

the
Mountain
path



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

vol. 9, no. iii, july 1972

If spurned by Thee, alas !
 what rests for me but the
 torment of my *prarabdha*?
 What hope is left for me,
 Oh Arunachala ?

— *The Marital Garland
 of Letters*, verse 35.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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

Vol. 9

JULY 1972

No. III

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— Editor.

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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.

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

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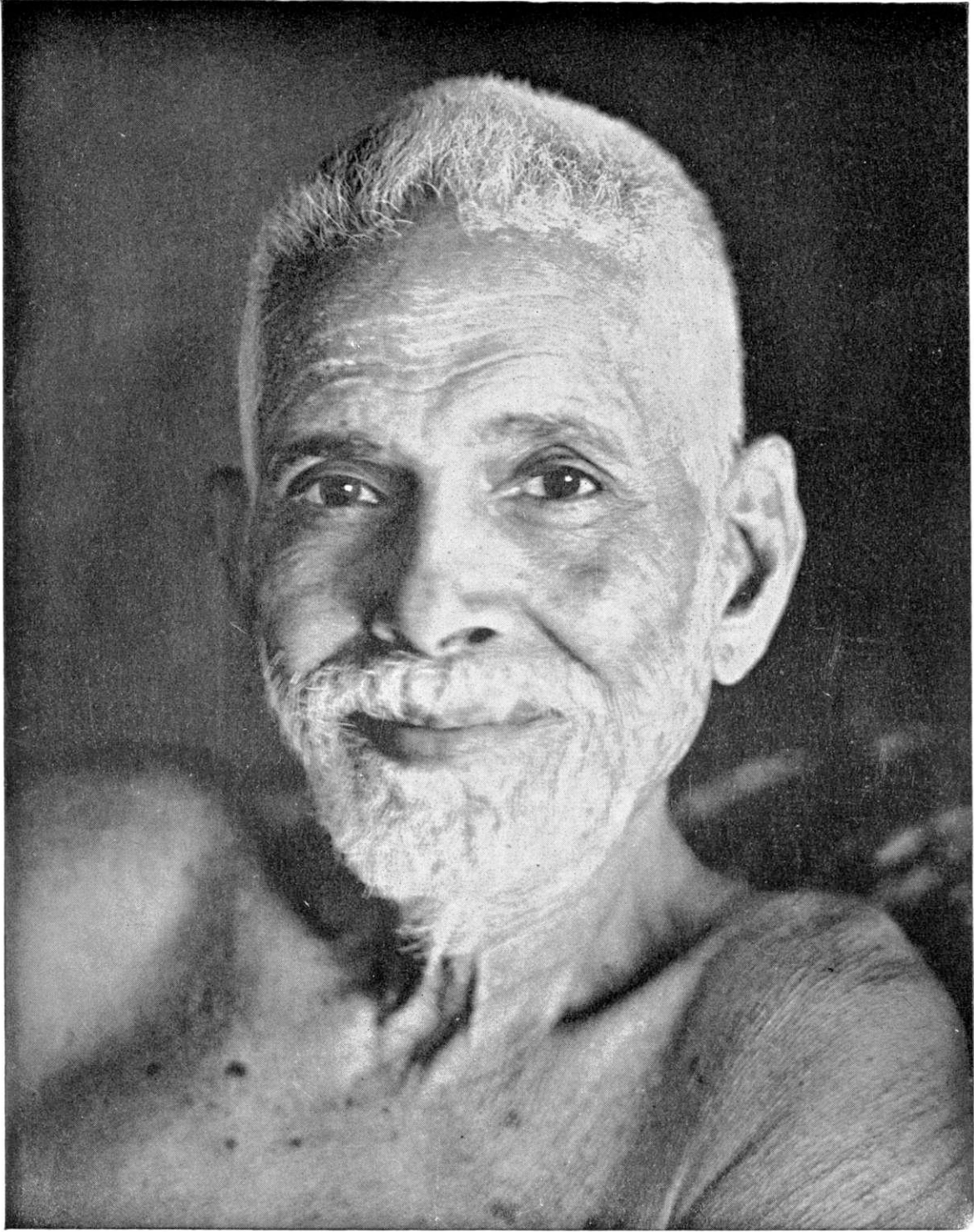
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

Vol. 9. No. III, July 1972

Editor : LUCIA OSBORNE

Editorial

MYSTICISM IN SACRED POETRY

IN ancient times sanctity was the central core of poetry in most of the world's great civilizations. Mysticism in poetry expressed the most profound urges of the human heart, a flowing of man to the Source

"Till in the end,
All battles fought, all earthly loves abjured,
Dawn in the East, there is no other way
But to be still. In stillness then to find
The giants all were windmills, all the strife
Self-made, unreal; even he who strove
A fancied being,"

— ARTHUR OSBORNE

When through meditation, devotional practices or any other form of spiritual striving the heart is stirred to its depth the language of the outpourings of longing and love becomes spontaneously rhythmical and finds expression in poetry rather than prose.

The ancient languages in which scriptures and sacred poems were composed were actually regarded as sacred languages — Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, Pali, etc. Sound vibrations are an integral part of scriptures or sacred poetry. In the earliest times the transmission was oral or through chanting. Spiritual understanding and above all mystical experience seems to bring out in some seekers not to mention saints a poetic strain seeking expression often in the language directed to the Beloved in a rhapsody of passionate longing and union. In Blake it is expressed as semi-utterances as it were from the depth of that which eludes and transcends speech.

A strange conformity runs through the mystical utterances trying to describe incursions beyond the veil of appearances by saint-poets widely separated in time and space. Though the experience eludes mental concepts and speech still something of the same nature in those intimations comes through.

This so to speak collective testimony should be sufficient proof of their validity for rational minds and cannot be brushed aside. They give man the assurance of the Oneness of all life, Oneness of Being where there is no room for suffering which is always bound up with otherness.

All great mystics have stressed the intervention of Grace 'a transcendent factor independent of the subject which grants as an inestimable favour the final unfettering of the soul' after a period of one-pointed intense spiritual striving. Bhagavan also said that Grace takes over when our effort has reached its limit. The seeker feels then that his own effort however great is as nothing and in utter surrender and holy passivity he is overwhelmed by the unveiling of his ever-present primordial state of Grace. This has been likened by poet saints particularly in Christianity to the loving abandon of the bride to her Beloved in the mystical marriage of the soul.

In our rampantly materialistic civilisation in which the reign of quantity over quality is manifestly evident poetry on the whole has been brought down to the level of merely human experience emphasizing egocentricity, psychic dissociation and distortion of traditional values. If the quality of human life deteriorates amidst increased comforts and the glitter of modern progress it is bound to find expression in art, poetry, music etc. The daring of some modern poets however great their mastery of words goes too far in its outwardness or rather earthiness to deserve the name of poetry. It is not a 'flight' but wallowing in the downward sensual trend of desires and emotions which fetter such a flight. This is characteristic of our times, this

letting oneself go in a negative way in a fool's paradise of seeming freedom in bondage to the senses.

Many great saints were also great poets. A supreme example is Ramana Maharshi's *Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala*. Utterances of Truth of sublime beauty and purity, a nuptial garland of letters to the Eternal Being, flow like a cascade to find an echo in the hearts of His devotees. Walking round the Hill, Ramana Maharshi wrote these lines spontaneously as they came to Him tears flowing from His eyes. These words embodying prayers of seekers at all levels being at the same time, as Sri R. Sadasiva Aiyar expressed it so poetically, 'a transcendent paean of Self-Realization, a soul-ravishing hymn of passionate longing for union' and Self-Realization. "All of a sudden spontaneously they welled up and poured forth", said Ramana Maharshi when people asked for an explanation. "Please interpret them for me yourselves. Like you, I too must first think over their meaning before giving it." An ecstatic outpouring compelling chanting like a *mantra* which is also sacred poetry chanted with correct intonation, its subtle power going far beyond the literal meaning. In sacred poetry it is not merely the sense but the sound also which is of great significance. That is probably why Sri Bhagavan explained to somebody that the listening to the chanting was in itself conducive to meditation whether one understood it or not. The refrain repeated at the end of each verse grips and at the same time lulls the mind to be still. *Sadhana* is a series of ups and downs. When we think ourselves at the very bottom that is most probably the time for the next wave to carry us higher than before. It often leads to poetic outpourings out of the one-pointedness of desolation. Did these impassioned ecstatic outpourings come to Bhagavan on our behalf? Infinity embracing the finite in all its misery of separateness. Did He write them identifying Himself with our struggles? He the Self, the living inner Guru then and now? It

tells in glowing symbolism of the love and union between the human soul and God and is amongst the most profound and moving poems in any language. The only poems that came to Bhagavan, compelled Him as it were to write them without anyone urging Him to do so, were the *Eleven Stanzas to Sri Arunachala* and the *Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala*. The words would not be suppressed and proved easily, effortlessly as Bhagavan Himself described it when speaking of these compositions. When seeking His Grace and help the editor would write out one of the following *slokas*, and hand it to Him, with the remark: 'Who wrote these words? They come from my heart.' How He understood! The smile and reassuring look from those luminous eyes full of Grace and compassion were sufficient reply.

Unless Thou extend Thy hand of Grace in mercy, I am lost, Oh Arunachala!

Unmoving Hill, melting into a sea of Grace have mercy, I pray, Oh Arunachala!

Do not continue to deceive and prove me; disclose instead Thy transcendental Self, Oh Arunachala!

O Moon of Grace, with Thy cool rays as hands open the ambrosial orifice and let my heart rejoice, Oh Arunachala!

. . . Lord! deign to ease me in my weariness, struggling like a deer that is trapped. Lord Arunachala! what can be Thy will? (Yet) who am I to comprehend Thee?

Oh Pure One! if the five elements, the living beings and every manifest thing is nothing but Thy all-embracing Light, how then can I (alone) be separate from Thee? Since Thou shinest in the Heart, a single Expanse without duality, how then can I come forth distinct therefrom? Show Thyself planting Thy Lotus Feet upon the head of the ego as it emerges!

Lord! Who art Consciousness Itself, reigning over the sublime *Shonagiri*,¹ forgive all the grievous wrongs of this poor self, and by Thy Gracious Glance, benignant as a rain cloud, save me from being lost once more in the dreary waste, or else I cannot ford the grim (stream of universal) manifestation. (Thou art the Universal Mother); what can match a mother's care for her child?

¹ Arunachala.

A Comment on Shelley

By Sri Bhagavan

The following lines from Shelley were once read out in Sri Bhagavan's presence:

**Within a cavern of man's trackless spirit
Is throned an Image so intensely fair
That the adventurous thoughts that
wander near it
Worship, and as they kneel, tremble
and wear
The splendour of its presence, and the
light
Penetrates their dreamlike frame
Till they become charged with the
strength of flame.**

Sri Bhagavan remarked as follows: "Yes, the lines are excellent. He must have realised what he wrote."

— Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, p. 310.

Even when the thieves of the five senses break in upon me, art Thou not still in my heart, Oh Arunachala!

Who can ever find Thee? The Eye of the eye art Thou, and without eyes Thou seest, Oh Arunachala!

Unless Thou embrace me, I shall melt away in tears of anguish, Oh Arunachala!

On seeking Thy Real Self with courage, my raft capsized and the waters came over me. Have mercy on me, Arunachala!

Not fair, unlovable am I to look at, who seek Thy protection! Adorn me first with Thy Grace and then regard me, Oh Arunachala!

'Reality is nothing but the Self'; is this not all Thy message, Oh Arunachala?

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

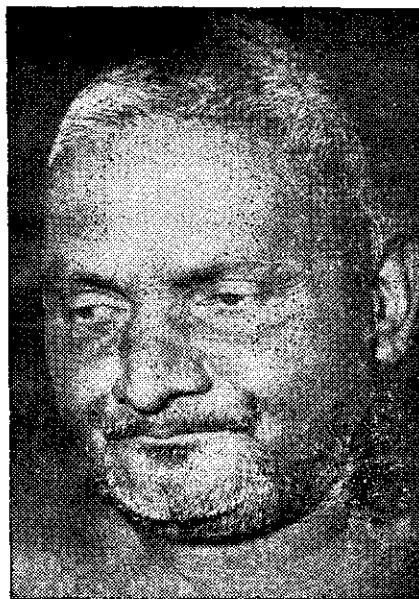
*Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala Shiva!
Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala!*

WHILE staying with devotee-friends in Bombay during a long tour soon after Sri Bhagavan's *Maha Nirvana* they took me along with them to visit Sri Swami Nityananda. If I remember right it was sometime in 1950.

On reaching Swami Nityananda's Ashram we found a large gathering of his followers already there. It was not certain whether we would be able to see him as his behaviour was rather unpredictable at that time. We told the man in charge that we would take our chance and so sat in a row on the verandah before Swamiji's room. It occurred to us while waiting to recite Sri Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram* in Sanskrit. As soon as we commenced chanting, we heard a roaring noise inside the room. The door flew open and the huge figure of the Swamiji darted out and sat down to listen to the recital beating time with his hands and approvingly nodding his head. As soon as the chanting was over he roared again and gave us a happy and penetrating look. Seeing the offerings of fruit and sweets brought by my friends he distributed them himself to all present. Then he plunged back into the room and looked at us through the open window graciously.

Again he roared at somebody to give us food but since as we had already eaten we excused ourselves. All of us did obeisance to the Swamiji in front of the window and he nodded in reply and retired. I learnt afterwards that Sri Swami Nityananda had great reverence for Sri Bhagavan whose *darshan* he had in earlier days.

We all felt deeply moved by the effect of the recital of the *Upadesa Saram* on the Swamiji which enabled us to have his *darshan* contrary to all expectations. We were greatly impressed and moved by his presence.



Swami Nityananda

The Power of Sacred Poetry

By T. P. R.

EIGHT STANZAS TO SRI ARUNACHALA



The *Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala* along with the *Eleven Stanzas* has a unique place in the original works of Sri Bhagavan.

Both were written by Him impelled by a spontaneous urge, which according to His own description was irresistible. This cannot be said of other works which were written only in response to devotees' questions or requests. Kovalur Narayana Swami (who belonged to the Kovalur Mutt, near Cuddalore) and others connected with him had great reverence for Sri Bhagavan as an extraordinary *tapasvin*. But on seeing the *Eight Stanzas* they realised that Sri Bhagavan was much more—he was a *jnani* and a Knower of the Vedanta as well. The poem was composed at Skandashram.

“The Hill which draws to itself those who are rich in *jnana tapas*¹ is this Arunachala.”

From *Annamalai Venba*, by Guru Namasisvaya.

1. Hearken ; It stands as an insentient² Hill. Its action is mysterious, past human understanding. From the age of innocence it had shone within my mind that Arunachala was something of surpassing grandeur,³ but even when I came to know through another that it was the same as Tiruvannamalai I did not realize its meaning. When it drew me up to it, stilling my mind, and I came close, I saw it (stand) unmoving.⁴

2. ‘Who is the seer?’ When I sought within, I watched the disappearance of the seer and what survived him. No thought of

¹ i.e. those who are ever intent on gaining Wisdom.

² The adjective also bears the meaning ‘eradicating (objective) knowledge’.

³ ‘To view Chidambaram, to be born in Tiruvarur, to die in Benares, or merely to think of Arunachala is to be assured of Liberation.’ This couplet is commonly known in the Hindu households of South India.

⁴ *Alternatively* ; I realized that It meant Absolute Stillness.

'I saw' arose; how then could the thought 'I did not see' arise? Who has the power to convey this in word when even Thou (appearing as Dakshinamurty) couldst do so in ancient days by silence only? Only to convey by silence Thy (Transcendent) State Thou standest as a Hill, shining from heaven to earth.

3. When I approach regarding Thee as having form, Thou standest as a Hill on earth. If (with the mind the seeker) looks for Thy (essential) form as formless, he is like one who travels the earth to see the (ever-present) ether. To dwell without thought upon Thy (boundless) nature is to lose one's (separate) identity like a doll of sugar when it comes in contact with the ocean (of nectar); and when I come to realize who I am, what else is this identity of mine (but Thee), O Thou Who standest as the towering Aruna Hill?

4. To look for God while ignoring Thee who art Being and Consciousness is like going with a lamp to look for darkness. Only to make Thyself known as Being and Consciousness, Thou dwellest in different religions under different (names and) forms. If (yet) men do not (come to) know Thee, they are indeed the blind who do not know the Sun. Oh Arunachala the Great, Thou peerless Gem, abide and shine Thou as my Self, One without a second!

5. As the string in (a necklet of) gems, it is Thou in Thy Unity who penetratest all the diversity of beings and religions. If, like a gem when it is cut and polished, the (impure) mind is worked against the wheel of the (pure) mind to free it of its flaws, it will take on the light of Thy Grace (and shine) like a ruby, whose fire is unaffected by any outward object. When a sensitive plate has been exposed to the Sun, can it receive impressions afterwards? Oh benign and dazzling Aruna Hill! is there anything apart from Thee?

6. Thou art Thyself the One Being, ever aware as the Self-luminous Heart! In Thee there is a mysterious Power (*Shakti*) which without Thee is nothing. From it proceeds the phantom of the mind emitting its latent subtle dark mists, which, illumined by Thy Light (of Consciousness) reflected on them, appear within as thoughts whirling in the vortices of *prarabdha*, later developing into the psychic worlds and projected outwardly as the material world transformed into concrete objects which are magnified by the out-going senses and move about like pictures in a cinema show. Visible or invisible, O Hill of Grace, without Thee they are nothing!

7. Until there is the I-thought, there will be no other thought. Until other thoughts arise, (asking) 'To whom?' (will call forth the reply) 'To me'. He who pursues this closely, questioning 'What is the origin of the I?' and diving inwards reaches the seat of the mind (within) the Heart, becomes (there) the Sovereign Lord of the Universe.⁵ O boundless Ocean of Grace and Effulgence called Arunachala, dancing motionless within the court of the Heart! there is no (longer any) dream there of such dualities as in and out, right and wrong, birth and death, pleasure and pain, or light and darkness.

8. The waters rise up from the sea as clouds, then fall as rain and run back to the sea in streams; nothing can keep them from returning to their source. Likewise the soul rising up from Thee cannot be kept from joining Thee again, although it turns in many eddies on its way. A bird which rises from the earth and soars into the sky can find no place of rest in mid-air, but must return again to earth. So indeed must all retrace their path, and when the soul finds the way back to its source, it will sink and be merged in Thee, O Arunachala, Thou Ocean of Bliss!

⁵ Literally; The Sovereign Lord under the shade of a single umbrella.

SIVA PURANAM

of

Saint Manicka Vachakar

The account of Sri Manicka Vachakar's life is by Sri Viswanatha Swami. The translation of *Siva Puranam*, the first hymn in the *Tiruvachakam*, is by Prof. K. Swaminathan. This popular hymn is recited by thousands of devotees, particularly Saivites, as part of their morning worship.

SRI MANICKA VACHAKAR, the well-known Saivite saint, was born in a village 12 miles from Madurai, known as Tiruvâdavur in the 3rd century A.D. according to research scholars. His heart was devoted to Siva from his very early years. His learning and brilliance made him the prime minister of the ruling Pandya King. He was sent to Tirupperundurai, on the sea-coast, for the purchase of some fine horses. It so happened that when he reached the place and went to the Siva Temple there, he found a great sage seated under a tree with his disciples. As he approached he had the intuition that it was Lord Siva Himself come to bless him! He surrendered himself at the feet of the sage and got initiated and illumined thereby. The sage and his disciples vanished confirming his conviction that it was Siva Himself. Overpowered by the Grace of Siva he spent all the money he had with him for the purchase of horses in renovating the temple of Siva at Tirupperundurai. When the King heard about it he imprisoned him but extraordinary miracles that happened convinced him that Sri Manicka Vachakar was acting as directed by Siva and so he was released and treated with reverence.

Sri Manicka Vachakar visited Tiruvannamalai and other sacred places of Siva and sang His praise in his composition known as *Tiruvâchakam*, which has been incorporated as *Part Eight* of the *Twelve Parts of Saivite Devotional Poems*.

Tiruvâchakam is reputed as a collection of poems which melts anyone who hears or goes through it. Sri Bhagavan often quoted from it and has said that it is the expression of very exalted spiritual experience. *Tiruvâchakam* has been praised highly by ever so many devotees; no wonder that the saint-poet bears the name *Manicka Vachakar*, meaning one whose utterances are gems!

SIVA PURANAM

Namah Sivāya :

Blessed be the Name, the Feet
They may not for one moment leave
My inmost heart!
Me, the best of teachers took
And made his own at Kogazhi;
And now as meaning in the Holy Books
He lives within me tasting sweet;
Blessed be His Feet.
The One, the Many, the Ruler immanent,
Who stilled the tumult of my mind
And has become my Master,
May His Feet prevail;
The God of gold who breaks
The chain of births.

Those flower-like Feet, unseen, afar,
To eyes averted, fill with bliss
Hearts open and hands clasped;
Yea, raise to lofty eminence
Heads in adoration bowed;
Praise His Feet.

Praise the Lord, my Father, praise
Siva, the bright, the pure,
Whose dwelling place is love.¹
King who ends illusive birth;
Our God of prosperous Perundurai;
Hill of grace whence runs a hill
Perennial of joy.

Since He, this Siva, stands within my heart,
Now by His grace His gracious Feet
I shall worship, and with joyous mind,
So as to find

Final Freedom at last
From my own grievous past,
Recount the tale of His antiquity.

Yes. I would fain adore
The blinding brightness of those Feet
To which the Lord's compassionate glance
Beckoned me and I have come.
But I, a sinner, know not how to praise
Your might and majesty
That fill and overflow all heaven and earth,
As light, revealing light,
Boundless and beyond conception bright.

