.)
 Mr. Larry Moody (U.S.A.)
 Miss Wendy E. Anderson (U.S.A.)
 Mr. Oidier Brasseur (French)

* * *

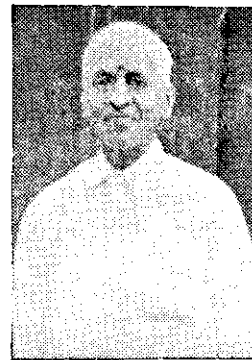
THE EDITOR

The Editor, Mr. Arthur Osborne, having regained his normal health was expected to return to the Ashram by the middle of last month. But he has not returned, evidently he wishes to return to India only after the summer is over. Two of the articles which had originally been proposed to be included in this issue had, therefore, to be held over for the next issue. The 'Letters to the Editor' had also to be held over.

* * *

OBITUARY

Dr. M. 'Rajangam' Krishnamoorthy, an old and well-known devotee of Sri Bhagavan, passed away on 24th January at his residence in Tiruvannamalai. A native of Mangudi, he inherited the family title of 'Rajangam' from one of his ancestors upon whom the title had been conferred by a Chola king in view of his piety and prowess. From early years, his intense attitude for spiritual endeavour shaped his devotional approach with volcanic emotions. His urge found peace and solace with his initial contacts with Sri Bhagavan



Dr. Krishnamurthy

during 1927 and 1929. As a result of his convincing find of his Master in Him, he came to stay permanently in Tiruvannamalai in 1933, and continued to practise there until old age and ill-health compelled him to relinquish his practice. He used to visit Sri Bhagavan every Sunday at exactly 2 p.m. so much so that he came to be known as the 'Sunday Doctor'! In fact he was so punctual and regular that Sri Bhagavan used to remark occasionally, on seeing him, 'Oh! Today is Sunday?'. The Doctor never came to Sri Bhagavan without bringing some eatable or other to be offered to Sri Bhagavan and then distributed, as usual, among the devotees assembled in the Hall. It was he who, in fact, laid the foundations for the Ashram Dispensary to come, beginning with a deal-wood box in which some first-aid materials were gathered and kept, for the use of the inmates. He had the privilege of being referred to occasionally by Sri Bhagavan as the 'Ashram Doctor'....With the passing of years he had close contacts with Sri Bhagavan and gave best of his time and attention to one and all. His last years were marked by contemplative seclusion and by Sri Bhagavan's Grace, he passed away with His thoughts on Him and in perfect peace. May He rest in Sri Bhagavan's eternal Peace!

Kumaraswamy Gounder, who came into the fold of the Ashram in 1935, passed away after a brief illness on the 18th of February at his native village of Ranga-



'Anna' with
President's grandson

samudram in Coimbatore district. He was married and had two children; but then, his latent dispositions for a peaceful life and devotion to God, were ostensibly ignited by some sudden family discontent and quarrels that marked his desertion from home, seeking asylum straight into Sri Bhagavan's abode. Calm and unruffled by nature in appearance and temperament, he spent his life here for over three decades, loved by one and all, intimately known and called as 'Anna' (elder brother). A silent worker and faithful devotee

of Sri Bhagavan he was in charge of and looked after the maintenance and routines of the Ashram stores. The daily menu in the kitchen was under his regulated control after making only suggestions to Sri Bhagavan for instructions, which he faithfully and meticulously carried out to the last. This service gave him the opportunity for his own evolution in life as it occasioned his meeting Sri Bhagavan in familiar ease day by day and clock-like at stated times for receiving all instructions and guidance. A devoted servant of Sri Bhagavan, of a hefty physical build brimming with child-like innocence, it is indeed difficult for old devotees here to forget him. One and all the ashramites share the grief on his demise. Sri Kumaraswamy was very fond of the family of the President, especially the children. The President and his entire family feel of having lost one of the old members of their family in the passing away of 'Anna'. May he abide in peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

