the Mountain path

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

vol. 10, no. iv, october 1973

Grant me wisdom, I beseech Thee, so that I may not pine for love of Thee in ignorance, Oh Arunachala !

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 40.

Publisher :

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

*

Editor :

Mrs. Lucia Osborne
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

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Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

*

Annual Subscription :

INDIA		Rs. 6
FOREIGN	£ 0.75	$ 2.00

Life Subscription :

Rs. 125	£ 12.50	$ 30

Single Copy :

Rs. 1.75	£ 0.20	$ 0.45

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

Vol. 10 **OCTOBER 1973** **No. 4**

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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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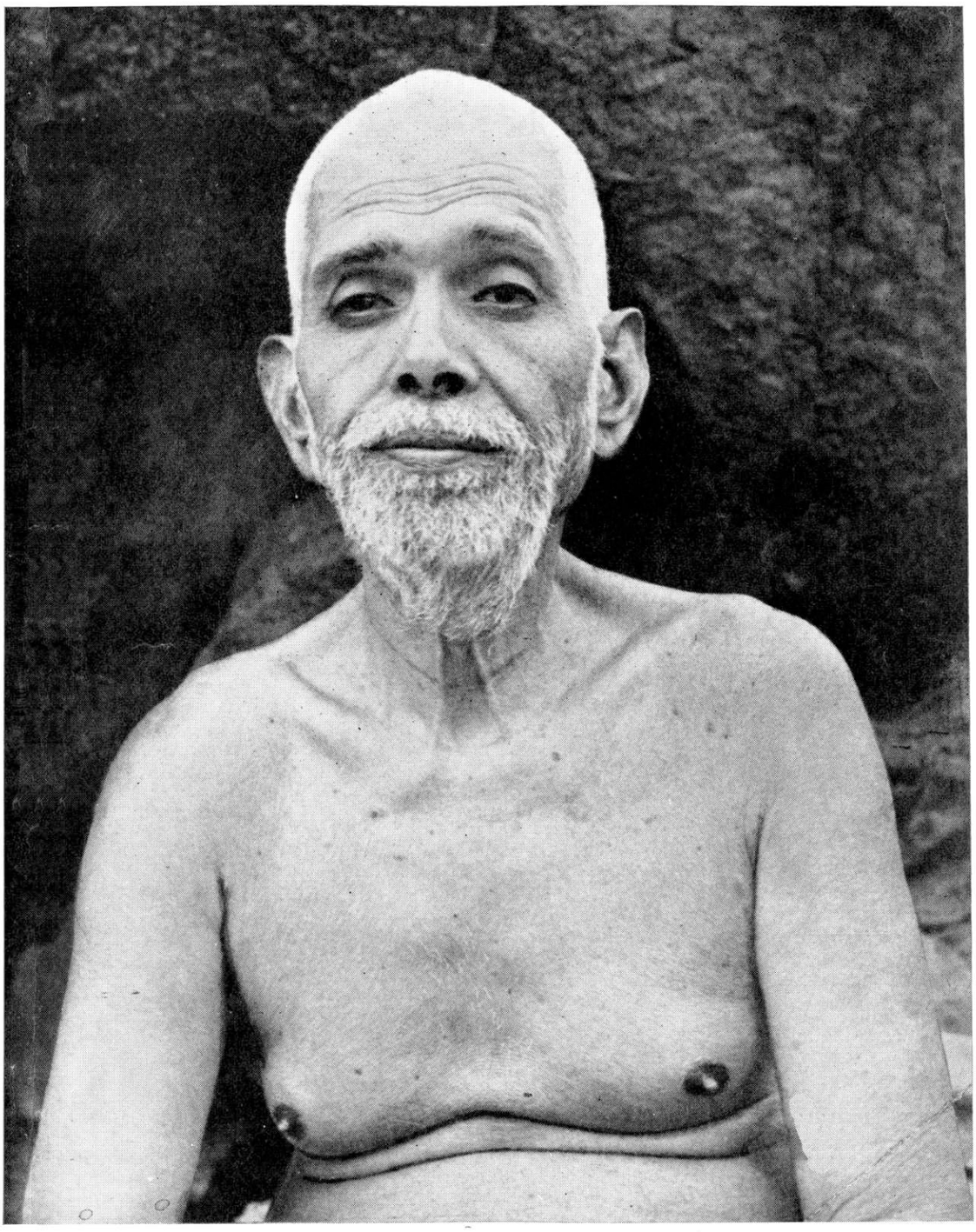


The Mountain Path

Vol. 10. No. IV, October 1973

Editor : LUCIA OSBORNE

AUM

Editorial

" Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute Reality, it is only a means for realising It without name and form."

– Sri Bhagavan's *Forty Verses on Reality*, Verse 8.

THE invocation of AUM is a much used form of worship which like the spiritual disciplines of all major traditions aims at one-pointed concentration of the mind so as to focus it on the Self and realise it in Oneness of Being. AUM opens and concludes every solemn utterance, every ritual, every prayer.