As boulder, grass, herb, tree,
Worm, reptile, diverse beasts and birds,
As man, as ghost and demon-host,
As monsters, sages, gods,
As every transient object fixt or moving,
Many have been the births I took
And tired of, till today, my Lord,
Truly your golden Feet beholding,
I have come home to Freedom.

God of Truth, immaculate,
Redeemer dwelling in my heart as OM,
Bull-rider whom the Vedas yearn for,
So high, deep, vast, minutely small;
Burning and freezing; goal divine
Of every sacrifice;
Radiance bright
Driving out all error;
Gracious master of this witless servant;
True knowledge putting ignorance to flight;
Uncreated, measureless, unending,
You create, sustain, destroy,
Conceal the worlds and rain down grace;
Me you have seized and hold
In servitude to you.

Like fragrance subtle, far yet near,
The Vedas' import beyond speech and thoughts,
Like fresh milk, honey and candy mixt,
Like sweetness welling up in lovers' hearts,
Your bliss, my Master, makes immortal
Your devotees born mortal.

Your five-fold form you hid
From the adoring gods of heaven;
But to me revealed your Feet eternal
Condescending and descending
To the earth.

¹ May also mean: 'Who in awareness deigns to dwell.'

With ropes of right and wrong you bound
 The darkness false surrounding me,
 A hardened sinner,
 Wrapped in skin the festering filth;
 Housed in a hovel with nine doors
 Exposed to all the wiles of sense;
 This wretch with wayward mind and arid heart,
 You comforted with more
 Than a mother's love and care.
 O Spotless light, expanding flame,
 Splendour vast, immortal bliss;
 Siva, King of Heaven;
 Freedom snapping every bond!
 Befriending me with grace and ending
 Falsehood hidden in the heart!
 Broad, brimming river of compassion,
 Uncloying bliss; unbounded greatness;
 Light that lurks in minds unthinking;
 Life of my life
 That melts and makes me flow in love.
 Compact of pain and pleasure,
 And also free of both.
 Lover of those who love you;
 Bright One present in all things
 And beyond them all;
 Lord of light and darkness dense,
 Too vast for our beholding!
 You that are and yet are not
 The origin, the middle and the end!
 Father who drew me magnet-like
 And now as Master govern me!

Ultimate vision rarely seen
 By keenest seekers truly wise!
 Insight too subtle for our sensing;
 Holy One that neither comes nor goes,
 And always there is never gained;
 Guardian and guiding light
 Too bright for sight;
 River of bliss in flood;
 Father, more than father;
 Goodness all-transcending;
 All-illuminating light; awareness beyond words
 Appearing in this mutable universe
 As multitudinous perceiving;
 You are knowledge pure,
 The clarity of knowledge,
 The spring and fount of bliss
 Within my heart, O Master of this slave!

If once we pray and say,
 "No longer will I crouch content
 In this rotting house of flesh.
 O Master, Hara, come!"
 You will straight dismember
 This hovel by the wily senses built,
 And giving us the true Being bodiless
 Free us for ever from further birth on earth.

What am I to do? Ramana

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

I am tired, you seem to ignore, lonely, lost,
 Where am I to go, forsake me not, my
 Lord.

When tears floated all my fears, you afford
 A luxury liner to cruise me past
 Storms and rough sea to Thy supreme
 post fast

And why this near ship-wreck, O Benign
 Lord

You have destroyed my raft, let me ford
 This last stormy patch and reach my
 Lord atlast.

The crooked sharks are all around me,
 save me,

I am unarmed, weary, just can't go on,
 If Thy Grace flows, then all will change,
 the sea

Will turn to a lake of gentle balmy

Shark will turn to meek fish and I
 can go on

To reach Thee and I become Thee.

Master dancing in dark midnight
 The dance of dissolution;
 Dancer too in Thillai² town;
 Lord of the Pandyan South,
 Breaker of the cycle
 Of births affliction-filled.

Of Him beyond all speech
 Let us speak. To Him let us pray
 And at His hallowed Feet
 Sing this song, following well
 The meaning of the words we utter.
 Singing thus, we the fortunate shall dwell
 In Siva's city, our true home,
 Surrounded by adoring multitudes
 Bowing low at Siva's Feet,
 Adoring, bowing low!

² Chidambaram, where Siva appears as Nataraja
 and pure awareness in the heart.

THE SONG CELESTIAL

Bhagavad Gita

A devotee once asked Sri Bhagavan whether the Gita should be read occasionally.

‘ Always ’, Sri Bhagavan said in reply.

Besides pointing out the great merit of the Gita on many occasions Sri Bhagavan also selected forty-two verses out of the seven hundred and arranged them in a particular order. Seven verses out of this selection of *Gitasaram* are reproduced below. The first verse below was mentioned by him when he was asked to indicate one verse which contained the essence of the Gita. And the third was recommended to a devotee who complained that even the forty-two of the *Gitasaram* was too much for him and therefore wanted just one verse to remember and recite !

1. I am the Self, O Gudakesa,¹ dwelling in the Heart of every being ; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings.
(x - 20)
2. There is no existence of the unreal and no non-existence of the Real. The Seers of Truth are those who have known (the nature of both to be) thus.
(II - 16)
3. Out of compassion for them and abiding in their Self I destroy with the resplendent Light of Knowledge their darkness born of ignorance.
(x - 11)
4. Little by little one should realise tranquillity, by Judgement with a steadfast purpose ; making the mind abide in the Self, one should think of nothing at all.
(VI - 25)
5. I undertake to secure and protect the welfare of those who without ‘ otherness ’ meditate on Me and worship Me, and who ever abide thus attuned.
(IX - 22)
6. The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the Heart of every being and His mysterious power spins round all beings set on the wheel.²
(XVIII - 61)
7. To Him alone surrender, O Bharata,³ with all thy being ; by His Grace shalt thou obtain Peace Supreme, the Abode Eternal.
(XVIII - 62)

¹ & ³ Other names for Arjuna.

² The Lord actuates everything. Beings are bound by the power of *maya* to the body which is compared to a wheel or machine and their activity is incessant.

ON BELIEVING IN MIND

Seng Ts'an, the Third Patriarch of Zen cautions against accepting the Real or denying the unreal as they are in the realm of dualism. All intellection should be avoided by one who seeks Enlightenment.

By Seng Ts'an

The perfect way knows no difficulties
Except that it refuses to make preferences ;
Only when freed from hate and love
It reveals itself fully and without disguise ;
A tenth of an inch's difference,
And heaven and earth are set apart.
If you wish to see it before your own eyes
Have no fixed thoughts either for or against it.

To set up what you like against what you dislike—
That is the disease of the mind :
When the deep meaning (of the Way) is not
understood,
Peace of mind is disturbed to no purpose.

(The Way) is perfect like unto vast space,
With nothing wanting, nothing superfluous.
It is indeed due to making choice
That its Suchness is lost sight of.

Pursue not the outer entanglements,
Dwell not in the inner Void ;
Be serene in the oneness of things,
And dualism vanishes by itself.

When you strive to gain quiescence by stopping
motion,
The quiescence thus gained is ever in motion ;
As long as you tarry in the dualism,
How can you realize oneness ?

And when oneness is not thoroughly understood,
In two ways loss is sustained :
In denying of reality is the asserting of it,
The asserting of emptiness is the denying of it.

Wordiness and intellection—
The more with them the further astray we go ;
Away therefore with wordiness and intellection
And there is no place where we cannot pass freely.

When we return to the root, we gain the meaning ;
When we pursue external objects we lose the
reason.

The moment we are enlightened within,
We go beyond the voidness of a world
confronting us.

Transformations going on in an empty world
which confronts us,
Appear real all because of ignorance :
Try not to seek after the true,
Only cease to cherish opinions.

Abide not with dualism
Carefully avoid pursuing it ;
As soon as you have right and wrong,
Confusion ensues, and Mind is lost.

The two exist because of the One,
But hold not even to this One ;
When a mind is not disturbed,
The ten thousand things offer no offence.

No offence offered, and no ten thousand things ;
No disturbance going, and no mind set up to work ;
The subject is quieted when the object ceases,
The object ceases when the subject is quieted.

The object is an object for the subject
The subject is a subject for the object ;
Know that the relativity of the two
Rests ultimately on the emptiness.

In one emptiness the two are not distinguished
And each contains in itself all the ten thousand
things ;
When no discrimination is made between this
and that,
How can a one-sided and prejudiced view arise ?

THAYUMANAVAR

THE saint's name Thayumanavar derives from the shrine of Lord Thayumaneswar when his father's prayer for a son was fulfilled.

From early childhood the boy was drawn to the religious life. Highly intelligent, already in his teens, he mastered the most important sacred works in Sanskrit and Tamil. When his father died King Chokkanatha prevailed upon the young man already known for his superior knowledge and holiness to assume his father's place as superintendent.

At court he avoided useless argumentation and advised the pundits to seek out the truth.

There is a saying that the guru appears when the disciple is ready and so it happened in Thayumanavar's case. Sage Arul-Nandi Sivachariar known as Mouna (Silent) Guru, made his appearance at the Rock Temple and gave initiation to Thayumanavar who was eager to leave the world and follow his Guru but was discouraged by him to do so, with the words "Be Still". Renunciation is in the mind and not brought about by outer circumstances.

However later circumstances made him leave the court, assume the householder's life in compliance with his guru's instruction. After the death of his wife the Silent Guru completed his initiation and bade him take up the life of an ascetic. Soon disciples gathered about him. Thayumanavar composed very inspiring, stirring songs of great beauty expressing Oneness of Being to which the dualistic approach ultimately leads.

The one wondrous word which contains all other words is among the most inspiring of

the songs. It was this one wondrous word which sparked off Thayumanavar's Self-realization.

Bhagavan often referred to and quoted from Thayumanavar's works :

One WORD, a wondrous word exists
Which in Itself contains
All other words ; by it is purged
The soul of all its stains.
It is the WORD by the Guru given.
One WORD, immovable Goal
Steadfast as a mountain-top.
Towards which journeys the soul.
Beside it all other words are
Valueless, void of aim.
Like pawns moved at random,
Moved in a purposeless game.

* * *

God alone is true Wisdom
Where neither one nor twain can be ;
Now am I in darkest night,
When will dawn the day for me,
When will dawn the day ?

I cannot worship in Thy Temple,
And before Thy symbols bow.
Or offer Thee dew-kissed blossoms,
For in the blossom's art Thou.
How place my palms together ?
Bend my body to worship Thee ?
All this is imperfect service
Since Thou, Lord, indweldest in me.
The vastness of the ether, Thou art,
The elements, the primal sound,
The four Vedas and their Goal,
The Search beyond all seeking found.
The sacred quest, its key and secret ;
Of all seeing Thou art the sight,
Of all knowing Thou art the knowledge,
Of sense and sight, the inner light.
The word and its meaning.
Form of the secret, saving Call,
O source of Grace — Bliss beyond thought.
Dancing joyously in High Wisdom Hall.

SONGS OF MILAREPA

Translated and Annotated by
Garma C. C. Chang

Tibet's great Yogi, Milarepa, needs no introduction. Non-attachment is synonymous with Wisdom. This is dealt with in the first poem while the second speaks of the glory of radiant Self-awareness, the state in which there is no ego.

The Grey Rock Vajra Enclosure

I bow down at the feet of the supreme Guru.

To cling to the actuality of mind is the
cause of *Samsara* ;
To realize that non-clinging and illuminating
Self-awareness
Is unborn and immanent,
In the consummation sign of the Stage of
One-Pointedness.

If one talks about the Two-In-One
But still meditates on form,
If one acknowledges the truth of Karma
But still commits wrong-doing,
He is actually meditating with blindness and
passion !
Things, as such, are never found
In the true Stage of One-Pointedness.

In realizing that the non-clinging and
illuminating mind,
Is embodied in bliss and transcends all
playwords,¹
One sees his mind's nature as clearly as
great Space.
This is the sign of the consummation
Of the Stage of Away-from-Playwords.

Though one talks about the Stage of
Away-from-Playwords,
Still he is declaring this and that ;
In spite of illustrating what is beyond all words,
Still he is but piling words on words.
He then, is the ignorant one,
Who with self-clinging meditates.
In the Stage of Away-from-Playwords,
There is no such thing as this.

The non-differentiation of manifestation and
Voidness
Is the *Dharmakaya*,
In which *Samsara* and *Nirvana* are felt
to be the same.
It is a complete merging of Buddha and
sentient beings.
These are the signs of the Stage of One-Taste,
As many have declared.

He who says that "all is one,"
Is still discriminating ;
In the Stage of One-Taste,
There is no such blindness.

The Heart Sutra

By Wei Wu Wei

**The burden of the Heart Sutra
Is not the nature of objects
But the seeing of them,
Which is what they are.**

A wandering thought is itself the essence of wisdom —

Immanent and intrinsic.
Cause and effect are both the same.
This is a realization of Buddha's Three Bodies²
Existing within oneself.
These are the consummation signs
Of the Stage of Non-Practice.

When one talks about Non-Practice,
His mind is still active;
He talks about illumination,
But in fact is blind.
In the Stage of Non-Practice,
There is no such thing!

... A wise man knows how to practise
The space-like meditation.
In all he does by day
He attaches himself to nothing.
With a liberated spirit,
He desires not wealth nor beauty.

One should see that all appearance
Is like mist and fog;
Though one has vowed to liberate all
sentient beings,
He should know that all manifestations
Are like reflections of the moon in water.

Without attachment, he knows
That the human body is but a magic spell.
So from all bindings he gains freedom.
Like the immaculate lotus growing out of mud.
He attains the conviction of Practice.

The mind is omnipresent like space;
It illumines all manifestations as the Dharmakaya;
It knows all and lightens all.
I see it clearly like a crystal
In my palm!

In the beginning, nothing comes;
In the middle, nothing stays;
At the end, nothing goes.
Of the mind there is no arising and extinction!
Thus, one remains in the Equality of past,
present and future.

Immanent, the mind, like the sky, is pure.
The red and white clouds³ vanish of themselves;
No trace of the Four Elements⁴ can be found.
The omnipresent mind resembles Space:
It never separates from the Realm of the Unborn,
It cuts the path of the Three Worlds of *Samsara*.
This is the conviction of Enlightenment.

The Shepherd's Search For Mind

Listen carefully, dear shepherd.
Clinging to the notion of ego is
characteristic of this consciousness.
If one looks into this consciousness itself,
He sees no ego; of it nothing is seen!

... When your body is rightly posed, and your
mind absorbed deep in meditation,
You may feel that thought and mind both disappear;
Yet this is but the surface experience of *Dhyana*.
By constant practice and mindfulness thereon,
One feels radiant Self-awareness shining like
a brilliant lamp.
It is pure and bright as a flower,
It is like the feeling of staring
Into the vast and empty sky.
The Awareness of Voidness is limpid and
transparent, yet vivid.
This Non-thought, this radiant and transparent
experience
Is but the feeling of *Dhyana*.

¹ Playwords: All *Samsāric* conceptions and ideas which have to be expressed through words and symbols are meaningless sophistries from the viewpoint of an enlightened being. The term "Playwords" also implies that all *Samsāric* conceptualizations and verbalizations are on a par with children's prattle — little more than nonsense. Realization of this is considered the initial stage of Enlightenment.

² Three Bodies: The *Trikāya*, or Three Bodies of Buddha, i.e., the *Dharmakāya*, the *Sambhogakāya*, and the *Nirmānakāya*.

³ "Red-and-White" denotes the positive and negative elements in the body.

⁴ The text is very obscure here and the meaning is not certain.

Once overcome by a mood of disappointment Chadwick addressed a poem to Sri Bhagavan. He made no specific plan about a return to England before he wrote it. It was what one might just call spiritual disappointment which had taken a momentary grip. With his usual frankness he gave vent to his feelings. Bhagavan saw the poem and did not directly disapprove of the idea of Chadwick's return. He however explained to Chadwick at length that England or India did not matter if one could control the mind. One's mind is the problem and that matters—it would still have to be tackled even if one goes to England. Bhagavan's words brought tremendous consolation to Chadwick who abandoned forever the thought of return. The poem is reproduced here :

To Maharshi Ramana, The Merciful Master

By A. W. Chadwick

Will You Not Let Me Go?

Will you not let me go?

Like some insidious druggist you would make
Me come with craven pleading to your door,
And beg you of your mercy let me take
From out your potent wares a little more.
And so,
You will not let me go.

Will you not let me go?

Here, in an alien land I pass my hours,
Far from my country and all former ties.
A restless longing slowly devours
Me that all worldly happiness denied.
And so,
Will you not let me go?

Will you not let me go?

You tell me, 'Yes, I do not keep you here.'
That's but your fun. Why else then should I stay?
While months pass by and mount up year by year,
So that it seems I'll never go away.
And so,
You do not let me go.

Will you not let me go?

Nay, I'm a fool, I cannot if I would.
I am your slave, do with me what you will,
That you should all deny, well, that is good
If so it pleases you. I'll speak no ill.
And so,
Refuse to let me go?

Will you not let me go?

I'm only sorry wax beneath your hands,
You've striven long to mould me into shape.
Your endless patience no one understands;
Your boundless love no one can escape.
And so,
You'll never let me go.

Will you not let me go?

I am a fool that I should try to flee;
For here, there is a peace I'll never find
When I the least am separate from Thee;
Then I'll be but a slave to caitiff mind.
And so,
I do not wish to go.

*KING
AND
HERMIT*

Marvan, brother of King Goary of Connaught in the Seventh Century, had renounced the life of a warrior-prince for that of a hermit. The King endeavoured to persuade his brother to return to his Court, when the following colloquy took place between them.

GOOARY :

Why, hermit Marvan, sleepest thou not
Upon a feather quilt ?
Why rather sleepest thou abroad
Upon a pitchpine floor ?

MARVAN :

I have a shieling in the wood,
None knows it save my God :
An ash-tree on the hither side, a hazel-bush beyond,
A huge old tree encompasses it.

Two heath-clad doorposts for support,
And a lintel of honey-suckle :
The forest around its narrowness sheds
Its mast upon fat swine.

The size of my shieling tiny, not too tiny,
Many are its familiar paths :
From its gable a sweet strain sings
A she-bird in her cloak of the ousel's hue.

The stags of Oakridge leap
Into the river of clear banks :
Thence red Roiny can be seen,
Glorious Muckraw and Moinmoy.¹

A hiding mane of green-barked yew
Supports the sky :
Beautiful spot ! the large green of an oak
Fronting the storm.

Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry

Translated by Kuno Meyer

A tree of apples—great its bounty !
Like a hostel, vast !
A pretty bush, thick as a fist, of tiny hazel-nuts,
A green mass of branches.

A choice pure spring and princely water
To drink :
There spring watercresses, yew-berries,
Ivy-bushes thick as a man.

Swarms of bees and chafers, the little musicians
of the world,

A gentle chorus :
Wild geese and ducks, shortly before summer's end,
The music of the dark torrent.

The voice of the wind against the branchy wood
Upon the deep-blue sky :
Falls of the river, the note of the swan,
Delicious music !

The bravest band make cheer to me,
Who have not been hired :
In the eyes of Christ the ever-young I am
no worse off
Than thou art.

Though thou rejoicest in thy own pleasures,
Greater than any wealth ;
I am grateful for what is given me
From my good Christ.

Without an hour of fighting, without the din
of strife

In my house,
Grateful to the Prince who giveth every good
To me in my shieling.

¹Names of well-known plains.

GOOARY :

I would give my glorious kingship
With the share of my father's heritage—
To the hour of my death I would forfeit it
To be in thy company, my Marvan.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Four men stood by the grave of a man,
The grave of Alexander the Proud :
They sang words without falsehood
Over the prince from fair Greece.

Said the first man of them :
"Yesterday there were around the ming
The men of the world—a sad gathering!
Though today he is alone."

"Yesterday the king of the brown world
Rode upon the heavy earth :
Though today it is the earth
That rides upon his neck."

"Yesterday," said the third wise author,
"Philip's son owned the whole world :
Today he has nought
Save seven feet of earth."

"Alexander the liberal and great
Was wont to bestow silver and gold :
Today," said the fourth man,
"The gold is here, and it is nought."

Thus truly spoke the wise men
Around the grave of the high-king :
It was not foolish women's talk
What those four sang.

THE PILGRIM AT ROME

To go to Rome
Is much of trouble, little of profit :
The King whom thou seekest here,
Unless thou bring Him with thee, thou wilt not find.

THE BLACKBIRD

Ah, blackbird, thou art satisfied
Where thy nest is in the bush :
Hermit that clinkest no bell,
Sweet, soft, peaceful is thy note.

CELTIC HERMIT POEMS²**THE IVY BOWER**

My little hut in Tuaim Inbhir,
a mansion would not be more ingenious,
with its stars to my wish,
with its sun, with its moon.

It was Gobban that made it
— that the tale may be told you —
my darling, God of heaven,
was the thatcher that roofed it.

A house in which rain does not fall,
a place in which spears are not feared,
as open as if in a garden
and it without a wall about it.

"THE HERMIT"

(Irish ; author unknown ; eighth-ninth century)

Alone in my little hut without a human being in
my company, dear has been the pilgrimage before
going to meet death.

A remote hidden little cabin, for forgiveness of my
sins ; a conscience upright and spotless before holy
heaven.

Making holy the body with good habits, treading it
boldly down ; weak tearful eyes for forgiveness of
my desires.

Desires feeble and withered, renunciation of this
poor world, clean live thoughts ; this is my prayer
to God.

My food to suit my condition—it is a dear bondage—
my meal would not make me full-blooded, without
doubt.

Dry bread weighed out, well we bow the head ;
water of the fair-coloured hillside, that is the draught
I would drink.

Treading the paths of the Gospel, singing psalms
every hour ; an end of talking and long stories ;
constant bending of the knees.

My Creator to visit me, my Lord, my King, my
spirit to seek Him in the eternal kingdom where
He is.