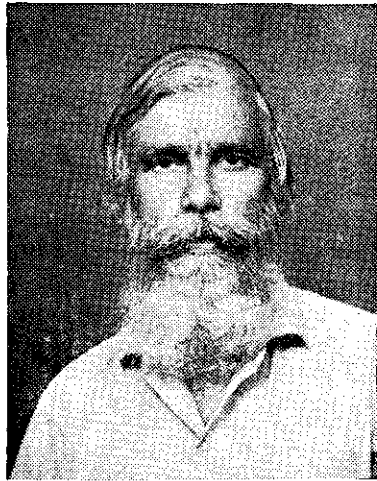
NEW ADDITIONS

- Sri Venkateswara* — The Lord of the Seven Hills, Tirupati — by P. Sitapati.
- Changdeo* — Pasashti and other Poems of Sant Jnaneshwar and Mukta Bai: Text and translation by K. R. Kulkarni.
- Saint Thyagaraja* — The Divine Singer — by Suddhananda Bharati.
- Chhando-Darsana* — by Daivarata.
- The Message of the Upanishads* — by Swami Ranganathananda.
- India in the Time of Patanjali* — by B. N. Puri.
- An Introduction into Lamaism* — by R. P. Anuruddha.
- Path of Self Realization* — by Acharya Sri Rajaneesh.
- Existence, Devotion and Freedom* — by Sangam Lal Pandey.
- Gitanjali* — by Rabindranath Tagore.
- Brahma Vidya Abhyasa*, Reality and the Method to trace it — by Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha.

INTRODUCING.....

N. NATARAJA IYER

SRI N. NATARAJA IYER, retired Traffic Inspector, Southern Railway, is an old and well-known devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He comes from a pious and orthodox family of Brahmins, his father having been a spiritually advanced soul. Sri Nataraja Iyer himself was of a devotional and religious temperament from his boyhood. He used to visit temples and revere religious and spiritual persons, especially sannyasins. When he was a young man of twenty-two a friend brought to him something to eat (*prasadam*) from Sri



Sri Nataraja Iyer

Ramanasramam, but it never occurred to him to ask his friend anything about the Swami of that Ashram. Nor did it occur to him to go and see the Swami on any of his visits to Tiruvannamalai. But a few years later, when one of his relatives spoke to him about Sri Ramana Maharshi whom he had seen, he became immediately interested and went to the Ashram. This was in 1935 when he was only 29 years old. At his very first visit he sat spellbound before Sri Bhagavan for nearly forty-five minutes, much to the annoyance of his friend who had taken him to the Ashram and who had expected him to stay only for a few minutes. Coming out of the Hall he was taken to the *Sarvadhikari* (Sri Niranjanananda Swami) who spoke to him kindly and invited him to stay for lunch. He thus had an opportunity of also taking lunch with Sri Bhagavan. He did not ask any questions but mentally pray-



ed to Sri Bhagavan for relief from some troubles which were causing him great anxiety.

This first visit made such a strong impression upon Sri Nataraja Iyer that he wished, if possible, to obtain a transfer to Tiruvannamalai, so that he could go and sit in front of Sri Maharshi more often. To his immense surprise this transfer came about soon under circumstances which were almost miraculous. Having gained his object he used to go to the Ashram whenever he was off duty and sit in Sri Bhagavan's presence. He soon came to be well-known to everybody at the Ashram, but he never took any liberty with Sri Bhagavan and never asked him any question, being content with sitting in a corner except when there was some discussion when he came nearer to listen. However, he slowly began to

feel that he was improving morally as well as spiritually. Very often he was overcome by tears of ecstasy. Meditation also came to him with greater and greater ease.