This is the end of vice among mansions, a lovely
little cell among many graves, and I alone there.

Alone in my little hut, all alone so, alone I came
into the world, alone I shall go from it.

If of my own I have done wrong at all, through
the pride of this world, hear my wail for it all
alone, O God !

² *Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry*, Kenneth Jackson.

THE MYSTICAL POETS: A Short Study

By E. M. Abrahams

**A wide range of poetry of mystic import—
Indian, English, Persian, etc., including
the supposedly controversial one of
Omar Khayyam—is discussed by the author
who quotes appropriate poems.**

“I fled Him down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
of my own mind.”

—FRANCIS THOMPSON,
The Hound of Heaven.

“THE poetry of mysticism,” writes Evelyn Underhill in her introduction to Tagore’s translation of Kabir, “might be defined on the one hand as a temperamental reaction to the vision of Reality; on the other hand as a form of prophecy. As it is the special vocation of the mystical consciousness to meditate between two orders, going out in loving adoration towards God and coming home to tell the Secrets of Eternity to other men.”

The mystics accept the here and now as a means of representing supernal realities. They employ homely and physical symbols.

At their peak, philosophy and religion meet in the sense and contemplation of universal unity. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in mystical poetry. A mystical experience is in the most literal sense ineffable. Those who come out of the inmost sanctuary of the self find that their lips are sealed by sheer insufficiency of language as a vehicle of communicating their experience. Prose has no terms which could convey adequately their supreme overture. Faced with such a difficulty the mystics often turn to poetry.

It is not necessary to discuss mysticism in detail to understand mystical poetry. Suffice it to say that the supreme, whether we call it God or with Plotinus, the One, or with Eckhart, the Godhead, or with the moderns, the Absolute, is transcendent. To the mystical poet (as also to any mystic) language is symbolical. For, a genuine symbol, as Coleridge says, “partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible.”

Once man has been graced with a glimpse of Reality, the shadow world of his habitual

dreaming becomes appalling to his re-awakened visionary powers; Listen to Tennyson in *The Two Voices* :

"Moreover, Something is or seems
That touches me with mystic gleams
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams
Of something felt like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare."

Thomas Traherne, practically all of whose poetry is of a mystical nature writes :

"And while God did all his Glories Show,
I felt a vigour in my Sense
That was all Spirit. I within did flow
With Seas of life, like wine
I nothing in the world did know
But 'twas divine."

Richard Crashaw sings thus :

"Lord, when the Sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my Soul to seek thy face
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
I dy in love's delicious Fire.
Dead to my selfe 'I live in Thee'."

Says R. C. Zaehner in *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane*, "that their experiences are not reducible to words, and few of them have any interest in art, or poetry or music as such."

Persian mysticism is often esoterically of the highest order conveying the experience of Reality "I am the Truth" of all Hallaj and "Glory be to me, how great is my glory," of Abu Yazid of Bistam. The essence of Sufism is expressed in the two key words of the Sufis—*fana* and *baqa*—the destruction of the individual and its "Survival" in God as God. As Suso in *The Little Book of Truth* puts it :

"When a man is thus taken out of himself, so that he neither knows anything about himself nor about anything else and above all, is made calm in the ground of the Eternal Nothing; then he is really lost to himself." Says Happold in his book, *Mysticism* : "The description of the quest for and union with God by these Sufi mystics are not only psychologically and intellectually illuminating, but are also often given exquisite expression; for, as

Elixir of Waiting

By 'Sein'

Why creation? They ask
So there's waiting
Union, return
Back to the Source
Elixir of waiting
Movement
In ecstasy, pain
In joy I am waiting
Oh, Ramana!
I am waiting.

we have said, Sufism produced men who were not only true mystics but also poets. Persia, that home of poetry, produced more poet-mystics, inspired by the most profound spiritual experience, than any other country has done.

Omar Khayyam is a controversial figure in Persian literature. He was misunderstood because of the inaccurate translation of his poetry. Lyrics like, "'Tis I who have swept with my mustaches the wine shop" have been quoted to discredit him.

To any ordinary reader such a saying would immediately dispose of the likelihood that Omar was a Sufi. In Persian the original poem uses Sufi technical terms conveying the true intent of the poet.

"When the original cause determined my being,
I was given the first lesson of love
It was then that the fragment of my heart
was made
The Key to the Treasury of Pearls
of mystical meaning."

"I cannot live without wine
Without the cup's draught I cannot carry
my body,
I am the slave of the breath in which
the Saki says
Take one more cup and I can not do so."

“This is a clear reference” says Idris Shah, “to the condition attained under Sufi teachers when what was an ecstatic experience develops into a real perception of the hidden dimension beyond the metaphysical drunkenness.”

“O ignorant ones — the Road is neither this nor that,” is one of Omar’s most expressive sayings which deals still with his later self-appointed critics and expounders. When we come to Rumi, “the greatest mystical poet of any age” as his English translator Nicholson called him, all controversies disappear. His *Mathnavi* embodies the deepest philosophical insights and ethical teachings, while his *Divan* (collection of odes) contains the purest distillation of his gift for lyrical poetry. He invariably used fables to drive home a point and to instruct his followers.

The following from the *Sun of Tabriz*, translated by Sir Colin Garbelt, are fine examples of Rumi’s mystic poetry :

“How long in exile must I range?
Grant me at one to be!
Broken my heart from Thee apart,
My home—to be with Thee.

“Save love is no Reality,
Let love intoxicate;
For only to the knock of love
The loved one opens his gate.

“What then is love? ’tis sacrifice
Of self and self’s hard will;
He that by selfish will is bound
Can never self fulfil.”

Rumi sings :

“In One there is no ‘I’ and ‘We’;
I am naught, without head and without feet;
I have sacrificed head and soul to gain the
Beloved.”

A sufi of great stature was Attar. Among his numerous poetical works is, *The Conference of Birds*. Here we see a large assemblage of birds (representing human souls) who have set their hearts on attending the mysterious Court of Simurg, the King of Birds. In the language of Sufis, the Simurg is Divine Unity embracing all plurality. Despite the

hardships and perils of the journey, these birds have mustered strong under the banner of their daring leader, the Hoopoe, who has undertaken to guide them through all the dales and deserts to the Kuh-i-Qat, the Seat of the Sovereign bird. The journey lies through seven Valleys : The Valleys of Quest, Love, Knowledge, Detachment, Unity, Bewilderment and steepest of all, Annihilation. Only thirty out of millions, survive and approach the Capital of the Simurg. After all this travail the pilgrims were not comforted but sunk in desolation and utterly annihilated. This purifies them and they received a new life from the divine effulgence. This is *Baqa* after Fana, immortality after transiency, eternal life after extinction.

“Joy! Joy! I triumph!
Now no more I know
Myself as simply Me.
I burn with love
The centre is within me
And its wonder
Lies everywhere about me
Joy! Joy! No mortal thought can fathom me
I am the merchant and the pearl at once.
Lo, Time and space lie crouching at my feet
Joy! Joy! When I would in a rapture,
I plunge into myself and all things know.”

India produced great mystical poets : Thayumanavar, Tulsi, Kabir, Baba Farid, Nanak, Sarmad, Namdeva, Ramdas and many others. It would not be possible to deal with all of them in this short space. Kabir’s poetry, though technically imperfect was on the whole an outburst of rapture. He uses simple words and metaphors : Bridegroom and bride, Guru and disciple, the pilgrim, the migrant bird.

“So long as man clamours for the I and the
Mine,
His works are as naught
When all love for the I and the Mine is dead,
Then the work of the Lord is done,
For work has no other aim than knowledge.”

It is difficult to capture the poetry of Kabir in English though no doubt remains about its meaning. Here are a few short illustrations.

The Elixir of Youth

By Arthur Osborne

The frosty years have in their grip
This ailing body that at last
Into Death's refuse-bin must slip.
Then let it go,
Quick be it or slow,
Like autumn flower in wintry blast.

For I have drunk Youth's elixir,
His joy made firm, his follies fled.
Life like a May-day chorister
Throbs into song.
The heart, grown strong,
Dances and sings where grief lies dead.

This world and body are not me.
They are a dream from which to wake.
Whatever in their fate may be
Cannot destroy
The vibrant joy
Or turn to night the bright daybreak.

When even imperfect sight can bring
Such joyful certitude as this,
Who to the seeming self would cling,
In a barren land where no birds sing,
Lost to Awareness, Being, Bliss?

Hound pursues simply by being the creator of
and indweller in everything that is, imbuing
all things with His essential quality of love.

"Halts by me that footfall
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched Caressingly,
Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He who thou seekest,
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest
Me . . ."

Another great mystic poet was Dante, the
poet of *The Divine Comedy*. Some of the
passages in *Paradise* clearly show that he had
actually glimpsed the Reality:

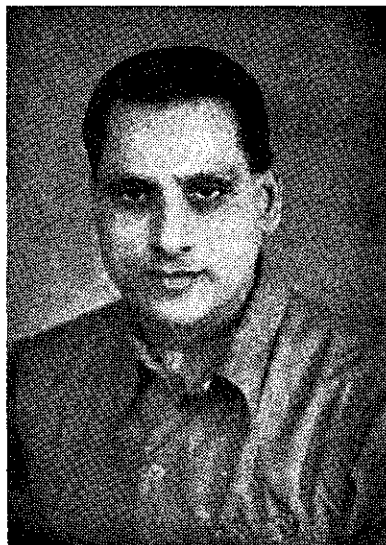
"For now my sight, clear and clearer grown,
Pierced through the ray of that exalted light,
Wherein, as in itself, the truth is known.
Henceforth my vision mounted to a height,
Where speech is vanquished and must lag
behind,
And memory surrenders in such plight.
As from a dream one may awake to find,
It's passion yet unprinted on the heart,
Although all else is cancelled from the mind."

This article would not be complete without
a quotation from St. John of the Cross. He
was a great mystical poet. His lovely lyrics
of the Spiritual quest, rank among the greatest
mystical poems of all ages. We quote *The
Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

"In a dark night,
With anxious love inflamed,
O, happy lot!
Forth unobserved I went,
My house being now at rest.
In darkness and in safety,
By the secret ladder, disguised,
O happy lot!
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now at rest
In that happy night,
In secret, Seen of none,
Seeing nought myself,
Without other light or guide,
Save that which burned in my heart
I continued in oblivion lost,
My head was resting on my love,
Lost to all things and my self,
And, amid the lilies forgotten
Threw my cares away."

And now we come to the end of our short
journey into the hearts and minds of the great
mystical poets, the great souls, who tried to
couch their experiences in beautiful odes and
lyrics. In the words of an ancient poem:

"When one looks at It, one cannot see It;
When one listens for It, one cannot hear It,
However, when one uses It, it is inexhaustible."



By Dr. R. Padmanabhan

Dr. R. Padmanabhan of Palghat, Kerala, popularly known as *Ramanadas* was a well-known devotee and the son-in-law of Sri Janaki Mata.¹ He not only served the rich and poor alike in the capacity of a doctor but did notable social service in upholding religion by organising camps for young people at various centres till death put an end to his activities. His songs on Sri Bhagavan continue to be sung to this day.

We give below an account of his coming to Bhagavan for the first time, based on his articles in *Arul* a Tamil magazine published years ago. Dr. Padmanabhan is the founder of the *Prem Sangh*, a spiritual institution which is still functioning.

How I Came to the Maharshi

EVEN as a student I was conscious of the spiritual urge and in particular derived great pleasure from the company of sadhus. But this urge did not develop sufficiently to lead me into any serious spiritual pursuit till my graduation from the medical college in the year 1939. This was an auspicious year in my life as many spiritually highly advanced souls graced my home and I came into close contact with Sri Ramakrishna Math. A fervent spiritual craving awakened in me and I developed a tendency to meditate, impatient to discover the mystery behind the universe. Whether in the house or in the hospital my quest went on. It was during this time that my mother-in-law Sri Janaki Mata who found in Bhagavan the embodiment of Grace and wisdom, paid me an unexpected visit. She insisted that if there was a real master who alone could guide us to our goal it was only Sri Ramana. I had already heard of Sri Ramana from people and through books and what's more, several times he appeared to me in visions. My mother-in-law was leaving for

¹ For an article on whom see p. 105, January 1966 issue of *The Mountain Path*.

ZEN BUDDHISM AND MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

A Zen poem is often the outcome of an intense and perhaps only a momentary awareness of Reality. Some modern American poets, like for instance Tagliabue, show the influence of Zen.

By Lucien Stryk

THOSE aware of the development of modern American poetry will not have raised eyebrows at this title, for Imagism, as important to the poetics of this century as Symbolism was to the poetics of the last, derived in part from the fascination with, and critical examination of a Zen art, the haiku. There is no further need, surely, to comment on the Orientalism of modern poetry's giants, Yeats, Pound and Eliot, nor in speaking of such Oriental arts as the haiku is it necessary to make a case for the importance to them of Zen. That Basho and Buson were Zen-nists, for example, is known to most high school seniors.

Perhaps due to the strength of the impact of Asian philosophy on Western literature in our century, it is being examined with great care, often with suspicion, by contemporary critics. In the 1959 issue of *ASIA AND THE HUMANITIES*, for example, James Baird in a very comprehensive essay on critical problems in modern Orientalism, writes the following:

The disciplines of *yoga* or of Zen Buddhism can, of course, be understood by the West. But I think it not very likely that we shall ever have a poetry of meditation which proceeds from a Western practice of them. To repeat, history is written in the blood.

The quest of Zen is that of the original self, not the Oriental in one's self, and though it

may be true that history is written in the blood of an Occidental, as much can be said of the Oriental. The important thing to remember is that the meditator's search, be it carried on in a *zendo* or a *pad*, is for a state beyond history.

It must be remembered that the meditative poetry of the East, particularly Zen poetry, is the result of moments of momentary experience (of reality), and that most of the time Orientals, whether or not they happen to be poets, suffer "the anguish of desire and the fetters of time", with history written in their blood.

Before speaking of those modern American poems written as a result of an awareness of Zen Buddhism, it may be of some use to have an idea of Zen poetry itself, especially that written by Japanese masters.¹

Before turning to those American poets who seem to me have been affected in one way or another by Zen, I wish to make clear that there is a certain kind of poem which though often admirable and in spite of being directly concerned with Oriental enlightenment, does not suit my thesis. Since I have mentioned him already, and since in his *Lapis Lazuli* he gives us a pure instance of Western understanding of the East, Yeats's lines suggesting an awareness of the *koan* about finding one's original face come to mind:

From mirror after mirror
 No vanity's displayed,
 I'm looking for the face I had
 Before the world was made.

Another type of poem with which I shall not concern myself at this time is one we normally associate with Beat Zen, those poems in which there are quests for "satori in Brooklyn" and/or descriptions of trips on drugs like LSD. Still another is the satire, intentional or not, on Zen, the poem which belongs to what I have elsewhere called the game of Kick-Zen. Such poems, and the game itself, are if anything a source of pleasure to the true Zennist, who has learned the delights of self-mockery. However intense the indignation felt by some scholars at the Zen antics of the Beats, his earned libertarian views make it possible for him to smile at and, on occasion, even join in the fun.

The poets whose work I should like briefly to examine are, each of them and for one reason or another, seriously interested in Zen, or were at the moment of writing the poems I have in mind. Often, as in case of John Tagliabue, the interest is a result of a residence in Japan, however brief. Tagliabue, who may be the most prolific of those American poets writing in the Zen manner, spent two years there. Here are a couple of his exuberant pieces :

A poem
 which is a poem
 does not leave
 any marks on the reader
 just as a Zen comedian
 does not leave any footsteps
 and he carries his skies with him.

A poem which is a poem
 leaves a reader who is a hero
 carrying his skies with him.

O Flower begin a Festival
 O Reader begin running and drumming

Inside	inside	and
a	a	praising
rose	drum	a
a	a	Bodhisattva.
Bodhisattva	rose	
is	is	
drumming ;	desiring	

Well known is the American Zen poet Gary Snyder, whose aesthetic is remarkably close to that of the Zen poets of Japan, as well as to that of William Carlos Williams, which is best expressed in that famous formula, and restatement of an Imagist principle, "no ideas but in things." Since the formula has proved so important to a number of the finest contemporary American poets, including Robert Creeley and Denise Levertov, and since it is demonstrably derived from Imagism, I do not feel it too much to claim that it serves as a clear indication of the kind of connections it is the purpose of this article to examine. Certainly it has been used, along with other Zen-conditioned aesthetic notions, in a most successful manner by Snyder, who has for years shown a deep interest in Buddhist art.

In the very powerful "Burning" section of Snyder's MYTHS & TEXTS there is incorporated the Rinzai Zennist Daito's famous death poem, which Snyder translates as :

where the sword is kept sharp
 the VOID
 gnashes its teeth

Those who have been following the recent development of American poetry will be familiar with Robert Bly both as poet and instigator. As his friend, I can testify to his great interest in Zen, and this interest is easily seen in his work. In a statement about his poetry on the jacket of his volume SILENCE IN THE SNOWY FIELDS, Bly reminds one of the Ch'an theorists mentioned earlier :

I have been interested in the connection between poetry and simplicity... If there is any poetry in the poems, it is in the white spaces between the stanzas... The poems are about the present rather than the past. They therefore touch at times on nature and the unconscious, both of which are part of the present. The fundamental world of poetry is the inward world. We approach it through solitude.

Here is an awakening poem from Bly's volume, a poem which might have been

written five hundred years ago by a Japanese
Zennist :

Watering the Horse
How strange to think of giving up all ambition !
Suddenly I see with such clear eyes
The white flake of snow
That has just fallen in the horse's mane !

And here is another poem of Robert Bly :

Mornings of Winter
Half-awake, we hardly know what we are !
We are the grass,
A light frost covers us....

There is a story about the Zen monk
Kyogen, who was fond of taking down what
his masters said. Eventually he came to
realize that all the notes he had recorded, as
well as all his accumulated knowledge, were
of no use to him in his attempt to understand
Zen. He burned all his notes and retired to
a country temple where he devoted himself to
caring for an old master's graveyard. One
day, while sweeping the ground, his broom
dislodged a stone which struck a bamboo. At
the sound of the stone against the bamboo,
he experienced an awakening.

Sangai (1750-1837), the Zen poet and
artist, composed this poem about Kyogen's
enlightenment (the translation is Dr. D. T.
Suzuki's) :

Kyogen Sweeping the Ground
One strike made him forget his learning.
What kind of sound was it ?
A piece of brick immediately
Turned itself into gold.

In James Wright's *THE BRANCH WILL NOT
BREAK*, surely one of the most impressive
contemporary volumes, there is a poem which
has struck a responsive chord in many who
care about poetry in this country :

Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy's
Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota

... To my right,
In a field of sunlight between two pines,
The droppings of last year's horses
Blaze up into golden stones.

You Live, O Ramana!

By Vasanti

The Hill of Dawn is there, O Ramana
Wet with wondrous light
The pink mist upon its peak
Lingers, unable to part.
The slopes and the little cave,
Are all there for you.
O Ramana, you live ! you live !

Beneath Shiva's hill
Your Ashram breathes
A retreat of Peace.
The couch where oft you sat
Is laid out for you.
The incense is lit
In readiness for you.
O Ramana, you live ! you live !

The white peacock also waits
While the blue ones screech from yonder
tree,
The squirrels are here and there,
While the monkeys play around
The Vedic chant begins
Its homage to truth.
O Ramana you live ! you live !

I lean back, as the evening darkens and
comes on.
A chicken hawk floats over, looking for home.
I have wasted my life.

It is the conviction of James Wright and
his friend Robert Bly, and of the many fine
poets who seem to be learning from them,
including Louis Simpson, Donald Hall and
W. S. Merwin, that American poetry has
wasted its life in its pursuit of formal perfec-
tion and "outwardness." Their interest in
Chinese and Japanese poetry of the Zen type
is a fact, and the things such poetry is teach-
ing them and their many admirers add up to
an important fact in modern American poetry.

**Kanzan
or
Han-Shan
of
Cold-Mountain¹**

Translated by Gary Snyder

“Cold Mountain” takes his name from where he lived. He is a mountain madman in an old Chinese line of ragged hermits. When he talks about Cold Mountain he means himself, his home, his state of mind. He lived in the T'ang dynasty — traditionally A.D. 627-650, although Hu Shih dates him 700-780. This makes him roughly contemporary with Tu Fu, Li Po, Wang Wei, and Po Chü-i. His poems, of which 300 survive, are written in T'ang colloquial: rough and fresh. The ideas are Taoist, Buddhist, Zen. He and his sidekick Shih-te (Jittoku in Japanese) became great favourites with Zen painters of later days — the scroll, the broom, the wild hair and laughter. They became Immortals and you sometimes run on to them today in the skidrows, orchards, hobo jungles, and logging camps of America!

*Preface to his Poems
by LuCh'iu-yin,
Governor of T'ai Pefecturer*

NO one knows just what sort of man Han-shan was. There are old people who knew him: they say he was a poor man, a crazy character. He lived alone seventy *li* west of the T'ang-hsing district of T'ien-t'ai at a place called Cold Mountain. He often went down to the Kuo-ch'ing Temple. At the temple lived Shih-te, who ran the dining hall. He sometimes saved leftovers for Han-shan, hiding them in a bamboo tube. Han-shan would come and carry it away; walking the long veranda, calling and shouting happily, talking and laughing to himself. Once the monks followed him, caught him, and made fun of him. He stopped, clapped his hands, and laughed greatly — *Ha Ha!* — for a spell, then left.

He looked like a tramp. His body and face were old and beat. Yet in every word he breathed was a meaning in line with the subtle principles of things, if only you thought of it deeply. Everything he said had a feeling of the Tao in it, profound and arcane secrets. His hat was made of birch bark, his clothes were ragged and worn out, and his shoes were wood. Thus men who have made it hide their tracks: unifying categories and interpenetrating things. On that long veranda calling and singing, in his words of reply *Ha Ha!* — the three worlds revolve. Sometimes at the villages and farms he laughed and sang with cowherds. Sometimes intractable,

¹ Extract from *A Range of Poems* by Gary Snyder.

sometimes agreeable, his nature was happy of itself. But how could a person without wisdom recognize him?

I once received a position as a petty official at Tan-ch'iu. The day I was to depart, I asked a Buddhist Master named Feng-kan, "Are there any wise men in your area I could look on as Master?" He replied, "When you see him you don't recognize him, when you recognize him you don't see him. If you want to see him, you can't rely on appearances. Then you can see him. Han-shan is a Manjusri hiding at Kuo-ch'ing. Shih-te is a Samantabhadra. They look like poor fellows and act like madmen. Sometimes they go and sometimes they come. They work in the kitchen of the Kuo-ch'ing dining hall tending the fire." When he was done talking he left.

I proceeded on my journey to my job at T'ai-chou, not forgetting this affair. I arrived three days later, immediately went to a temple, and questioned an old monk. It seemed the Master had been truthful, so I gave orders to see if T'ang-hsing really contained a Han-shan and Shih-te. The District Magistrate reported to me: "In this district, seventy li west, is a mountain. People used to see a poor man heading from the cliffs to stay awhile at Kuo-ch'ing. At the temple dining hall is a similar man named Shih-te." I made a bow, and went to Kuo-ch'ing. I asked some people around the temple, "There used to be a Master named Feng-kan here. Where is his place? And where can Han-shan and Shin-te to be seen?" A monk named Tao-ch'iao spoke up: "Feng-kan the Master lived in back of the library. Nowadays nobody lives there; a tiger often comes and roars. Han-shan and Shih-te are in the kitchen." The monk led me to Feng-kan's yard. Then he opened the gate: all we saw was tiger tracks. I asked the monks Tao-ch'iao and Pao-te, "When Feng-kan was here, what was his job?" The monks said, "He pounded and hulled rice. At night he sang songs to amuse himself." Then he went to the kitchen, before the stoves. Two men were facing the

Sacred Mystery

By Sister Sara Grant

India,
land of lotus and palm,
Where the lord is sought by a thousand
names
with ardent longing,
and known in His sacred mystery
down the ages
by holy men
Who have sensed the presence
of the Bliss at the heart of creation
and yielded the poverty of their being
Shadowless
to His radiance.
Always the cry
of the rainbird
and, in the cave of the heart,
that uncircumscribable
Glory.

fire, laughing loudly. I made a bow. The two shouted Ho! at me. They struck their hands together — *Ha Ha!* — great laughter. They shouted. Then they said, "Feng-kan — loose-tongued, loose-tongued. You don't recognize Amitabha, why be courteous to us?" The monks gathered round, surprise going through them. "Why has a big official bowed to a pair of clowns?" The two men grabbed hands and ran out of the temple. I cried, "Catch them" — but they quickly ran away. Han-shan returned to Cold Mountain. I asked the monks, "Would those two men be willing to settle down at this temple?" I ordered them to find a house, and to ask Han-shan and Shih-te to return and live at the temple.

I returned to my district and had two sets of clean clothes made, got some incense and such, and sent them to the temple — but the two men didn't return. So I had them car-

Riverness

By Torben Huss

I walked by the Riverness
 where centuries have gone
 in guise of varying moods.
 From moment to moment
 we moved in the meadow
 monotonies all new
 no time surprised.
 I passed by the noontide
 rested by the fullness
 of the midsummer sea
 no stranger in sight.
 The sound of a bird
 takes my eye from a wave
 through the stillness
 of the air
 to a flower in the void
 where we share the flow
 of Being fully
 Wholly with you
 and All
 in Love
 —O Life.....

ried up to Cold Mountain. The packer saw Han-shan, who called in a loud voice, "Thief! Thief!" and retreated into a mountain cave. He shouted, "I tell you man, strive hard!" — entered the cave and was gone. The cave closed of itself and they weren't able to follow. Shih-te's tracks disappeared completely.

I ordered Tao-ch'iao and the other monks to find out how they had lived, to hunt up the poems written on bamboo, wood, stones, and cliffs — and also to collect those written on the walls of peoples' houses. There were more than 300. On the wall of the Earth-shrine Shih-te had written some *gatha*. It was all brought together and made into a book.

I hold to the principle of the Buddha-mind. It is fortunate to meet with men of Tao, so I have made this eulogy.

The path to Han-shan's place is laughable,
 A path, but no sign of cart or horse.
 Converging gorges—hard to trace their twists
 Jumbled cliffs—unbelievably rugged.
 A thousand grasses bend with dew,
 A hill of pines hums in the wind.
 And now I've lost the shortcut home,
 Body asking shadow, how do you keep up?

In a tangle of cliffs I chose a place—
 Bird-paths, but no trails for men.
 What's beyond the yard?
 White clouds clinging to vague rocks.
 Now I've lived here—how many years—
 Again and again, spring and winter pass.
 Go tell families with silverware and cars
 "What's the use of all that noise and money?"

... I wanted a good place to settle:
 Cold Mountain would be safe.
 Light wind in a hidden pine—
 Listen close—the sound gets better.
 Under it a gray-haired man
 Mumbles along reading Huang and Lao.
 For ten years I haven't gone back home
 I've even forgotten the way by which I came.

... Spring-water in the green creek is clear
 Moonlight on Cold Mountain is white
 Silent knowledge—the spirit is enlightened of itself
 Contemplate the void: this world exceeds stillness.

... If I hide out at Cold Mountain
 Living off mountain plants and berries—
 All my lifetime, why worry?
 One follows his *karma* through.
 Days and months slip by like water,
 Time is like sparks knocked off flint.
 Go ahead and let the world change—
 I'm happy to sit among these cliffs.

Most T'ien-t'ai men
 Don't know Han-shan
 Don't know his real thought
 and call it silly talk.

... My home was at Cold Mountain
from the start,
 Rambling among the hills, far from trouble.

... When men see Han-shan
 They all say he's crazy
 And not much to look at—
 Dressed in rags and hides.
 They don't get what I say
 and I don't talk their language.
 All I can say to those I meet:
 "Try and make it to Cold Mountain."

THE LIGHT-FOOTED ONES

The POET FAIZI (1547-1595), an Indian who wrote in Persian, was born in Agra and was the brother of Akbar's famous minister and biographer, Abul Fazl. Like the latter, he was regarded as a heretic by orthodox Muslims on account of his liberal and tolerant religious views, which did not prevent the Emperor from crowning him "King of the Poets" at his court. He was possessed of very wide learning, and his pioneer work in translating Sanskrit classics into Persian deserves mention, since he was apparently the first man to translate the *Bhagavad Gita* into any foreign tongue. We subjoin a short poem in which he offers some reflections on the practical requisites for the spiritual path.

By Poet Faizi

Who are the light-footed ones?
 They who ever press forward
 With the torch of faith in their hands;
 Who drive on their camels tirelessly,
 Their light in front, their load at the back,
 Ever intent on the goal;
 Who do not flinch beneath the burdens of
 the world
 But carry them all with a light tread,
 Ready to go on to the ends of the earth
 Or to carry the sky upon their backs.
 They press on, heedless of their friends
 and relations,
 And do not permit stragglers to block their
 way.
 While leading their own caravan ever onward
 They leave footprints behind to mark the
 track.
 On they press, while the dilatory ones
 Sit with a bell fallen from that caravan
 Alone amid the footprints in the dust.
 I lay my head at the feet of every traveller
 Who stands one step beyond me on the path.

Translated by A. J. A.

PARABLES OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS

Translated by Lin Yutang

THE MAN WHO SPURNED THE MACHINE

By Chaungtse

WHEN Tsekung, the disciple of Confucius, came south to the state of Ch'u on his way to Chin, he passed through Hanyin. There he saw an old man engaged in making a ditch to connect his vegetable garden with a well. He carried a pitcher in his hand, with which he was bringing up water and pouring it into the ditch, with very great labour and little results.

"If you had a machine here," said Tsekung, "in a day you could irrigate a hundred times your present area. The labour required is trifling compared with the work done. Would you not like to have one?"

"What is it?" asked the gardener looking up at him.

"It is a contrivance made of wood, heavy behind and light in front. It draws water up smoothly in a continuous flow, which bubbles forth like boiling soup. It is called a well-sweep."

Thereupon the gardener flushed up and said with a laugh, "I have heard from my teacher that those who have cunning implements are cunning in their dealings, and those who are cunning in their dealings have cunning

in their hearts, and those who have cunning in their hearts cannot be pure and incorrupt, and those who are not pure and incorrupt in their hearts are restless in spirit. Those who are restless in spirit are not fit vehicles for Tao. It is not that I do not know of these things. I should be ashamed to use them."

Tsekung's countenance fell, humiliated, and he felt discomfited and abashed. It was not till they had gone thirty *li* that he recovered his composure.

"Who was that man," asked his disciples. "Why did your face change colour after seeing him, and why did you seem lost for a whole day?"

"I thought" replied Tsekung, "there was only one man (Confucius) in this world. But I did not know there was this man. I have heard from the Master that the test of a scheme is its practicability and the goal of effort is success and that we should achieve the greatest results with the least labour. Not so this manner of man. Coming into life, he lives among the people, not knowing whither he is bound, infinitely complete in himself. Success, utility and the knowledge of skills would certainly make man lose the human heart. But this man goes nowhere against his will and does nothing contrary to his heart, master of himself, above the praise and blame of the world. He is a perfect man."

THE CONCEALED DEER

By Lichtse

THERE was a woodcutter in Cheng who came across a frightened deer in the country and shot and killed it. Afraid that other people might see it, he hid it in a grove and covered it with chopped wood and branches, and was greatly delighted. Soon afterwards, however, he forgot where he had hid the deer, and believed it must have all happened in a dream. As a dream, he told it to everybody in the streets. Now among the listeners there was one who heard the story of his dream and went to search for the concealed deer and found it. He brought the deer home and told his wife, "There is a woodcutter who dreamed he had killed a deer and forgot where he hid it, and here I have found it. He is really a dreamer."

"You must have dreamed yourself that you saw a woodcutter who had killed a deer. Do you really believe that there was a real woodcutter? But now you have really got a deer, so your dream must have been a true one," said his wife.

"Even if I've found the deer by a dream," answered the husband, "what's the use of worrying whether it is he who was dreaming, or I?"

That night, the woodcutter went home, still thinking of his deer, and he really had a dream, and in that dream, he dreamed back the place of hiding of the deer and also its finder. Early at dawn, he went to the finder's house and found the deer. The two then had a dispute and they went to a judge to settle it. And the judge said to the woodcutter:

"You really killed a deer and thought it was a dream. Then you really had a dream and thought it was reality. He really found the

deer and is now disputing with you about it, but his wife thinks that he had dreamt that he had found a deer shot by someone else. Hence no one really shot the deer. Since we have the deer before our eyes, you may divide it between you two."

The story was brought to the ears of the King of Cheng, and the King of Cheng said, "Ah, Ah! Isn't the judge dreaming again that he is dividing the deer for people?"

THE MAN WHO FORGOT

By Lichtse

THERE was a man in Sung by the name of Huatse, who developed in his middle age a peculiar malady of forgetting everything. He would take a thing in the morning and forget about it at night, and receive a thing at night and forget about it in the morning. While in the streets he forgot to walk, and while standing in the house, he forgot to sit down. He could not remember the past in the present, and could not remember the present in the future. And the whole family were greatly annoyed by it. They consulted the soothsayer and they could not divine it, and they consulted the witch and prayers could not cure it, and they consulted the physician and the physician was helpless. But there was a Confucian scholar in the country of Lu who said he could cure him. So the family of Huatse offered him the half of their property if he should cure him of this strange malady. And the Confucian scholar said:

"His malady is not something which can be cured by soothsaying or prayer or medicine. I shall try to cure his mind and change the objects of his thought, and maybe he'll be cured."

So he exposed Huatse to cold and Huatse asked for clothing, exposed Huatse to hunger,

and Huatse asked for food, and shut Huatse up in a dark room, and Huatse asked for light. He kept him in a room all by himself for seven days and cared not what he was doing all this time. And the illness of years was cured in a day.

When Huatse was cured and learned about it, he was furious. He scolded his wife and punished his children and drove away the Confucian scholar from his house with a spear. The people of the country asked Huatse why he did so, and Huatse replied :

“When I was submerged in the sea of forgetfulness, I did not know whether the heaven and earth existed or not. Now they have waked me up, and all the successes and disappointments and joys and sorrows and loves and hatreds of the past decades have come back to disturb my breast. I am afraid that in the future, the successes and disappointments and joys and sorrows and loves and hatreds will continue to oppress my mind as they are oppressing me now. Can I ever recover even a moment of forgetfulness ?”

HONEST SHANGCH'IU KAI

By Liehtse

MR. FAN¹ had a son by the name Tsehua, who succeeded very well in establishing his personal influence, and was very much admired by the whole kingdom. He was a good friend of the King of Chin, and although he refused office, his power was higher than that of the Three Chief Ministers. When the light of his eyes lighted upon a person, the government at once honoured him, and when he spoke ill of a person, the government at once degraded him. The scholars who congregated in his house equalled those at the court. He made his warriors fight duels of wit or of strength, even to the point of hurting

each other, which he did not try to stop. Thus day and night they amused themselves so that such customs grew up in the country.

Among the “guests” of the house of the Fan family were Hosheng and Tsepo. One day the two men were walking in the countryside and stopped at the hut of a farmer by the name of Shangch'iu K'ai. During the night, Hosheng and Tsepo talked about the great power of Tsehua, and said that he could make or ruin a man and make a rich man poor and a poor man rich at his will. The farmer, Shangch'iu K'ai, had known starvation and cold and he overheard the conversation against the north wall. Therefore he borrowed some food and putting it in a basket across his shoulder, started out for the home of Tsehua.

Now the followers of Tsehua were all from well-known families. They wore white jackets and rode in carriages, walked with a leisurely pace and held their heads high. When they saw the farmer was shabby and old, a feeble fellow with a dark face, they thought him a fool, and soon began to tease and cheat him and make fun of him. They would strike and pummel him and push and pull him about and do anything they liked with him, but Shangch'iu K'ai did not show any feeling of offence. When the followers were tired of this teasing, they went up with him to a high tower and said among themselves. “Whoever can jump down from the tower shall be rewarded with a hundred pieces of silver.” Many people offered to try, and Shangch'iu, innocently believing in their words, jumped down first. He flew down like a bird and alighted on the ground, without hurting himself. The followers thought it was just a stroke of luck, and were not surprised by it.

¹A very powerful family of the Chin State. In the time of the Warring Kingdoms, a wealthy class had grown up, and it was the custom for many wealthy families to keep a great many scholars, swordsmen and warriors in their homes. Some had as many as three thousand such “guests” and they acquired a tremendous political influence, being sometimes able to influence the fortunes of war and the fate of kingdoms.

Again they pointed to a deep bend of the river and said, "There is a precious pearl in the water. You can dive in and get it." Shanch'iu K'ai indeed took their word for it and dived into the water and soon emerged with a real pearl. Only then did they begin to suspect there was something in the farmer, and Tsehua ordered that he be placed among those entitled to eat meat and wear silk. Soon a fire broke out, and Tsehua said, "If you can go through the fire and rescue some of the brocades, whatever you can bring out shall be yours," Shangch'iu K'ai placidly walked toward the fire and went back and forth through the flames. He came out without being scorched by the flames or blackened by the ashes.

The followers of the Fan family then believed he was a man of God and apologized to him, saying, "We did not know that you were a man of God, and have cheated you. We did not know that you were a divine saint and have abused you. Do you regard us as fools, or do you consider us blind or deaf? Please explain to us your secret doctrine."

"I have no secret doctrine," replied the farmer. "Even my mind does not know how I have done it. However, there is a point which I will tell you. When you two were stopping at my house I heard you talking about the power of the Fan family, saying that they could make or ruin a man and make a rich man poor and a poor man rich. And I had no doubts in mind, but sincerely believed you. That was why I was willing to come such a long distance. And I thought all that you people said was sincere. I was only worried that I might not have enough faith in me and might not do all that was in my power. I was not conscious where my body was and what was good and what was bad for me. I had only this sincere mind and matter could not go against it. Now that I know you people are cheating me, my mind is full of suspicions and I have to be constantly on the look out. When I think of how

I Am What I Am

By Norman A. Sugden

I am what I am,
Be I King or beggar
Montgomery or Sam,
I am what I am.

But what am I ?
Am I man with inside spirit,
Am I spirit inside man ?

I am a bottomless pit
I am the highest star,
I am the blend of good and evil
which I have reached so far,
I am what I am.

I escaped being burned or drowned in the water, I am still trembling and excited. How dare I go near the fire or water now ?"

From that time on, the followers of Fan dared not abuse beggars or horse doctors they met on the way, but always came down from their carriage and bowed to them. When Tsai Wo heard the story, he told Confucius about it, and Confucius said, "Don't you know? The absolutely sincere man can influence matter, his power can move heaven and earth and influence the spirits, and he can go through the universe without meeting any obstruction, not to speak of going through fire and water and such common dangers. Shangch'iu K'ai was able to overcome matter even when he was being cheated; how much more when you and I are both sincere? Remember it, young man."

GREAT KNOWLEDGE

By Father Thomas Merton

Great knowledge sees all in one.
Small knowledge breaks down into the many.

When the body sleeps, the soul is enfolded in One.
When the body wakes, the openings begin to
function.

They resound with every encounter,
With all the varied business of life, the strivings
of the heart;

Men are blocked, perplexed, lost in doubt.
Little fears eat away their peace of heart.
Great fears swallow them whole.
Arrows shot at a target: hit and miss: right
and wrong.

That is what men call judgement, decision.

Their pronouncements are as final.

As treaties between emperors:

O, they make their point!

Yet their arguments fall faster and feebler

Than dead leaves in autumn and winter

Their talk, flows out like piss, it is

Never to be recovered.

They stand at last, blocked, bound and gagged,

Choked up like old drain pipes.

The mind fails. It shall not see light again.

Pleasure and rage

Sadness and joy

Hopes and regrets

Change and stability

Weakness and decision

Impatience and sloth:

All are sounds from the same flute,

All mushrooms from the same wet mould.

Day and night follow one another and come

upon us

Without our seeing how they sprout!

Enough! Enough!

Early and late we meet "That"

From which then all grow!

If there were no "That"

There would be no "I".

There would be nothing for all these winds

to play on.

So far can we go.

But how shall we understand

What brings it about?

One may well suppose a True Governor

To be behind it all. That such a Power works

I can believe. I cannot see his form.

He acts, but has no form.

the way

By paul rePS

Stand
on both bare feet
in this butterfly world.
Eyes soft, what do you see?
A tree.
So far so good.
We name this imaging act
a percept.

this work digs
into see and say.

experience overall *seeing*.
some life units see through
pores. try, by not tying,
seeing will all of you.
as you do, really what is
seen is the *seeing*.
seer and seen are academic.

the rain
yes
the rain



the rain
yes
the rain

rePS

Then you say
 "I see a tree."
 We name this say-act
 a concept. Concepts
 and concepts about concepts
 complicate *see*.
 Not so good.
 Who wants to complicate?
 Me?

Sum up
 You see a tree,
 say at tree,
 Let seeing see
 and let saying say.
 Concept returns to percept.
 Percept returns to be.
 Be.

Self-Inquiry:
 How do I perceive objects?
 With sensings.
 How do I perceive sensings?
 With mind, attention.
 How do I perceive mind?
 I do
 with the I
 of each.

self-inquiry is THE key to
 the thousand opening doors.
 mind quicker than light,
 space charge, bubble
 re-turning to sea, our sea,
 I am.

no one denies I am. and
 no one knows how deep it goes.
 add, I am right, black, white,
 and concepts start.

the whole purposes of life
 is to be free of me
 the moment I stop
 conceiving I am free
 (of conception).
 This in itself
 is the way.

The Sapling and The Oak

By W. J. Gabb

A wild wind raged from out the west,
 Bearing destruction on its breast.
 It levelled fences, threatened farms;
 It filled men's hearts with dire alarms.
 Over hill and over dale
 Swept the fury of the gale.
 Outraged nature seemed to say
 "As man has wrought, so I repay."

A sapling shivered on a height,
 It's every leaf curled up in fright.
 It begged the wind, "For pity's sake,
 Bend me no more or I must break."
 It longed for the gentle summer breeze,
 With scent of flowers from verdant leas.
 But this! Ah! This indeed was woe;
 No sapling ever suffered so!

An old oak tree on the self-same height
 Welcomed the wind with sheer delight.
 It bent its boughs as it sighed, "Ah, this!
 To know thy touch and to feel thy kiss!
 'Twas what it had said of the summer breeze,
 And again when its sap did all but freeze
 In the icy grip of the winter storm,
 For its trunk was wide and its roots were warm.

It knew that trees survive the blast;
 It knew the weather clears at last;
 It knew the sky will smile, and frown;
 It knew the hill goes up, and down;
 It knew the sun will set, and rise;
 It knew that nothing ever dies;
 It knew what youth, with years to go,
 In the nature of things can never know.

MYSTICISM IN VEDIC POETRY

Transcendental Self, O Arunachala!
Fearless I ask Thee, Fearlessness Itself.
Grant me the essence of the Vedas
which shine in the Vedanta,
One without a second O Arunachala!

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

WHAT IS MYSTICISM ?

Mysticism is not a system of thought but an experience. It is the experience of a direct spiritual realisation of the Ultimate Reality by a man within himself. As such, mysticism has been regarded as the essential part of religion. Mystics, professing different religions, have distinguished this essential element from in-essentials in religion and atleast partly demolished barriers separating one religion from another by the uniformity of their experience.