Although he did not particularly aspire to rise in the service he never neglected his official duties. He also knew that Sri Bhagavan would never encourage any one to become indifferent to his duties. Fortunately for him his wife did not stand in his way. In fact she became in course of time a more ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan than himself. Even his small children were greatly devoted to Sri Bhagavan from whom they used to receive small marks of affection and blessing from time to time. After three years of such peace and happiness he found himself sud-

denly under orders of transfer to a place near Madras. Although these orders were stayed for six months in circumstances which he attributes to Sri Bhagavan's Grace, he had eventually to leave Tiruvannamalai. Before taking leave of Sri Bhagavan he placed before Him a short note praying for some instructions for his future sadhana, but Sri Bhagavan simply put it under his pillow implying thereby that he needed no instructions.

Sri Nataraja Iyer who is now 63 years old, has settled down in Madras. But his devotion to Sri Bhagavan is as great as ever and he never fails to come to the Ashram whenever circumstances permit.

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

— *Rig Veda.*

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Statement about ownership and other particulars about *The Mountain Path* (according to Form IV, Rule 8, Circular of the Registrar of Newspapers for India).

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I, T. N. Venkataraman, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: 24-3-1969.

(Sd.) T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
 Signature of the Publisher,

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

A statement showing the income and expenditure of Sri Ramanasramam for the year 1967, certified by Sri J. Srinivasan, F.C.A., Chartered Accountant of Bangalore, is published below for the information of the devotees and well-wishers of the Asramam. The statement was approved on 27-12-1968 by the Board of Trustees appointed by the Government of Tamil Nadu and was recorded by the Government, in their G.O. Rt. No. 105 Revenue dated 5th February 1969.

Sri Ramanasramam,
22nd February 1969.

(Sd.) T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
President,
Board of Trustees.

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended December 31, 1967

1966 EXPENDITURE				1966 INCOME			
Rs.		Rs.	P.	Rs.		Rs.	P.
	To Gosala			1,961	By Athayam		2,450 45
7,040	Expenditure	5,764	58		Arpanam :		
— 3,624	Less: Income	2,794	12	13,806	Donations: Inland	27,743	46
				6,294	Foreign	8,573	31
255	Bull & Cart Maintenance		2,970 46	22	Miscellaneous Receipts	342	82
44,605	Meals	49,332	79				36,659 59
	Less: Receipts from			1,585	Membership Subscription :		
— 13,082	Resident Members, Bikshas etc.	12,559	83	4,440	Arrears	1,075	00
827	Postage		36,772 96		Current	4,310	00
1,667	Salary		874 00	850			5,385 00
2,055	Lighting		1,834 50	..	Aradhana		502 87
1,325	Miscellaneous Expenses		2,794 98	278	Mahapooja		182 35
105	Travelling Expenses		729 57	53	Navarathri		38 38
1,996	Repairs		102 15		Laksharchana	
393	Stationery		2,280 40		Jayanthi :		
389	Garden Expenses		673 51		87th Year Receipts	634	88
..	Miscellaneous cooly		782 04		88th Year Receipts	6,310	52
103	Taxes		209 19			6,945	40
234	Sundaramandiram, Tiruchuzhi		47 77		Expenses :		
365	Telephone charges		264 38		87th Year	Rs. 649.88	
430	Auditor's Fee and T.A.		296 17		88th Year	Rs. 3,118.33	
	Depreciation :		290 00	5,559		3,768	21
376	Furniture at 6% on Rs. 5,898.78	353	92				3,177 19
	Electrical Installation at 10%			2,268	Pooja		2,710 62
416	on Rs. 3,740.32	374	03	..	Mandalabishekam		1,354 70
39	Cycles at 10% on Rs. 348.70	34	87	8,798	Excess of Expenditure over		
			762 82		income for the year	
	Excess of Income over Expenditure						
..	for the year		637 67				
<u>45,914</u>	Total		<u>52,461 15</u>	<u>45,914</u>	Total		<u>52,461 15</u>

BANGALORE,
Dated: 4th December 1968.

EXAMINED AND FOUND CORRECT
(Sd.) J. SRINIVASAN,
Chartered Accountant.