THE VEDAS

In a study of mysticism in sacred poetry it will be useful to consider the oldest sacred poetry known to the world, found in the four Vedas — Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yujur Veda and Atharva Veda. The first two are entirely in the matrical form, the other two have some prose also. The four Vedas have a total of over 20,000 *mantras* or units for prayer.

As the earliest and most important sacred texts, the four Vedas have been most carefully preserved through oral transmission from remote antiquity. Even now there are a few thousand reciters of the Vedas, living in diffe-

rent parts of India, who daily recite portions of the Vedas. The identity of the texts in different parts of the country indicates their freedom from corruption and interpolation. And the efforts of Vedicists, Eastern and Western, have helped the interpretation, despite anachronisms, committed particularly by those who explain the Vedas in terms of later mythology, Indian or Greek. Besides, the uncritical belief in the theory of all-round progress of man has often led to the assumption that the Vedas, belonging to prehistoric times, must have been composed by primitive men! One can, however, find enough non-controversial matter in the interpretation of oriental scholars in support of the thesis that mysticism in its genuine form is found in Vedic poetry.

MYSTIC SILENCE

Let us take a stanza from a Rig Vedic hymn to illustrate the Rishi's mystic experience. (Here 'light', *jyothi*, symbolises the Supreme Spirit).

My ears strain to hear, my eyes to see
this light within my spirit that shines beyond.
My mind roams with its thoughts in the distance.
What shall I speak, and what, indeed,
shall I think?
(RV. 6.9.6).

An Upanishad gives a concise expression to the idea lying behind this ecstatic poetic utterance: "From which words return, unattain-

By Dr. A. C. Bose

ing with the mind." (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2, 4).

Mystics have spoken of the inadequacy of words to express their experience. In the Yajur Veda it is said : "For the finite, the man of many words (*bahuvadin*), for the infinite (*ananta*) the dumb man (*mūka*) (YV. Vs. 30. 19). A Rig Vedic sage says : "Four grades of speech have been measured. The sages — who are wise — know them. Three that are mystic (literally, 'hidden in the cave' — i.e., depths of the mind) are unutterable. Men speak the fourth grade of speech." (RV. 1. 164. 45 ; AV.).

In all ages there were great mystics who often communicated with their disciples through silence. (The Greek word, *mysticos*, from which 'mystic' in English is derived, means, one who shuts his lips).

AS A MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION

There have, however, been many who have expressed their spiritual experience either directly or indirectly. They have done so by taking the fourth grade of speech as their medium, and improving its power of expression in different ways. One of these has been to adopt poetry — musical speech — for expressing themselves. It seems as if they can sing what they cannot say. As in the stanza quoted above, poetic eloquence succeeded in transmitting the effect made on them by their mystic experience.

Poetry, based on lyric intensity, has its high value, as the stanza shows. But there is another kind of mystic poetry in which the poet is more serene and objective. In the following lines, for example, it is said about the sage-poet bearing the name 'Vena' (the loving one) that he saw what the other poet struggled, without success, to see :

"Vena sees (in a mental vision) the Supreme Being (*tat sat*) wherein all came to have one home. In That all unite, and from

A Beacon Still¹

By S. P. Mukherji

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

¹This poem was first published in our inaugural issue of January, 1964.

That all emanate. The omnipresent One is warp and woop in creation." (YV. Vs. 32, 8 ; AV. 2. 1. 1.)

We find here the transcendental basis of world unity. In the following, instead of saying that all have one home in the Supreme Being, it is said that all have their identity with That. There is a description below of the state of the universe before creation. The description illustrates the mystic's defiance of logic.

There was neither existence nor non-existence
then,
Nor air nor the sky that lies beyond it...
There was no death then nor life immortal,
Nor of night or day was there any sign.
The ONE breathed airless by Self-impulse.
Other than That was nothing whatsoever.
Darkness was concealed in darkness then,
And all this was indiscriminate chaos.
The ONE which has been covered by the void
Through the night of *tapas* (spiritual energy)
was manifested.

(RV. 10. 120. 1-2).

This implies that creation is the Self-manifestation of the One Ultimate Reality. This view came to be called *Advaita Vedanta* in a later age.

VEDAPARAYANA

DURGA SOOKTAM

Hymn to Goddess Durga

1. We shall press out the soma juice to Jatavedas (Deva Agni). May the all-knowing annihilate¹ our enemies. May Agni protect us against all obstacles and evils (and take us across them like a boatman who takes people across the river in a boat).

2. I take refuge in that Goddess Durga who is of the colour of fire, who blazes with her *tapas* (spiritual fire), who is the consort of Virochana (the Supreme Being) and who is the bestower of the fruit of actions. Obeisance to Thee who art skilled in ferrying (people across the river of the world). Be pleased to ferry us across.

3. O Agni, Who art worthy of praise, take us across all obstacles by ways that are safe. May our town and our lands expand. Make our children happy.

4. Thou Jatavedas, who art the remover of obstacles, take us beyond all evil like the boatman who ferries people across a river. O Agni, may you be a careful protector of our bodies like Atri who is always concerned with the welfare (of all beings).

5. Let us invoke, from the highest places, Agni the vanquisher of enemy hosts, who is powerful and invincible. May that Agni protect us against all obstacles and evils.

6. O Agni, praised in sacrifices, thou increasest bliss. Thou art the ancient and the

new invoker at sacrifices. O Agni, make Thyself happy and grant us prosperity.

7. O Indra, all-pervading! we shall follow thee blessed with cattle and unbroken happiness. May those who live on the heights of heaven bring here the world of Vishnu.

8. We shall try to know Katyayani, we shall engage in contemplation on Kanyakumari, may Durga be pleased to guide us.

PASSAGES FROM THE TAITTIRIYA ARANYAKA

O Indra, the possessor of a thousand eyes! Come accompanied by the year (*samvatsara*) with its varying colours and the bright and different seasons which are Thy horses. Fire (Agni) who is clothed in dazzling raiment (i.e., lightning) and the wind (Vayu) who makes the white sands fly before him are Thy constant followers! O God who is glorified by the Vedas (Subrahmanya)! O God glorified by the Vedas! O God glorified by the Vedas!

OM That is Brahman. OM That is Vayu. OM That is the Self (Atman). OM That is the Truth. OM That is all this. OM the three bodies (physical, subtle and causal) are That. Salutations to That.

The Supreme Being whose symbol is OM moves about in the (heart) cave of all beings. Thou art the sacrifice. Thou art the *mantra* with which the oblations are made (*Vashatkāra*). Thou art Indra. Thou art Rudra. Thou art Vishnu (the sustainer of the world). Thou art Brahma (the Creator). Thou art the lord of beings (Prajāpati). Thou art the waters (of rivers, seas etc.). Thou art the taste (such as sweet and sour). Thou art the nectar (drunk by devas). Everything is Brahman of which OM is the symbol. The three worlds Bhuh, Bhuvah and Svah are also Brahman.

(To be continued)

¹ lit. burn up.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

SRI MURUGANAR

205.

Though we may serve in every way
Through thought and speech and action
Shriva supreme as he appears
And moves among us as our guru,
The highest end to seek and gain
Is ego-less existence
Through one-ing and identity.
With Him, our life's Life, Lord and Master.

206.

The stillness which precludes the birth
Of the obstinate ego with its brood
Of false, destructive differences
Like master and pupil, god and man,
Such *mouna* is the inward meaning
Of wise prostration to the Master.

207.

When in the fierce flame of the sovereign
presence
The pupil's separate self is burnt away
And his abidance in the depths of *mouna*
Grows firm, this firmness is the wisest
mode
Of worshipping the Master.

208

Inquiring who this 'I of mine' may be
The pupil reaches full identity
With the guru-Self and loses utterly
His separate self.
This final ending of the ego false
Is the true pupil's worship of the Master.

209.

In pure awareness shines the guru
As in the infinite sky the sun.
To merge therein without projecting
A separate ego of one's own
Is fittest worship of the guru-god.

210.

Treading the path in constant nearness
to him
One finds the world composed of "I" and
"This"
Transformed completely into the guru
himself.
This steadiness of vision, this awareness
Of his bright Presence everywhere
Is the true pupil's worship of the Master.

211.

When the ice-berg ego body-bound
Dissolves in that vast ocean of bliss
The shining Presence of the guru-self
This disappearance in the One
Is true worship of the Master.

212.

The natural state where the ego's flawed
vision
Does not circumscribe the guru's
Indivisible, universal Presence,
This is true worship of the Master
Standing like a beacon on a hill.

213.

Having once surrendered to the guru
Body, wealth and spirit, to regard
These still as I and mine amounts
To repudiation of a deed of gift.
Strict avoidance of this sin
Is pure worship of the Master.

GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

CHAPTER VIII

THE GLORY OF ARUNACHALA WORSHIP

GAUTAMA said : Goddess ! Hear what happened long ago. I visited, at Sankara's Command, the places sacred to Rudra such as Kedar, Badarikasrama, Kasi, Sri Parvata, Kancheepuram, etc., with the object of worshipping the *lingas* installed at those places. I saw the *lingas* installed by sages and great yogis. I worshipped the *tirthas* (bathed in them). I regularly practised austerities along with my disciples and performed *Yajnas* (sacrifices and bathed in *tirthas*. I then saw Isa, the great Deva, the three-eyed God, in this *linga* in the form of the famous hill Arunadri (Arunachala). *Tapasvins* who resolutely practised austerities and lived upon edible roots, were worshipping this Sonagiri (Arunachala). I adored this great *linga* which had first been adored by Brahma mentally (lit. with his divine eye). I said : Lord of Arunachala that art acclaimed by the Vedas in the words : *Asau Yastāmra aruna uta bhābhru sumangalah*. Siva ! Supreme Self ! Thou that art all the Vedas ! Eternal God ! Immor-

tal God ! Slayer of the God of Time (*Kala-Kala*) ! Flood of compassion ! Ocean of nectar ! Thou that art full of love towards Thy devotees ! Sacred Being ! Destroyer of the Three Cities ! Lord of the devas ! By (merely) looking at Thee one obtains the merit of following all the *dharmas*. One need not practise austerities thereafter. This earth which is the proper place for performing religious works (*karmabhumi*) is controlled by Thee. Even the devas wish to dwell in this abode of Thine. Time being now propitious for me I have obtained the good fortune (of dwelling here). The austerities practised by me have enabled me to see Thee. This form of Thine is wonderful. Nowhere else in the world can one see a *linga* in the form of a hill. The sun, the moon and the god of fire have made this a beautiful hill of a triangular shape. This form constitutes the three gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva). It controls the three phases of time as well as the three kinds of powers (*saktis*). This is a wonderful

Stand in Stillness

By Sunya

Following the discord and
remembering to stand ...
not to shout.
There remains an end ; but
all ends dissolve
into Love,
into Being.
... holy is that which remains Still.
How can you forget words
written with heart-beats ;
Or the silent sound,
when the heart is satisfied.
Communion is timeless,
Time is but an illusion.
Succumb only to the wind.
For a dustless vision of Mount Meru
standing alone
in its worldless understanding
of sky and earth,
united and interpenetrating
in infinite belonging
... pure accord
... the harmony of clouds.
Only 'ideas' reflect disharmony.

three-cornered *linga* composed of the three Vedas. Thou abidest on earth in this form as the famous Sonadri (Red Hill) for protecting the three worlds. Being a true Ocean of compassion, even ignorant persons who look at it once obtain all kinds of benefits. A *linga* which is not worshipped is regarded as worthless. But this is worshipped by devas constantly. Therefore it is capable of granting all kinds of boons. O Merciful God ! Sonachala ! Great God (Mahadeva) ! Graciously bless me. Thou art the Saviour of Thy devotees. Therefore save me who have in fear sought refuge with Thee, I see before me that form which is most auspicious. Ocean of compassion ! Refuge of all ! Graciously save me who have sought refuge with Thee !

Sonachala whom I praised in this manner revealed thereupon His divine form to me, called me to His side and, after listening to the praises sung with such great devotion, said : " I am greatly pleased with you. You shall worship me according to the ancient usage and perform austerities and thus proclaim my glory to all. When you were practising austerities on the Kailasa Mountain I ordered you to come to the southern country and worship Arunachala. The Seven Rishis worship me on earth in the same way and do good to all living beings through the power of their austerities. Worship me. Offer flowers to me according to the method laid down in the *agamas*.¹ This glorious and divine method of worshipping me is worthy of being seen even by the devas of *swarga*. Make it clear to all that Arunachala in this physical form composed of earth is truly Myself. There are ever so many virtuous souls who, having formerly worshipped me, are now living on earth in great joy. As you are superior to all of them you must clearly expound the proper method of worshipping Siva."

On being commanded by the Lord of the devas in this manner I bowed down to Him and reverently asked the extremely compassionate Lord of Arunadri : How can I worship the Great God who is fiery and unapproachable in a manner suited to the earth ? How am I to carry out Thy command ? Kindly tell me how I am to understand Thy words. The Lord of Arunachala, the Ocean of Compassion, the Great Deva, then replied as follows : I shall describe to you the *lingas* on earth which are incorporeal. You may worship me in accordance with the *agama* method. Worship with the power of your austerities the *linga* of the Lord of Arunadri which has five colours and is incorporeal and wonderful.

Saying this Swayambhu (the self-created God) revealed Himself to me as Siva, the

¹ A class of Revealed Scriptures which lay down the procedure for worship.

self-created, pure, great and incorporeal *linga*. On seeing this *linga* adorned with all kinds of ornaments, I felt that the goal of my life had been attained. I again begged Siva, who is fond of His devotees, thus : How can name and form be attributed to Thee that could not be described even by the *agamas* ? O Embodiment of Kindness ! Thou art my Lord, Thou art the Controller (Isvara). Who can worship Thee with flowers ? Where is the temple for Thee ? Or how is one to be built ? Which is the hymn to praise Thee ? In what manner art Thou to be worshipped ? Who are the servants (of the temple) ? How is one to protect Thee in Thy abode (*sthanaraksha*) ? Who is Thy bodyguard ? How is one to improve from day to day the method of worshipping Thee established by other persons ? How is one to make people believe that ever so many celestial beings (*devatas*) always abide in Thy presence ? Supreme Lord (Isa) ! Thou Thyself must kindly explain all this to me.

When I prayed thus the Lord of Sonagiri, the self-created God, ordered Visvakarma (Creator of the Universe) as follows : You must create (here) a divine and noble city named Aruna. You must also build in it a divine temple blazing with jewels. Arrangements should be made (in the temple) for chanting the Vedas and singing and dancing and playing musical instruments before me, for worshipping me in the prescribed manner.

The peerless Sambhu then explained to me the proper order of chanting His different names while offering flowers and the rules prescribed for it. He said : Gautama ! I shall describe how mortals should worship me. Listen. Know also who are the persons to be appointed for my worship. You must worship without fail this Arunadri (Arunachala) which appears as a lustrous and immeasurable *linga* on earth, for the welfare of the entire world. Let my power (*sakti*) which is inseparable from me and sustains the glory of this temple be installed on my northern side and worshipped as Apitakuchambika (Mother of the unsuckled breasts). The

THY FACE

By Jalalu'ddin Rumi

I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and then I died to vegetable growth and attained to the animal.

I died from animality and became Adam : why, then, should I fear ? When have I become less by dying ?

At the next remove I shall die to man : that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels ;

And I must escape even from the state of the angels ;

EVERYTHING IS PERISHING EXCEPT HIS FACE.

Lord of Arunachala is fond of Her and never parts from Her. Let the Great Deva (Myself) be worshipped during festivals along with His (My) sons. Let offerings be duly made to Him. Siva, the bestower of Wisdom who protects His devotees from fear and carries the bow named Saranga and an axe has a pleasant countenance. He is accompanied by Uma and Skanda. He wears all divine jewels and ornaments and illumines the entire world by His unsurpassable brilliance. Let Sundareswari (lit. beautiful Goddess) who increases one's amorous propensities be fully adorned and worshipped during auspicious festivals. Since Bala Ganapati (the young Ganapati) is the bestower of all prosperity let Him be well adorned and worshipped in front of Me. Let Parasakti (Supreme power) who never leaves Me be worshipped at My side during festivals. Nataraja who is fond of dancing, Amritesvara and another Parasakti should also be worshipped. Let the goddesses (lit. mothers) who remove obstacles be installed on the southern side and Skanda who carries the weapon known as Sakti, on the

Rainbow of Knowing

By Kavana

in the lifting
of an eyebrow
i see you
There.....
in the glow of
your silver
rainbow.
Sun-faces,
moon-dreams.....
all in a rainbow
of Knowing
You, Friend.
You are THAT
i AM.

north-east. Beautiful *lingas* should thereafter be worshipped!

I should be worshipped in the innermost shrine (*mulasthanā*), Dakshinamurti on the south, Maha Vishnu in the form of Agni on the West, Brahma in the East and on a separate shrine on the northern side, Goddess Unnamulai well adorned, accompanied by all the devas and surrounded by the *digpalakas* (protectors of the eight quarters). The extremely glorious *devis* (celestial beings) the fully adorned *Kshetrapala* (the protector of the temple), Goddess, *devatas* (celestial beings) who maintain the traditions, should all be worshipped for ensuring the prosperity of the temple. Monthly festivals should be celebrated with pomp. Beautiful and absolutely pure (chaste) maidens who have learned the art of singing and dancing for the sole purpose of serving (pleasing) Siva should be (engaged). Let *dikshitaras* who are learned in the Vedas virtuous, prosperous, pure in heart and well-versed in the Agamas of Siva, be appointed for rendering divine service. Let highly

accomplished persons be engaged to play on musical instruments at the time of worship. Let *pandits* learned in *Sad Vidya* and *Chaturvidya* and *kshatriyas*, *vaisyas* and *sudras* who are devotees of Siva be induced to settle here. Let mutts (rest-houses) be constructed on all four sides for the accommodation of pilgrims and the residence of ascetics, sages and devotees of Siva. Let Pasupatas,² Kapalikas³ and Sivayogis live in them, beg their food and worship Siva. The kings should protect this place without breaking My commands.

There is a *makizha* (*bakula*) tree at this place. Matters relating to Siva (temple affairs) should be decided under it. Money offered here will yield boundless merit. I listen to the prayers of devotees at that spot and grant the boons desired by them. I pardon all the faults of those who adore Me.

I accept the worship conducted by mortals as laid down in the agamas. Acts pious knowingly done by my devotees are pleasing to me. O Sage! you must examine the agamas and prescribe the methods of worshipping Me. Let special pujas be conducted on full moon days. Let thousands of *sattras* (alms houses) supply (free food) on that day. Let everyone make gifts according to his ability.

There is no doubt that those who keep a light burning continuously before me will become effulgent beings like Me (lit. will gain my effulgent form). Those who worship Me, with flowers will become kings. I will always go before them and conquer their enemies for them. A king who devoutly offers to Me the wonderful objects in his kingdom will be regarded as a devotee of Siva and performer of austerities even if he is a wicked person.

Having heard these words of Sambhu my doubts were cleared. I bowed to the Lord of Arunagiri and prayed to Him.

(To be continued)

² A sect among Saivites (Pasupati is one of the names of Lord Siva).

³ Another sect who use the *kapala* (human skull) in their rituals

RABBI NAHMAN
OF
BRATZLAV
TEACHES
THE TORAH
OF THE
VOID

Translated by Z. M. Schachter

Don't strain to understand
this void!

It is a mystery — not to be realised
until the future
is the *now*.

Now
speaking of the void
we must say two things
— opposites —
is-ness and is-not-ness.

Void means absence of G-d
for world space's sake.
But in truth's deepest truth
G-d is still there.
Without His giving life
Nothing is is-ing.

Thus we speak of the void.
There is no way to realize
The void before the future
is come to be now.

All creation comes from
the WORD:
"By the word of G-d
Heaven was made,
and by the breath of His mouth
all their hosts."
In words inhere wisdom
and sense.

All speech is bordered
by the five limits
of the mouth.
All creation is a limiting
in three dimensions
and in time
and in substance:
"In wisdom hast Thou
made them all."

The void has no limits,
no echo.
Burning questions
are not answered there.
Martyrs who want to know *Why?*
Are told "Silence!"
Thus is the decree of the Thought!"
Such *thought* is not given
to words.
Such thought is void of words.

A WESTERN APPROACH TO ZEN: By Christmas Humphreys. Pub.: George Allen & Unwin, London. Pp. 211. Price: £ 3.25 (Paperback £ 1.75).

Christmas Humphreys is a distinguished Buddhist writer and the President of the Buddhist Society which he founded nearly half a century ago. He has been guiding the Zen Class of this Society for many years. This book is based on experience and wide knowledge of the subject to which the author has consecrated the major part of his life.

This Western approach is meant for students and followers of Buddhism in the West who according to the author need a new Zen approach appropriate to the needs of the times. He suggests a practical course of mind-training via intellect or 'illumined thought' which means more study and thinking 'as hard and long and high as your intellect can manage, and rather more.' And about intellect Seng Ts'an says in 'On Believing in Mind,' 'Wordiness and intellection. The more with them the further astray we go.' It bypasses long years in Zen monasteries accessible to very few seekers and the practice of the koan which the author considers unsuitable for the modern mind. The courses are for 'those who accept that they are living in a world of relativity and not in a phantasy of a state of consciousness not yet attained.' Results are commensurate with the effort put in. In this the author echoes great seers, among them Ramana Maharshi, who said that nobody succeeds without effort. They expound Truth from the absolute point of view not losing sight of the plane of relativity which is 'as real as we are to ourselves.' Some of the chapters particularly those on effort and the highest esoteric aspects of Zen reveal what the Buddha and all the sages revealed though not without contradictions. 'From the first not a thing is' by Hui Neng runs like a refrain throughout the book. It is a relief and pleasure to go through these chapters. They come from a discerning mind.

The author also quotes extensively from D. T. Suzuki who was attacked in Japan for reducing Zen to the level of intellect. 'The Unattainable must be left to itself until it is ready to give an answer which comes apparently from the intellect but which is in fact the outcome of the intellect being investigated by the Unattainable. The more the commotion the deeper the satisfaction...' (from a still unpublished manuscript by D. T. Suzuki) or 'subject and object is needed to make us aware of consciousness.' The author comments that nought can be conscious without that which is to it 'other.' What about pure Consciousness or Oneness of Being without any duality? In the chapter 'Beyond Thought' the author writes:

BOOK REVIEWS

'These are moments of awareness not of my awareness of some thing which was not there before. Here subject/object . . . you and I no longer exist in separation...'

Knowledge is acquired when we succeed in fitting a new experience into the system of concepts based upon our old experience. Huxley says in *Adonis and the Alphabet*: 'Understanding comes when we liberate ourselves from the old and so make possible a direct unmediated contact with the new, the mystery moment by moment of our existence.' This the author takes as support for his own views.

Whereas Zen Master Pe'i Hsin has it: 'To those who have realized the nature of Reality there is nothing old or new. If one begins to reason about it one at once falls into error.' And Huang Po in the Chun Chou Record: 'Reality does not belong to the category of things which exist or do not exist, nor can it be thought of in terms of new and old.'

Christmas Humphreys believes that the teaching of Buddhist scriptures is true and that the highest thought will ever be that Truth is beyond all thinking. Then why supporting quotations metaphysically open to criticism?

The question arises apart from anything else whether Zen needs the support of the wisdoms of Madame Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine culled not only from the Stanzas of Dzyan but from various sources and does Zen echo the Voice of Silence or vice versa? James Stannus questions in his admirable review of *The Buddhist Way of Life* in the October 1969 issue of *The Mountain Path*: 'To what extent Theosophy despite isolated and admirable quotations constitutes a suitable basis for such forms of Buddhism as Chan or Zen or indeed for Buddhism as such at all.'

Some of the chapters are crowned with poems giving the gist of the teaching. The book makes interesting reading.

L. O.

A TREASURY OF TRADITIONAL WISDOM :
By Withall N. Perry. Pub. : George Allen &
Unwin Ltd., London. Price : £ 7.50.

No estimate of our times can fail to take note of the growing public interest in comparative religion. Beginning as an almost exclusively academic exercise it has extended in the past few decades to many with no pretensions to pure scholarship or interest in it who have been impelled simply by a craving for some religious or metaphysical assurance which they can no longer find within the bounds of the particular tradition into which they were born.

Superficially it would seem a surprising paradox that in an age so notoriously materialistic, men and women in ever increasing numbers should be seeking avidly for the fountain of living waters and earnestly looking for a solution to the mess they are in.

In response to the needs of the modern pilgrim to the source a number of excellent anthologies and "Bibles" of World Religions have already made their appearance. Some were perhaps compiled with more enthusiasm than judgment while others have tended to express too much of the author's personal eclecticism. What distinguishes the present sumptuous compilation of over a thousand pages is that it satisfies both the rigorous demands of the scholar who will find it an invaluable source book and the devotional needs of the pilgrim on the way for whom it will prove an illuminating workbook and an inexhaustible quarry for his meditations.

"The author's disposition of his material can fittingly be described as an arabesque of mutually revealing quotations", writes Marco Pallis in his foreword. The compiler himself opens his brief introduction with an invitation to the reader to enter upon a spiritual journey. "In this book he will encounter the heritage he shares in common with all humanity, in what is essentially timeless and enduring and pertinent to his final ends. Out of this myriad mosaic of material emerges a pattern of the human personality in the cosmos that is unerringly consistent, clear and struck through with a resonance infallible in its ever renewed reverberations of the one same Reality."

It is enough to mention Mr. Perry's close association with Ananda Coomaraswamy, Rene Guenon and Frithjof Schuon to assure the reader of his integrity and fitness for the labour of love that has taken him fifteen years. Neither in the choice and assembly of his quotations nor in the brief introductions to each section which themselves provide material for deep meditation does he allow his own personality and individual preferences to intrude.

The quotations, skillfully but not too formally grouped around six fundamental themes, are drawn

The Shakti

By Arthur Osborne

I only know she set my heart aflame
In youth when tempest tossed ;
In youth, all bearings lost,
Her grace my anchorage, her love my aim.

That was the first ; then through the middle years
Companion on life's ways,
Wedded in hopes and not weighed down by fears,
Solace in sombre days.

And now the third age dawns, the Shakti now,
Through whom to those who seek
His wisdom flows, His grace confirms the vow
To assail the sacred peak.

not only from familiar sources but from many inaccessible and probably unknown to the general reader. Devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi will be happy though not surprised to find his teachings have been widely quoted on all aspects of the spiritual path. Taking a page at random one finds him in the company of St. Paul, the Quran, Ibn Abi'l Khayr, The Tao Teh Ching, Shakespeare, Hazrat Ali, and Ho Kung. Another page he shares with Black Elk, the Chandogya Upanishad, Boehme, Saddharma Pundarika and Ibn Arabi.

We have for long been indebted to the publishers George Allen & Unwin for giving us a regular succession of authoritative books on the world's religions and reliable translations of spiritual classics. This splendidly produced volume more than justifies our indebtedness.

RONALD ROSE.

ZEN MIND, BEGINNER'S MIND : Informal talks on Zen meditation and practice : By Shunryu Suzuki, Master of Zen Center, San Francisco and Carmel Valley ; edited by Trudy Dixon, with an introduction by Richard Baker. Pub. : Walker/Weatherhill, New York & Tokyo, 1970. Pp. 134. Price : \$ 4.50.

If spontaneity is the hallmark of Zen Buddhism, then this book conveys this characteristic attitude in a most charming way. It has the freshness of

the spoken word in response to a momentary situation or problem of everyday life, and we can almost feel (or see with our inner eye) the smiling countenance of the Roshi. Trudy Diffon, one of Suzuki-roshi's closest disciples, who dedicated the last year of her short life to the editing and arranging of these talks, gives an excellent description of the relationship between Zen teacher and Zen pupil; and one of the best definitions of the title "roshi," which corresponds to the Indian term "guru": "A roshi is a person who has actualized that perfect freedom which is the potentiality for all human beings. He exists freely in the fullness of his whole being. The flow of his consciousness is not the fixed repetitive patterns of our usual self-centered consciousness, but rather arises spontaneously and naturally from the actual circumstances of the present. His whole being testifies to what it means to live in the reality of the present. Without anything said or done, just the impact of meeting a personality so developed can be enough to change another's whole way of life." (p. 14).

So far the West has been fairly swamped with Zen literature and more or less self-styled Zen teachers. But Suzuki-roshi, who has taken upon himself the difficult task to make an entirely new beginning of Zen in a Western country whose traditions are diametrically opposed to those of his own country, is the first who has succeeded not only in creating widespread interest in the ideas of Zen, but to establish Zen as a way of life by founding the first Zen training monastery outside Asia, at Tassajara (above Carmel Valley) in the mountains of California. Besides this many other groups have sprung up under his able leadership, the biggest one in San Francisco. The Zen Mountain Center is a place where both freedom and discipline are united and where physical work is as much a part of spiritual training as meditation and study. Here everybody contributes to the community life by sharing the necessary tasks in garden and kitchen, in building and household work, in planting and reaping, cutting fire-wood and clearing roads, or whatever the circumstances demand. The Roshi himself does not exempt himself from manual work, and his example turns even hard work into a joyful occupation. Hyakujo, the famous Zen Master of ancient China, who formulated the rules for Ch'an monasteries, said: "A day of no work is a day of no eating." If modern Buddhist Bhikshus would follow this rule (irrespective of whether they are Theravadians or Mahayanists), they would lead a healthier life and create greater respect for the Sangha — besides ensuring its survival under increasing difficult conditions all over the world. "Zen is not just for the man who can fold his legs or who has

great spiritual ability." "The only way to study pure mind is through practice. Our inmost nature wants some medium, some way to express and realize itself" (p. 132). This medium may be physical work as much as meditation. "You should be able to appreciate things as an expression of big mind. This is more than faith." "If you have this strong confidence in your big mind, you are already a Buddhist in the true sense, even though you do not attain enlightenment." "We each must find some to realize our true nature" (p. 133). The practice of Zen consists in making every activity into an expression of the 'big mind,' in which our true nature reveals itself. "Each of us must make his own true way, and when we do, that will express the universal way. This is the mystery. When you understand one thing through and through, you understand everything. When you try to understand everything, you will not understand anything. The best way is to understand yourself, and then you will understand everything" (p. 107). This is the purpose of *zazen*, of meditation, where you become you, and you see things as they are, and you become one with your surroundings. "So when you try hard to make your own way, you will help others, and you will be helped by others" (p. 107). "The result is not the point; it is the effort to improve ourselves that is valuable." For this reason the famous four vows of the Mahayana are not to be judged from the point of view whether they are attainable or not, but whether they are worth striving for or not: "Although sentient beings are innumerable, we vow to save them. Although our evil desires are limitless, we vow to be rid of them. Although the teaching is limitless, we vow to learn it all. Although Buddhism is unattainable, we vow to attain it." The Roshi's comment is: "If it is unattainable, how can we attain it? But we should! That is Buddhism. To think, 'Because it is possible we will do it,' is not Buddhism. Whether or not it is possible is not the point. If it is our inmost desire to get rid of our self-centred ideas, we have to do it. Your effort appeases your inmost desire. There is no other way to attain calmness. Calmness of mind does not mean you should stop your activity. Real calmness should be found in activity itself. We say, 'It is easy to have calmness in inactivity, it is hard to have calmness in activity, but calmness in activity is true calmness'" (p. 41/42).

While reading the book, the title "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind" reveals itself in its true meaning, namely, that this book is not meant merely as an introduction for beginners, but on the contrary, that a Beginner's Mind is the true mind of a genuine Zen follower, because only a mind that has the

freshness, receptivity and openness of a beginner, is an unprejudiced and spontaneous mind, who can see things anew in every moment of his life, unhampered by the deadening routine of habit and preconceived ideas. It is this freshness which pervades the whole book and brings us directly into the presence of the Roshi, who defines wisdom as "the readiness of the mind" (p. 111).

The book has been beautifully produced under the loving care of the Roshi's closest disciple, Richard Baker, the founding director of the Zen Mountain Center and himself a Soto Zen priest who is presently living in Japan. The jacket as well as the fine cloth-bound cover of the book show the calligraphy by Shunryo Suzuki Roshi. The back of the jacket bears an excellent, almost life-size photograph of the author by Robert S. Boni.

LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA.

BUDDHISM AND SOCIETY: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes: By Melford E. Spiro. Pub.: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 510. Price: £ 6.50 (in U.K.).

Buddhism and Society is an 'anthropological' study of Theravada Buddhism in Burma with all it implies in the process of transformation into 'a mass religion.' It concerns itself among others with a scientific and psychological study of religion possible on the basis of theories as propounded by Western thinkers and psychologists. Its compass is rather staggering ranging from anthropological problems to ideology, monasticism, ritual, apotropaic Buddhism, eschatology, the major features of esoteric Buddhism, the non-political and political aspects of the Burmese Sangha including an exploration of the 'sometimes contradictory consequences of karmic and moral authority for the Burmese political and social orders.' The major features of esoteric Buddhism are dealt with in a rather cursory exoteric manner its concern being rather with the social structure of monasticism. On the doctrinal level lay people tend to confuse 'anatta' with the doctrine of impermanence resulting in a shift to hedonism. There is emphasis on the preliminary sila precepts (morality or character building).

The book is analytical rather than textual though textual quotations enhance its value. *Parittas* (Buddhist spells) in crisis rituals are also quoted.

This is obviously a book that will appeal primarily to specialists in anthropology of religion as it deals extensively with major and minor aspects of the psychological setting of the religion and its impact on society, lay and monastic.

L. O.

Azad

By Arthur Osborne

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

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

LAGHU YOGA VASISTHA: English translation by K. Narayanaswami Aiyar. Pub.: Adyar Library & Research Institute, Madras-20. Pp. 486+xxxiii. Price not mentioned.

The *Yoga Vasistha*, also known as *Jnana Vasistha*, is a very popular epic dealing with Advaita philosophy through interesting stories. Its form is that of an epic while in respect of subject matter it is essentially philosophical. Herein lies its great attraction. Instead of discussing intricate philosophical problems in purely technical language it brings them home to the minds of ordinary readers as the most natural outcome of interesting stories. The stories, of course are carefully selected and narrated with skill so that they may naturally suggest the doctrines of philosophy.

The original work consists of 32,000 *stokas*. It is attributed to the sage Valmiki. It is in the form of a dialogue between Prince Rama and his family preceptor, Vasistha. The work is in the form of a report given by Valmiki to sage Bharadwaja.

A pandit of Kashmir, by name Abhinanda, brought out an abridged form of the work, consisting of 6,000 *stokas*. This abridgement, known as *Laghu Yoga Vasistha*, omits nothing that is important, only the elaborate descriptions of men and things are curtailed.

For the benefit of readers not sufficiently acquainted with the Sanskrit language, an English rendering of this abridged version was written and published in 1896 by the late Sri K. Narayanaswami Aiyar. It was reprinted in 1914. The present is the second edition and is intended to meet the persistent demands of the public.

In an introduction running to over thirty pages, the translator has given a fairly full summary of

the entire work. It is very readable. Then follow six chapters dealing with the Vairagya, Mumukshu, Utpathi, Sthithi, Upasanti and Nirvana *prakaranas*. Under each *prakarana* we read interesting stories which convey great lessons indirectly.

We heartily recommend the study of the book to all lovers of Advaita Vedanta.

FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY : By Balbir Singh. Pub. : Orient Longman, New Delhi. Pp. 301 + vii. Price : Rs. 27.50.

In this book, consisting of eleven chapters, the author inquires into the foundations of Indian philosophy and discovers it in the ethical, known as 'dharma'. "It is because of this principle of Ethics that Hindu thought in its entirety represents one single coherent, unified pattern from its formulation in the Vedas down through the succeeding centuries and that divergence and differences pertain only to the way in which the principle in its developing stages is employed in the attainment of the final goal of life conceived in different terms by different schools" (p. 164). The metaphysical quest for the ultimate reality behind the appearances is, in the author's opinion, ancillary to the ethical principle.

Dharma has two aspects, objective and subjective. In the former aspect, it is the cosmic principle governing the evolution and involution of the universe while in the latter it is the principle governing the right conduct of human beings.

To illustrate this thesis the author passes in review Hindu thought from the Rig Veda through the Upanishads, the Gita and the systems of philosophy down to recent times. The rapid survey that he makes of the entire body of Hindu speculative thought in the eleven chapters of the book under the heads of Ethics, Philosophy and Religion, is quite exhaustive and instructive also.

But all may not agree with his view that the main urge behind Hindu philosophical speculation is ethical and not metaphysical. If anything, it is the other way round. Any unbiassed student of Hindu thought will come to the conclusion that the dominant urge behind it is the desire to discover the principle of abiding reality behind the passing shows of the world.

Nor will readers of the book endorse the author's view that the Upanishads developed only the individualistic aspect of morality and totally neglected its social aspect. 'In their extreme enthusiasm to discover the nature of ultimate reality, the Upanishads have neglected the social aspect of ethics. *Vanaprasta* and *sanyasa* are exalted at the expense of the *Grahashta asrama*' (p. 90).

The inevitable reaction set in very soon and it is found in a pronounced manner in the Gita. In the author's opinion, the teachings of the Gita are in the nature of a revolt against the teachings of the Upanishads.

In answer to this, it is enough if we call attention to the characterisation of the Gita as 'Upanishad' and 'Brahma Vidya' in the colophon at the end of every chapter of the Gita. All the same, the book is worth reading.

THE REALM OF PERCEPTION : By Zohra Saiyidain. Pub. : The Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. Pp. 238 + xi. Price : Rs. 20.

Perception is the primary source of our knowledge of the external world. It comprises not only what we see with our eyes but also what we hear through our ears, what we smell through the nose, what we taste with the tongue and what we feel through the skin. Knowledge coming through any or all of these five sense-organs is termed perception.

The common sense view is that through these sense-organs, specially through the sense of sight, we become directly and immediately aware of the real nature of the objects that are presented to them.

But if this is the case, there is no reason why illusions, hallucinations and double images should occur. It is a fact of common experience that we sometimes see objects as other than what they are in reality. Seeing one thing for another is called an illusion. Seeing a snake where there is only a piece of rope is a typical instance of optical illusion. Macbeth seeing a shield hanging before him when there was really nothing before him, his seeing the ghost of Banquo sitting in the chair when it was really vacant, are instances of hallucination.

The naive common-sense view of perception cannot account for these aberrations. This has led to a re-examination of what exactly is presented in perception. Various theories have been advanced by thinkers down the ages. The author gives a clear account of all of them. She discusses also the allied question whether objects have an existence independently of our perception. In this connection she examines both subjective Idealism and common-sense Realism. Altogether it is a very readable book. Students specialising in Epistemology will greatly profit by the study of this book.

SOME CONCEPTS OF INDIAN CULTURE : By N. A. Nikam. Pub. : The Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. Pp. 91. Price : Rs. 10.

In this small book the author makes a close analytical study of the following concepts relating to Indian Culture : *yajna*, *satya* and *dharma*, the law of *karma*, *ahimsa*, *maya* and *lila*, *avatara*,

purushartha, atman and karma yoga. Undoubtedly these are representative concepts and taken together, their study gives a fairly full account of the fundamentals of Indian culture. In the course of the exposition the author quotes relevant passages from the Upanishads and the Gita. In fact these concepts crystallise the thought that is enshrined in the Upanishads behind their deceptive simplicity. The author's exposition of this thought exhibits deep and intelligent analysis. As occasions arise he elucidates Indian thought by making apt comparisons with the thought of western thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Kant, Bradley and others.

Discussing the concept of *yajna*, the author refers to the views of orientalist relating to the religion of the Veda. They said it was rank polytheism in its initial stages. The author contradicts this view and observes that 'the personification of Nature seems to be a devise of the ancient Indian mind to bring out into the day light of human devotion He who has hidden Himself behind the glories of His creation.'

Special mention has to be made of the intelligent exposition that the author gives of some of the myths that are to be found in the Upanishads. The role of dialectic and dialogue in the Upanishads is also well brought out.

Altogether it is a very useful contribution to the exposition of Indian culture on lines acceptable to modern readers. We strongly recommend its study to all lovers of Indian culture.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER.

MAHATMAS : By Trivedi Krishnaji. Published by the author at 22, Samudra Mudaly Street, Madras-3. Pp. 280. Price : Rs. 9.

Ma Anandamayi has said, "If you cannot get the company of living sages, read books about them or written by them." Most are not so happily circumstanced as to have this *satsanga* as often as one would wish. Here is a book in the alternative. It contains life-sketches of as many as fifty saints, mystics and philosophers of India as also from abroad. There are the Alwars, the Nayanmars, The Acharyas, saints of mediaeval and contemporary India; also Plotinus, Rabia, Rumi, Boehme. The author writes with discrimination and strikes a happy balance between history and legend.

There is an interesting account of a meeting between Bhagavan Sri Maharshi and Seshadri Swamigal : 'In 1908 Ramana Maharshi was in the Mango tree cave. One day Seshadri Swami went there and remained gazing at Ramana. He tried to read the mind of Sri Ramana and then exclaimed : "Not clear what he is thinking." Then he said :

Turkish Humanist Poetry

By Prof. Talat S. Halman

As a true mystic, he went in search of God's essence and, after sustained agony, made his ultimate discovery :

"The Providence that casts this spell
And speaks so many tongues to tell,
Transcends the earth, heaven and hell,
But is contained in this heart's cast."

"The yearning tormented my mind.
I searched the heavens and the ground ;
I looked and looked, but failed to find.
I found him inside man at last."

This prompted the mystic poet to remind the orthodox adherents of the faith in the following terms.:

"You better seek your God right in your
own heart :
He is neither in the Holy Land nor in
Mecca."

"If one worships Arunachala He will grant salvation." Sri Ramana enquired : "Who worships whom?" Seshadri Swami laughed and said : "That is just what is not clear." Then Ramana Maharshi spoke on the philosophical aspects of Advaita. Seshadri listened in silence and got up saying, "I can't say. All that is dark to me. I worship." He prostrated a dozen times to the Hill and moved out briskly' (p. 219).

In the concluding chapter of the book Sri T. Krishnaji discusses the importance of the *Name of God* in the sadhanas of the major traditions of the world. He makes a pertinent observation. 'The repetition of God's name or recitation of *Sahasranama* is not a mere repetitive process but it is intended to remind us of His presence in all His glory. Dariya Khan, a sufi saint of Sind, told one of his disciples that his refuge is Allah's name. The disciple wanted to know whether he repeated God's name to which Dariya Khan replied. "There was no repetition but remembrance of God's name." Faith and under-

standing must accompany the silent utterance of God's name.'

The Name is like a switch which when pressed releases a whole battery of spiritual Power. It is a dynamic and living symbol of the Reality it stands for.

THE HEART OF A GOPI : By Raihana Tyabji.
Pub. : East-West Publications Fund, B/12,
Nizamudding West, New Delhi-13. Pp. 62.
Price : Rs. 2.

When this little book first appeared thirty-six years ago, it made a deep impression as a document of profound spiritual experience. Since then it has gone into a number of editions and touched innumerable chords with its intensity of divine Love.

As the author notes in her preface, it was not a piece of writing in the usual sense. Sometime in 1924 she was possessed with an irresistible urge to write about Krishna. She had known little that she could write about. All the same, she had no option but to take pen and paper and allow the "writing" to shape itself. In three days of intense inspiration the narration poured itself revealing in full the *Heart of a Gopi*. It centres round the story of princess Sharmila and her moving surrender to the eternal Lord of souls — Krishna.

Raihana Tyabji rightly describes this as a "revelation of God's way with a soul that is ripe for spiritual awakening. There is, first, the hearing of the Name, followed by a curiosity that rapidly deepens into attraction. Then comes the contact with a true Bhakta and then a gradual and ever-deepening sense of His Presence, an intense desire for direct communion with Him. Whereupon — the soul turns into a Gopi, sees Him, and lives in Brindaban, hear His feet, for ever afterwards."

SAI BABA : By Mani Sahukar. Pub. : Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 77.
Price : Rs. 5.

In this monograph, the author describes the personality of the saint Sai Baba of Shirdi fame, the contribution he made to the spiritual regeneration of India and the living nature of his message and grace. She does not dwell on biographical details, but suggests that Baba's was an "immaculate origin." For an avatar, the taking of human birth in the human way, bearing human suffering and pain, are in the natural course of avatarhood. Whether an avatar or a vibhuti or a saint, he is great by what he manifests of God and not by virtue of the circumstances of his birth, the miracles attendant etc.

Mani Sahukar narrates with feeling the part played by Sai Baba in her own life. She underlines the main feature of his teaching, *bhakti*, which is indeed the culmination of true *jnana*. The chapter on Guru brings out the central role of the Teacher in sadhana. She quotes the Master "Guru is all the gods. Trust in the Guru fully."

Part II of the book deals with the 'Successors of Sai Baba.' There are two brief chapters on Upasani Baba and Godavari Mataji whom the author regards as the authentic *Guru parampara*.

M. P. PANDIT.

RAJA YOGA : By Selvarajan Yesudian and Elizabeth Haich. Pub. : George Allen and Unwin, London. Pp. 161. Price : £ 1.40 (28s).

This is an interesting book which serves as a spiritual bridge between East and West. It endeavours to synthesize the individual path of the Orient with the collective path of the Occident — *ekantam* with *lokantam*. Its Raja Yoga is reminiscent of Ramana Yoga; for it starts with Who and ends with I — the life-giving God-Self dwelling deep within the Heart. The book is an answer to the riddles of how, whence, whither and why. Moses heard God's name revealed as I AM THAT I AM, the Eternal Truth within the Heart, which in St. John finds further elucidation, saying, "I and my Father are One. Is it not said in your law, 'I said you are Gods'?"

The author gives us a Yoga that unites Eastern and Western philosophy and elucidates the Vedantic conclusion that the KNOWER, KNOWN and KNOWLEDGE are One Consciousness in *triputi* (three conditions). He brings together the Bible and the Upanishad in his unitive vision, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' and *Maitribhava*, fellow feeling for all. The book is enhanced with incidents from the lives of great souls. It brings together Krishna and Christ and ends with the Gita's declaration: You are my chosen friend; you are dear to me and I speak for your own good.

YOGI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI.

SWAMI DAYANAND : By B. K. Singh;

SWAMI RAM TIRTH : By D. R. Sood.
Price : Rs. 2.50.

RAMANUJACHARYA : By R. Parthasarathy;

MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR : By T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar;

TYAGARAJA : By Prof. P. Sambamoorthy.
Price : Rs. 2 each.

Publishers : National Book Trust, New Delhi
under *National Biography Series*.

Goethe had said somewhere that if man cannot solve the problem of the universe, he can at least find out where the problem begins... Surely, he was not referring to the problem of hunger, privation, disease and distress but to the privation of spirit, which makes a gap in the fabric of reason, leaving him to face a mystery which neither science nor philosophy can penetrate. For the latter can at best offer rules and formulas equivalent to a menu card for the staff of life. But each of the subjects of the given books under review provides to every earnest aspirant a heavy solid meal without parading the bill of fare. For they are in a real sense the Rishis of modern India, spiritual inheritors of the great Aryan treasure.

Dayanand, as every schoolboy knows, was a nation-builder, preaching ceaselessly, despite persecutions, the Aryan ideals in implicit obedience to his guru, Vrijanand's injunction to go out and teach the Vedas and dispel the darkness of creeds in the Holy Motherland. As Prof. Singh rightly describes, in this relentless struggle against social injustice and priestly privilege, no amount of coercion, intimidation or temptation was ever able to dissuade him from his chosen path :

"Though himself a Brahman, he was unsparing and remorseless in his denunciation of Brahmanas..." (p. 102).

If Dayanand stuck to the traditional Vedic lore, Ram Tirth was a Professor of Mathematics in the University of undivided Punjab ; and if the former was a *Bal Brahmachari*, the professor was married but later took to *sannyas*. In his thirty years of mortal life, he left a rich spiritual legacy preaching the Upanishadic doctrine to his countrymen intoxicated with the heady wine of the new Western culture.

Ramanujacharya coming nine centuries earlier in South India wrought a religious reformist upsurge by laying the spiritual foundations for the new Vaishnavite school, which soon spread like wildfire to the north, east and west of Aryavarta. Who can forget that his Bhakti gospel was the precursor of the movements sponsored by Vallabha, Eknath, Ramdas, Tukaram, Jayadev and Chaitanya ? The antecedent circumstances such as the spread of Sanskrit culture of the north in the peninsula, the growth of *visishtadwaita* literature in the vernacular under the influence of the Alwars, the development of Pallava architecture and other such important factors need to be understood clearly, if one is to

Ramana— Arunachala— Arthur

By L. O.

Softly, gently,
Caressingly
The Mountain's breeze
Surrounds me.
In an embrace of greeting
Touches my head, my face.
Long have you been in coming . . .
The heart stirs
Oh my Beloved !

(On the Hill of Arunachala after
some interval)

grasp the timeliness of this great Acharya's advent in the *milieu* of the eleventh century in South India. If the book had devoted more attention to the significance of this spiritual renaissance and less to the myths, legends and stories connected with the Swamiji, it would be of greater value.

But much scholarship and erudition are evident in that precious little book on Muthuswami Dikshitar who, although known to the public as a saintly composer and one of the classical trinity, was a profound savant learned in the Vedas, Vedanta, Yoga, *Mantra Sastras*, *Agamas*, etc., all of which are reflected in his compositions. As in his young years he stayed in Benares for more than a decade, his knowledge of the Hindustani system of music was as deep and profound as the Carnatic. His compositions are unique in that they are cast in the *ragas* of the Carnatic and the Hindustani systems.

An equally competent book on Tyagaraja is welcome as it is written by Prof. Sambamoorthy, the well-known musicologist, who like the late Mr. Justice T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar, can speak with authority of the sense of unutterable depth in music "by virtue of which it floats through our consciousness as the vision of a paradise firmly believed in, yet ever distant from us, and by which it is so fully understood and yet so inexplicable..."

ARGUS.



CALCUTTA RAMANA KENDRA — ARADHANA CELEBRATIONS: *Sitting in front of this large portrait of Sri Bhagavan, the devotees felt His Presence and Blessings very powerfully.*

ASHRAM BULLETIN

Ramana Aradhana Celebrations At Calcutta

The 22nd anniversary of Sri Bhagavan's *Brahma Nirvana* was celebrated in a fitting manner by 'Sri Ramana Kendra' at the National High School (Girls), Lansdowne Road, Calcutta, on Sunday, May 28th, amidst a large gathering of *Ramana-bhaktas*.

A VERY big coloured photo of Sri Bhagavan (a reproduction of the one at the Old Hall at the Ashram, bought by Sri H. R. Chadha only a few days before the function) with lights from behind it brought in a solemn and inspiring atmosphere of His living presence.

At 6 in the evening the function commenced with the chanting of the Maharshi's own composition in Tamil, *The Marital Garland of Letters (Aksharamanamalai)* by the lady devotees, led by Smt. Lakshmi Lakshminarayanan and Smt. Alagu Sundaram. This was followed by *Puja* and *Arathi*.

Sri S. C. Majumdar, General Secretary, welcomed the gathering and enunciated the activities of the Kendra.

Sri Swami Sambuddhanandaji Maharaj of the Ramakrishna Mission, who has seen Sri Maharshi, graced the occasion by his presence. He also delivered an instructive lecture on Hinduism and the teachings of Sri Maharshi. He urged the need for



S. C. Majumdar

harmony in thought, word and deed, with special emphasis on Self-enquiry.

The special feature of the function was declaring open of the Kendra Library by Sri A. R. Natarajan, Secretary, Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, containing, to start with, books on and by



Swami Sambuddhananda



A. R. Natarajan

Sri Maharshi, donated by Sri Ramanasramam. While congratulating the Calcutta Kendra's activities, Sri Natarajan emphasised the importance and need of *sadhana* as taught by Sri Bhagavan. He said

that reading books was only the initial step and that putting into practice what Sri Bhagavan taught, that is *sadhana*, was most essential.

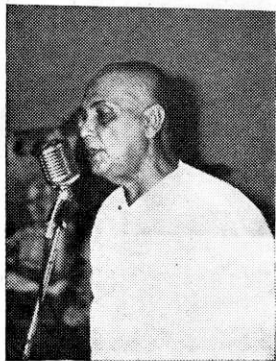
Sri V. Ganesan, Managing Editor, *The Mountain Path*, who came from Sri Ramanasramam specially to participate in the function, conveyed the good wishes and co-operation of the Ashram to the activities of the Kendra. He distributed to all devotees present a large beautiful colour picture of Sri Bhagavan (as published in the frontispiece of our January 1972 issue) meant for worship and meditation.



V. Ganesan

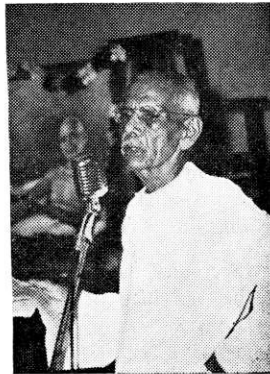
In his maiden speech he explained how he was attracted to Sri Bhagavan first and foremost by his own personal experience, and not merely by the theory and philosophy of Sri Bhagavan. He added that Bhagavan appealed to him as a full, complete human being, which affirmed that He was divine. He also quoted instances to prove how Sri Bhagavan, like other saints and sages, came to "fulfil and not to destroy", upholding tradition by following it meticulously himself as an example to others. He said Sri Bhagavan emphasised that it was possible to follow a spiritual life amidst mundane activities.

Next spoke Sri S. P. Mukherji, also of Sri Ramanasramam, who is permanently at Arunachala (for a note on whom, see *Ashram Bulletin* of 1964, p. 188) and who happened to be at Calcutta. Quoting a verse from *Updesa Saram*, he elucidated the unique simplicity and directness of Sri Bhagavan's technique of "Who am I?" He explained how Bhagavan was and is the exemplification of His own teaching of "Just Be".



S. P. Mukherji

Sri Radhika Mohan Sen read out a written speech on Sri Bhagavan's philosophy, quoting profusely from *Talks with Ramana Maharshi*.



Radhika Mohan Sen



H. R. Chadha

Then Sri H. R. Chadha, one of the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, narrated his personal experiences with the Master while he had the privilege of staying with Him at the Ashram. The audience listened with rapt attention to his devotional outpourings.

This was followed by an analytical exposition by Smt. Anusuya Subramaniam. She explained how the attribution of "Bhagavan" was and is so fitting to our Master. She cited from various texts to show how Ramana is the BHAGAVAN. Her speech in Tamil was



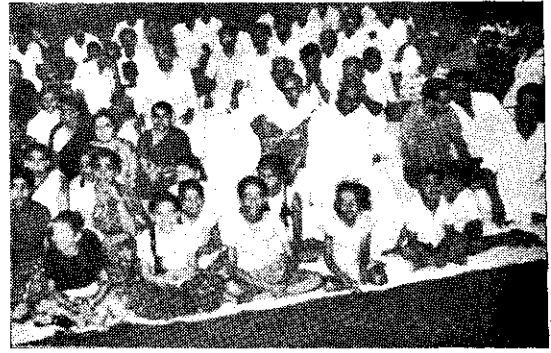
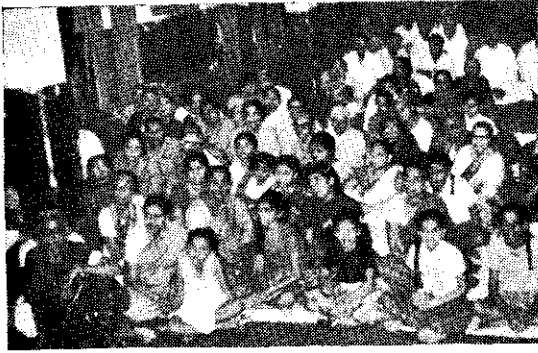
Smt. Anusuya Subramaniam

inspiring and was very well received by the audience.



Harendra Nath Majumdar

The Vice-President of the Kendra, Sri Harendra Nath Majumdar, who presided over the function, narrated his experiences when he visited the Ashram.



The devotees who attended the Ramana Aradhana Celebrations at Calcutta.

Sri N. S. Ramanan, Treasurer of the Kendra, who proposed a vote of thanks, made an announcement that the Kendra Library for the present would be situated at 16, Jatindas Road, Calcutta-29, where also the weekly *bhajan* would be conducted every Friday evening, and that the weekly study circle on the teachings of Sri Bhagavan each Sunday evening would be held at 12, Chakraberiya Road (South), Calcutta-25.

The function was successfully concluded with *bhajan* by the lady members of the Kendra, led by Smt. Lakshmi Lakshminarayanan and Smt. Alagu Sundaram.

* * *

AT THE ASHRAM

The 22nd Aradhana Day of Sri Bhagavan's Brahma-Nirvana was observed on the May 11, 1972 with all solemnity and devotion. As usual there was a very large gathering of devotees who took part in the day's functions. The proceedings commenced with Mahavyasa Puja and Ekadasa Rudram. At 6-15 a.m. there was Milk offering worship at Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace followed by breakfast which was served to all present. Then followed the Mahabhishekam to Sri Bhagavan to the accompaniment of Vedic chants and Upanishad Parayanam. Finally the *Arathi* was done and the devotees and visitors were all treated to lunch. There was poor feeding on a large scale.

At night Brahasri Jagadeswara Iyer conducted *Bhajan* which concluded the functions.

* * *

AT NEW DELHI

Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, celebrated *Gurupuja* in customary manner, with Veda Parayanam and

worship. There was also devotional music followed by discourses on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings.

At the election of new office-bearers for the Ramana Kendra, Sri C. Subramaniam was made the President and Sri A. R. Natarajan the Secretary.

* * *

AT MADRAS

The Ramana-Bhakta Sabha, Alwarpet, Madras, celebrated *Gurupuja* on May 14. After worship and Vedaparayanam Dr. P. K. Sundaram gave a talk on *Sri Ramananubhuti* (Ramana experience). Srimathi Sulochana Natarajan gave an inspiring recital of devotional songs from Sri Muruganar's compositions on Sri Bhagavan.

* * *

AT CHEPAUK

The members of Sri Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Chepauk, celebrated the 22nd Aradhana of Bhagavan Sri Ramana on May 10, at Neo Indra Bhavan, Big Street, Triplicane. After Siva Sahasranama Archanai, forty verses in praise of Sri Ramana and Taittiriya Upanishad were recited. With distribution of prasadam and *pan supari* the function terminated.

* * *

SRI RUDRA YASHTI

This annual ceremonial function took place on June 16 at the Ashram, commencing at 5-30 a.m. and concluding at noon. The occasion marked the anniversary of the daily pujas to Lord Siva and was largely attended.

A SHRINE TO SRI JANAKI MATHA

The *Maha Kumbhabishekam* of Sri Janaki Matha Shrine at Sri Janaki Nilayam, Ganapathinagar, Thanjavur, was celebrated with all rituals on Sunday the 23rd April, 1972 between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. The function commenced with the *Yaga Puja* on the 21st, followed by the *Ashtabandanam* on the 22nd and culminated with the *Kumbhabishekam* on the 23rd morning. There was poor feeding in the same afternoon.

His Holiness Sri Gnanananda Swamigal of Thirukoilur blessed the function in advance, as His Holiness was physically unable to attend.

Devotees had gathered for the function from far and near. Prominent among those present were Sri Gurudasananda Swamigal (a disciple of Sri Matha), Sri Krishnamurthi Sastrigal (the deputed representative of Sri Ramanasramam), *Vakeesa Kalanidhi* Sri K. V. Jagannathan, a special invitee, and Sri Sukha Brahmam, another special invitee and Kallur Sri Krishnamurthi Bhagavathar.

Messages had been received, blessing the great function, from the Holy Mutt at Sringeri, the Ramanasramam at Tiruvannamalai and the Anandasramam at Kanhangod. Letters of reverential congratulations had been received from Sri T. N.

Venkataraman, President of Sri Ramanasramam and from Sri Swami Chidananda of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh.

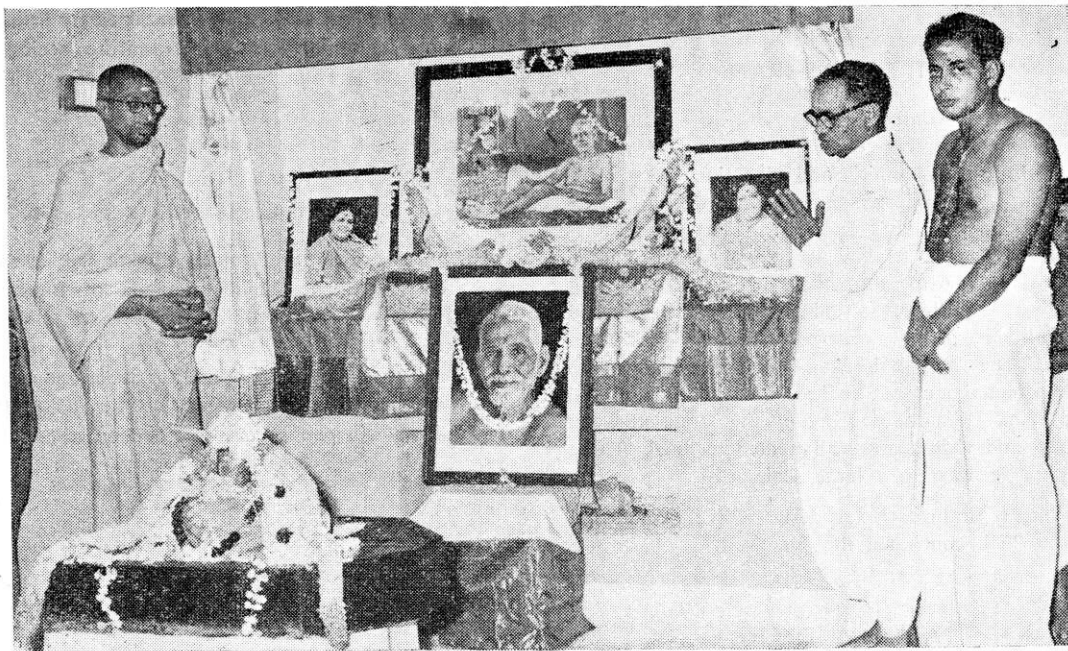
Sri K. R. K. Murthy of Hyderabad, Retired Electrical Engineer, reputed Master Dowser and a devoted disciple of Sri Ramana and Sri Matha, unveiled the life-like portraits of Sri Ramana and Sri Janaki Matha in the Shrine.

Sri Krishnamurthi Sastrigal of Sri Ramanasramam spoke from his personal knowledge of the greatness and grace of Sri Matha. Sri K. V. Jagannathan spoke at length of the uniqueness of Sri Matha's life combining spirituality with devotional duties of a domestic life. He concluded on a note of confidential assertion that Sri Matha is a link in the unbroken chain of enlightened souls of *Bharata Desam*.

In the evening there was an inspiring *Bhajan* by the Chinmaya Mission of Thanjavur so kindly arranged by Sri S. A. Venkatesan.

This was followed by a brilliant discourse by Sri Sukha Brahmam, in which he dilated on the special qualities of Sri Matha as a spiritual Guru and guide.

There was a *Sangeetha Upanyasam* on the Ramayana by Kallur Krishnamurthi Bhagavathar, who rendered the *Keerthanas* of Sri Thiagayya with due attention to the melody and the meaning, as the basis of his discourse on Sri Rama's life.



THE SHRINE OF SRI JANAKI MATHA : Praying at the shrine are (l. to r.): Sri Gurudasananda Swamigal, Sri K. R. K. Murthy and Sri K. V. Krishnamurthi.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Sri K. S. Narayanan, M.Sc., of Serfoji College.

The *Kumbhabhishekam* is the fitting culmination of the great spiritual life of Sri Janaki Matha who continues to have many followers and devotees!

* * *

A KENDRA AT NAGPUR

A preliminary gathering of friends, interested in the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, took place at the Theosophical Society Hall, Dhantoli, Nagpur, on May 28, 1972.

The following were present: Sri M. S. Nanjundiah, Sri K. R. Vasudewan, Sri Mahavir Prasad Jain, Sri C. Rama Shastri, Sow. Sarala Shankar Anand and Sri S. B. Potdar.

Sri S. B. Potdar, an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan, narrated how he was directed to Sri Bhagavan, years ago (1930) at Bilaspur, M.P. by his Sadguru Sri Baba, an Afghani Sage, who many a time said: "There is a great Lord in the South, some distance from Madras, keep it in mind".

It was unanimously agreed to establish a Ramana Kendra here, that being the very auspicious *Vaishakhi Poornima Day*.

Sri M. S. Nanjundiah (President) deserves thanks for his kind permission to use the Theosophical Society Hall for Ramana Kendra meetings.

* * *

VISITORS

During the month of May 1972, the following devotees among others came to the Ashram and stayed for short or longer stay.

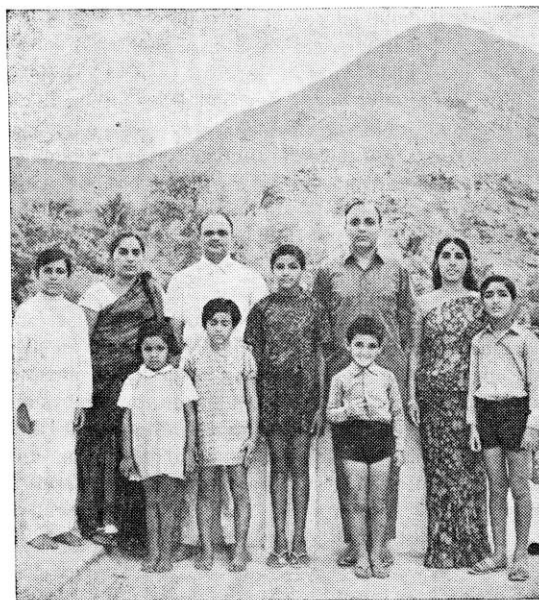
Sri Satyanarayana Tandon and Mrs. Tandon from Kanpur.

Sri Kailash Khanna with wife and children.

Sri Ranvir Khanna with wife and children.

Mr. Justice K. S. Ramamurty of the Madras High Court visited the Ashram on the 5th April, 1972 along with Mrs. Ramamurty. After performing Arathi and worship of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine and the Mother's temple he was shown round the Ashram.

Wing Commander Kailash Chandra Khanna who is now at Adampur in the Indian Air Force, has been awarded the *Vayu Sena* medal in 1965 and again the *Ati Visisht Seva* medal in 1971 for setting up a glorious example and successfully execut-



KHANNA FAMILY: (Back row — 1. to r.): Anil, Smt. Uma Khanna, Ranvir Khanna, Kailash Khanna, Smt. Sunita Khanna and Pavan. (Front row — 1. to r.): Vinnie, Ritu, Alka and Gagan.

ing all missions with total disregard to his own safety, during the two Indo-Pakistan wars. He stayed at the Ashram for a month during April-May, together with his wife and children. His brother, Sri Ranvir Khanna, and his family also joined him. They all stayed in the Premawathi Khanna's Guest House constructed and donated to the Ashram by their father, Sri Hari Chand Khanna. The children took to the Ashram life so naturally and so completely that they persistently urged their parents not to leave the Ashram! They endeared themselves to all the Ashramites so well that their absence was felt after their departure!

Sri Kailash says:

"In spite of the fact that Sri Bhagavan is always with us, it has been my long cherished desire to come to Sri Ramanasramam with my children for a full summer vacation, just the way we used to come with our father when we were in school, during Sri Bhagavan's life-time.

"The desire to come to Arunachala is like getting home to relax, where one's parents are waiting to embrace and absorb their children in their loving fold. The hospitality and kindness of all the Ashram inmates deepen the home-coming feeling.

"Sri Bhagavan's teachings of effectively discharging one's duties while abiding in the Self, have

induced a definite purpose in my life. It is due to His Grace that though employed as a Fighter Bomber Pilot in the Indian Air Force, the fear of death (losing this inert body) has never figured. During both the Indo-Pakistan wars, while engaged in offensive attack missions, my aircraft though seriously damaged by enemy ground fire on a few occasions with almost no possibilities of safe recovery, landed back safely due entirely to Sri Bhagavan's GRACE!"

* * *

Sri A. R. Natarajan, Mrs. Sulochana Natarajan and other members of their family, arrived at the Ashram on June 10th morning and stayed at the Ashram till the 13th. They all had a good and inspiring time during their stay, meditating at the Shrine of Grace of Sri Bhagavan and meeting all the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan staying permanently at the Ashram. Sri Natarajan is presently the Secretary of the Ramana Kendra, New Delhi.

* * *

Alan Saret of the United States of America, who arrived here in January, is still with us, doing meditation and *sadhana*. We are happy to have him amidst us.

* * *

Swami Narikutti from Ceylon, an Australian by birth, arrived at the Ashram in March and intends to stay in the Ashram till September. He is a disciple of Sri Yoga Swami of Ceylon and an earnest *sadhak*.

* * *

Madame Renault of France, who has visited the Ashram once before, is now amidst us for a month's stay.

* * *

OBITUARY

A staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, GOPAL RAO, passed away on April 30, 1972 at Desabhandu Sangan in Pappanampatti. The sad news was received with deep regret by all the devotees of Sri Bhagavan and the inmates of the Ashram. He was a staunch devotee of Bhagavan and associated with the Ashram since its inception.

In those early days he was helpfully guiding all visiting devotees of Sri Bhagavan, attending to their needs and Ashram affairs. The present Meditation Hall — known as the Old Meditation Hall — which was the first masonry structure put up here, was the result of his great efforts, and was raised by subscriptions. It was intended primarily to house Sri

Bhagavan and avoid exposure to the inclemencies of weather. From about 1925 to 1929 Gopal Rao was managing all affairs.

Gopal Rao also took an active part in the constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi and specially in the Khadi Movement and its propagation.

We all deeply regret to record his demise and pray that his soul may rest in peace at Sri Bhagavan's Lotus Feet.



A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

We deeply regret to announce the passing away of Sri A. Devaraja Mudaliar¹ at his daughter's residence in Kancheepuram on June 15, 1972, at the age of 85. Though he had no serious illness, he was growing weaker day by day, and the end was peaceful.

His first *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan was in Virupaksha Cave and since then he was a frequent visitor until he came to live in the Ashram in 1942 in a cottage he was permitted to build for himself. He lived here for many years and in 1966, due to old age, he went to live with his daughter.

His contact with Sri Bhagavan was close and long and he was one of the few devotees who acted as interpreter for the foreign and Indian devotees not knowing Tamil who asked questions of Sri Bhagavan. He was author of *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, *My Recollections of Bhagavan* and *Gems from Bhagavan*. He was also a frequent contributor to *The Mountain Path*.

May he now rest eternally in peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

¹ For a note on whom see our January, 1966 issue, p. 199.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

New Additions

From Man to God-man: The inspiring Life Story of Swamy Sivananda. By N. Anantanarayanan. Pub.: N. Anantanarayanan, 18-C, Irwin Road, New Delhi-1. (Rs. 16).

A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom: By Whittall N. Perry. Pub.: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. (£ 7-50 in U.K. only).

The Mind and Its Control: By Swami Budhananda. Pub.: Advaita Ashrama, 5, Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta-14. (Rs. 1.50)

Manu and the Origins of Social Thought: By Kewal Motwani. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpathy, Bombay-7. (Re. 1).

Lord Haranath (Vol. 3), *Antya-Lila* (Part 1): Compiled by A. Ramakrishna Sastry. Pub.: M/s. Girija Sankar Dhar, M.A., and A. Ramakrishna Sastry. 6-20-5, Innespeta, Rajahmundry-2, A.P.

A Western Approach to Zen: By Christmas Humphreys. Pub.: George Allen & Unwin, London. (£ 3.25)

* * *

Mention should be made of the splendid work of *The Buddhist Publication Society* founded in 1958 in spreading Buddhist spiritual teaching throughout the world through its Bodhi Leaves Series and Wheel Series booklets.

Here are some of the additions:

- (1) *Ethics in Buddhist Perspective*: By Prof. K. N. Jayantileke
- (2) *Facets of Buddhist Thought, Six Essays*: By Prof. K. N. Jayantileke.
- (3) *The Girimananda Sutta, Ten Contemplations with Commentary from the Sarattha Samuccaya*: Translated from Pali by Nanamoli Bhikkhu
- (4) *Rebirth Explained*: By V. F. Gunaratna
- (5) *Mudita, The Buddha's Teaching on Unselfish Joy, Four Essays*: By Nyanaponika Thera, Natasha Jackson, C. F. Knight and L. R. Oates
- (6) *Why Buddhism?, Why Theravada*: By M O'C Walshe
- (7) *Anguttara Nikaya, Discourses of the Buddha, An Anthology*: Translated by Syanaponika Thera
- (8) *The Requisites of Enlightenment, Bodhipakkhiya Dipani, A Manual*: By The Venerable Ledi Sayadaw

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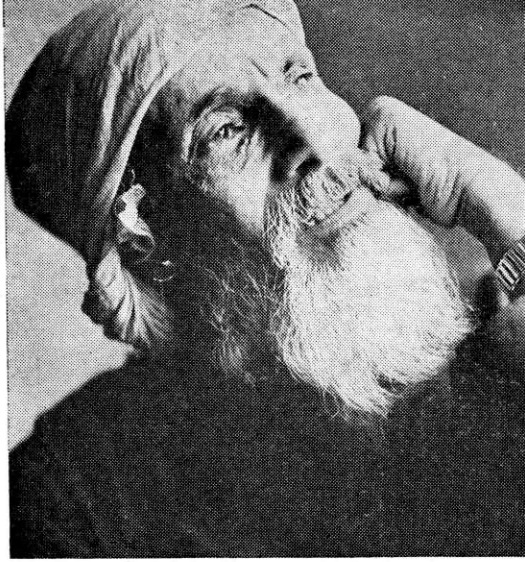
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Yogi Siddhananda Bharati

A tireless worker in the national cause of Indian independence, a tireless writer on any subject, an ardent spiritual seeker and above all a colourful personality — he is well known in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere. Born in a Brahmin family in 1897 he inherited the spiritual traits of his parents. Quite early he engaged in social service in the fields of Harijan uplift, boy scout movement, promotion of adult literacy, naturopathy etc. He regarded service to humanity as service to God.

Yogi Siddhananda Bharati remained unmarried and took to *japa*, *pranayama* and other practices of Hatha Yoga early in life. He read extensively books on all religions including Buddhism, Islam, Christianity etc., but he felt he had no glimpse of the Truth. He did *tapas* for a while at Nerur, where the Samadhi of Sadasiva Brahmendra is located. One day in the twenties, someone brought a picture of Bhagavan and he immediately felt attracted to it. Sri V. V. Iyer had given him a glowing account of Bhagavan already. So on a strong impulse he came to Tiruvannamalai.

The first sight of Bhagavan had a tremendous effect. And when Bhagavan referred to him as the author of *Bharata Sakthi* (his longest poem) he felt elated. This contact continued and Bharati became one of the group of devotees centred around Bhagavan. He had the habit of lighting a *kuthu vilakku* before Bhagavan and dancing round it and almost forcing other devotees to join in.

He is a prolific writer in Tamil and English both in prose and poetry. Special mention deserves to be made of his elaborate and well produced biography of Bhagavan in Tamil under the title *Ramana Vijayam* with special reference to His devotees.

INTRODUCING...

Yogi Siddhananda Bharati



One poem from the above work is given below :

Think of Ramana ! O mind,
 think of him !
 Think of him so that thinking
 may go
 And one may become the Bliss
 that is Siva.

Worship Ramana ! O mind worship
 him !

Worship him with love and
 flowers of gold
 Let all strife cease and the
 ego be extinct thereby.

Offer O mind ! Offer everything
 unto him

Offer everything to him who is
 That Awareness Supreme
 That Consciousness Wondrous !

Siddhananda Bharati with all his varied activities is essentially within the group of Bhagavan's earnest devotees. He now lives in comparative retirement having left his work of the Yoga Samaj, (Madras) in charge of his assistants.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HOW REAL IS THE WORLD?

I was drawn to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi through the writings of late Sri Arthur Osborne. Even after reading most of the books published by Sri Ramanasramam many doubts still persist in my mind. I shall be grateful if you can explain the following points in the light of Bhagavan's teaching :

(1) How is it proved that the world does not exist because I am not aware of it in deep sleep? Apparently the break is in my awareness of the world and not in its existence.

(2) How to understand that this world is merely a thought? The statement that it rises and sets with the mind does not convince me. The world seems to exist all the time, only I see it or do not see it.

(3) It is argued that the world as world is not real but as Brahman it is real. What does it matter whether the world is real as world or as Brahman? Does not this confirm the reality of the world?

J. R. KAMAT, Bombay.

If science has come to the conclusion that this world of seemingly so solid objects, etc. is only a form of energy, and matter only protons, neutrons and electrons whirling in various combinations, so it should not be so difficult for you to believe in its unreality from a metaphysical point of view. If you should dream of hitting your foot against a stone, you will experience pain and the hardness of the stone will be real to you at the time. How do you know that your experiences during your "wak-

ing" state are more real and that you will not awaken from this "waking" state also some day? All sadhana aims at waking up from it.

Consciousness is always in the first person. When you are asleep or under an anaesthetic, where is the world for you? You say that it exists all the time whether you know it or not, but you must be there to say so or think so or hear others say so. It is only on the substratum of your individual consciousness that the world appears. Does the world independently manifest as existent when you are asleep or in a faint?

There is a vast difference between the world viewed real as Brahman or apart from Brahman. If you realise the first view you are enlightened and all your troubles are at an end. The world viewed apart from Brahman is samsara with all its delusive entanglements and suffering.

EDITOR.

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LIFE OF REALITY?

Thinking about my life, though in comfortable circumstances, good position, nice apartment, a new car, etc., I am very dissatisfied. I have no obligations to other people, I mean wife or children. I am almost 34 years old.

Lately I have been thinking very seriously of going to India to become a monk and dedicate my life to realization. Perhaps you can help me. This is very important to me. I need a Guru. Everything is just an illusion and I want to start to live in reality. The kind of life I am choosing is very

hard, I know it, but I really want such a life. What do I have to do? I need your help. This step would be for good...

ERNESTO HORNEFFER, C.,
Mexico.

It is not absolutely necessary to renounce worldly life in order to dedicate it to realisation. SADHANA (spiritual effort) can be practised in the life of the world also. Very few people are fit to meditate and practise sadhana all day. Creating an artificial vacuum tends to make the mind more restless. Before adopting such a path for good it would be advisable to spend some time in an ashram or monastery on a temporary basis and see how it works. When someone asked Ramana Maharshi about sannyasa (renunciation) He replied: "Sannyasa is mentioned for one who is fit. It consists in renunciation not of material objects but of attachment to them. Sannyasa can be practised by any one, even at home!" You can always devote an hour or less to sadhana under a form which suits you best, be it meditation or devotional practice or Self-enquiry, morning and evening, and try to remember as constantly as possible the real Gurn in the heart which is your own Self never absent from you, and this will keep us a spiritual current which will lead you further. If our duties in life are performed to the best of our ability as selflessly as possible, this also helps to purify the mind. When ready and fit for a life of complete renunciation, everything will fall into place of its own accord and the question will not even arise. Outer circumstances are a reflection of our inner state and a stepping stone to go further.

EDITOR.

* * *

NO CONTRADICTION

I have been reading the Maharshi's "Talks" with great pleasure. I find that there are contradictions in the teachings. I have put some of these sayings on paper — Some statements imply that Self-realisation is easy, does not require much effort and is not a question of time. Another statement on the contrary suggests that Self-realisation takes a long time, many, many lives and requires sustained effort.

The same is the case with regard to the body. If it is not apart from the Self, why call it a disease or a corpse or be eager to discard it. I shall be grateful if you will write something on this subject.

K. A. SHAH.

The reply is contained in the quotations which you put down on paper. "A competent person who

The True State

IF we want to grasp it, it runs away from us, but if we cast it away, it continues to be there all the time.

We, the original vast, serene, and marvelous mind are all pure and illuminatingly all inclusive. Nothing can hinder us, we are as free as the firmament.

We are like the sun shining in the blue sky — clear and bright, unmovable and immutable, neither increasing nor decreasing. In all daily activities we illumine all places and shine out from all things.

This mind that we are is vast and expansive like space itself. . . . The wonder of this effortless mind naturally and spontaneously reacts to all conditions without any obstacle.

We do not adhere to anything, but are natural and spontaneous at all times and in all circumstances. . . . We who observe our body and mind see them as magic shadows or as a dream. Nor do we abide in this magic or dreamlike state. . . . When we reach this point then we can be considered as having arrived at the true state of No-mind.

— TSUNG KAO.

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had already perhaps in previous incarnations qualified himself, realises and abides in peace as soon as he hears the Truth told him only once," or

"It (practical sadhana) depends on qualifications and the nature of the seeker."

Seekers could be compared to wood in various stages of dryness and dynamite. The drier the wood quicker it is kindled. Wet wood takes a long time to become fit for burning and dynamite will explode at the touch of a lighted matchstick.

With regard to the body, so long as you identify yourself with it there will be problems and troubles of some sort or other. At this stage sages call it a disease or corpse to help a sadhaka disentangle himself from this false identification. There is only the Self, the one life animating all beings. Without it the body is a corpse. On the other hand when one realises that there is only the Self, that nothing exists apart from it then it is a matter of indifference what happens to the body. Just as you create your body in a dream so you do in this dream of life and it would be foolish to worry about it on waking.

EDITOR.

THE COMPASSIONATE LOOK

In the January '72 issue of the *Mountain Path* the portrait of Bhagavan certainly gives peace which unfortunately is disturbed by another picture appearing on page 17 of this very issue when my eyes are closed... This has occurred again and again creating a conflicting and disturbing atmosphere. I have not been able to find out what is the mystery behind it. I shall be obliged if you could explain it to me...

J. RAINA,
Kashmir.

Looking at Bhagavan's picture is conducive to peace and many experience it as you do. If the picture on page 17 has a disturbing influence on you it is most probably due to the fact that Bhagavan's expression on it is full of compassion and sadness that the majority of devotees blunder steeped in samsara and illusion when we are that very Self and never ceased to be the Self. "Oh the pity of it, oh the pity!" he once exclaimed. He also said on another occasion that earnest effort never fails. So what it amounts to is that unceasing vigilance and sadhana are sure to bring success.

EDITOR.

A MIRACLE

My father, Sri V. R. Vaidyanathan is a devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi... He was always pestering me to accompany him on his visits to Tiruvannamalai. At last I gave way and joined the family

What Garment could be Better than to be Clad by Sky and Air

By Lal Ded
(Lalleswari) Saint of Kashmir

.....
Foulness I burnt from my soul,
My mind with its desires died,
Then my name of Lalla (half-nude)
spread abroad.
Patiently sitting on my bended knees
I kept my mind from earthly passions.
There is no you and I,
There is no object for contemplation
Nor even contemplation.
All actions have been lost in forgetfulness.

on December 31, 1971. We did *Giri Pradakshina* (circumambulation of the Hill) the same day. Next day I hurt my foot carrying a huge bucket full of water but I forgot about it and, together with my family, we visited the big temple, Skandashram and the Muruga temple on the small hill nearby. I had completely neglected my injured foot considering it a trifle, but in the night, at about 1 a.m., it started hurting a lot and when I tried to get up I fainted with the pain. It must have turned septic. My family panicked; no doctor would come in the middle of the night and they did not manage to wake up anybody at the hotel. In this crisis my father, mother and sisters all prayed for Bhagavan's help and my mother applied *vibhuti* (sacred ashes) of Lord Arunachala on my wound. Believe it or not, my pain at once stopped and I could again move my leg! I am not a believer of miracles and I used to ridicule my father's tales of miracles happening at Arunachala, but now it happened to me. It was Bhagavan's birthday. I think He was born about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. Thus at such a time Bhagavan performed a miracle and converted me into a staunch devotee... My parents were still worried about my leg, so we left for Madras where I was taken to a doctor immediately on arrival, but he did not find anything wrong with it. Bhagavan had already cured it!

O Mother Come!

Because Thou lovest the Burning-ground,
I have made a Burning-ground of my
heart—

That Thou, Dark One, haunter of the
Burning-ground,

Mayest dance Thy eternal dance.

Nought else in within my heart, O
Mother:

Day and night blazes the funeral pyre:

The ashes of the dead, strewn all about,

I have preserved against Thy coming;

With death-conquering *Mahakala* neath
Thy feet

Do Thou enter in, dancing Thy rhythmic
dance,

That I may behold Thee with closed eyes.

— A Bengali Hymn to Kali

I am sending this letter not for propagating Bhagavan's miracles but to show how an unbeliever was taught a lesson for the better. Hereafter I will not scoff at Ramana Rishi's divine nature. He is God incarnate and I very much regret that I was not born when he lived. Can I hope to get Bhagavan's Grace even though He is not physically alive? I am praying that I get another chance to visit Arunachala, for who can forget this magnificent Hill, the beautiful temple, and last but not least, Bhagavan's Samadhi?

I hope you will publish this in *The Mountain Path*, for then other people can learn of Arunachala's divine nature. Incidentally I am only 24 years old and am now in the thick of worldly life, seeing James Bond films, etc. Thus when I myself am a victim of a miracle I am really floored. I thought that in this 20th century miracles etc., were a thing of the past, but not any more.

V. SHIVRAM, Madras.

Bhagavan continues guiding us as before. He said that the Guru-disciple relationship will continue after his physical death. He is the living inner Guru in your heart always present whether you know it or not. All one has to do is to turn to Him and remember Him as constantly as possible and He reveals Himself as a living Presence and Guide. It is up to you!

EDITOR.

Forthcoming Festivals

GURU POORNIMA	Wednesday	26-7-1972
KRISHNA JAYANTHI	Thursday	31-8-1972
VINAYAKA CHATURTHI	Monday	11-9-1972
NAVARATHRI (commences on)	Sunday	8-10-1972
SARASWATHI POOJA	Monday	16-10-1972
VIJAYADASAMI	Tuesday	17-10-1972
DEEPAVALI	Saturday	4-11-1972
SKANDASASHTI	Sunday	12-11-1972
DEEPAM	Monday	20-11-1972
JAYANTHI	Friday	22-12-1972
PONGAL	Sunday	14-1-1973
CHINNASWAMY ARADHANA	Thursday	18-1-1973
MAHASIVARATHRI	Saturday	3-3-1973
SRI VIDYA HAVAN	Friday	16-3-1973
TELUGU NEW YEAR'S DAY (Yugadi)	Wednesday	4-4-1973
TAMIL NEW YEAR'S DAY	Friday	13-4-1973

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