The complexity of human nature demands variety even in sadhana. Whatever spiritual measure helps to keep the mind poised in tranquillity is useful to that extent. During sadhana a seeker may experience periods of aridity. He confronts his own humanity having lost his unsteady worldly moorings in a void which appears to him so negative as to lead him into despair. That is the time to turn to invocation and prayer. " Meditation, contemplation and mental invocation are the same ", says Sri Maharshi. The mind first engages in invocation and then sinks into its own source, the Silence into which the sound AUM culminates. " The option of absolute despair can be turned into serenity and certitude by the Word of God ", says Fr. Thomas Merton. The invocation of AUM or the Name of God which takes it's place in other traditions, if persevered in, even if without any response to start with, becomes out of longing and distress a prayer to God for Grace, and mercy, to help us break out of the confines of egohood and attain that ' peace that passeth all understanding '. Continuous practice and one pointedness generate warmth like the friction of flint to kindle a fire ; the Name is used till the clouds of smoke (thoughts) are dispersed and the heart melts in the warmth of indescribable sweetness. But the Name has to be used with feeling not superficially. We are reminded by Sri Bhagavan : " To use the Name of God one must call upon Him and surrender to Him unreservedly. After such surrender the name of God is constantly with the man." AUM knocks at the gate of the heart till there is a response after ' reason has kindled its light from the flame of Thy Love,' says the Persian poet-saint, Hafiz.

The Vedas explain creation as emanating from Supreme Sound, the *pranava*, AUM. Its significance lies in what remains unuttered. Sri Ramana Maharshi says : " If you are not aware of the *ajapa* (unspoken chant) which is eternally going on, you should take to *japa* ". Revealed words and speech are gross sound heard with the ears, subtle sound is heard with the heart. AUM represents both gross and subtle sound, the whole range of sound, its substratum and source. The Gospel of St. John starts with : " In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God ". The Word was with God and yet the Word was God : the Oneness of creation and the Absolute, of the manifest and the unmanifest.

Technology however advanced enabling man to fly to the moon and stars will not unravel the mystery of the ever expanding universe but we can try to unravel it in our own mind which projects these worlds according to its contents. All is known in the Silence in which AUM or the quest *Who Am I ?* culminates.

The vibration of AUM if properly pronounced fills the mind with its all-pervasiveness and penetrates the heart of the seeker which is it, own source. It is the quintessence and the seed syllable (*bija mantra*) of the universe.

The *Maitrayana Upanishad* compares OM to an arrow with *manas* (thought) at its point, laid upon the bow of the human body and which penetrating the darkness of ignorance reaches Brahman, the target. Similarly in the *Mundaka Upanishad :*

" Having taken as a bow the great weapon of the secret Teaching One should fix in the arrow sharpened by constant meditation.

The *pranava* OM is the bow ;
the arrow is the self :
Brahman is said to be the mark
With heedfulness is it to be penetrated ;
One should become one with It as the arrow in the mark."

The *Mandukya Upanishad* which is said to contain the quintessence of Vedanta begins by identifying the mystic monosyllable ' AUM ' with all-that-which-is. The Self is Brahman, of which AUM is the symbol. The Self appears in the states of waking of which the sound value is ' A ', dream ' U ' and sleep ' M '. AUM as a whole is the all-encompassing Cosmic Consciousness beyond concepts (*turiya*). In the state of waking the experience is gross, in dreams subtle, in sleep the Self becomes one without the distinction of seer and seen, without duality or objective consciousness sunk in the ether of the heart in bliss veiled by ignorance. The fourth state *turiya* is not caught in the stream of waking, dream and sleep, though it is their substratum. It is pure Consciousness which is the self-luminous Reality.

In other words, when the word AUM is uttered in succession the sound of A and U merge and as Shankara points out A and U emerge out of and merge into M, the same as the waking and dream states appear from and disappear into deep sleep and so the three states are one, cosmic creation evolved from the One and absorbed into the One. ' AUM is all this '.

OM, the eternal rhythm of all that moves in effortless, spontaneous order and freedom can be heard with the inner hearing like the humming of a bee. All creation revolves in a ceaseless vibration of OM from which it is inseparable ; a paean to the Self which is Itself. It may reveal itself to a devotee as if the sky was rent asunder in an Alleluia at the throne of God. Wagner might have been inspired by such an experience in some of his compositions.

The Virupaksha Cave, below Skandashram, on the Hill Arunachala, where Sri Bhagavan spent many years, is said to be in the shape of OM and sometimes a devotee may hear it's all-embracing humming sound. Sri Bhagavan confirmed this in reply to a question.[1]

During last year's *Maha Sivaratri* (The Night of Siva)[2] a group of us after an all-night vigil and a *pradakshina* (circumambulation of Arunachala) rested for a while in the Viru-

[1] *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p. 295.

[2] *see The Mountain Path*, April, 1972 issue, p. 128, for an article on *Maha Sivarathri* by Sri Viswanatha Swami.

paksha Cave and sat meditating. A swami occupying the Cave had just completed a week's fast and the people who came with offerings of food and fruit made quite a hubbub. Suddenly the sound of OM was heard distinctly, continuous vibrating humming, in a low key untouched by the noise which would have drowned it under ordinary circumstances. It is heard with the inner hearing and does not reveal itself to all present.

" Creation is out of the Supreme Sound ", the Vedas explain. Scientists describe it as a form of energy which projects itself into the form of the universe. Swami Ghanananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, describes OM as the sound representing the acoustic aspect of the tendency of potential stress to pass into kinetic stress from which *natural names* are evolved (the seed words or *bijas* of the elements). They are the sound produced by the generating stress (*shakti*) heard by the supreme and infinite hearing without being subject to the varying conditions of time, space or plane. Sir John Woodroff compares it to hearing the rise of sap in a tree, a yogi to hearing the sound of *kundalini shakti*, piercing the six *chakras*.

Pythagoras explains that all beings or things produce sounds according to their nature and to the particular state in which they find themselves because these beings and things are aggregates of atoms that dance and by their movements produce sounds. Each atom perpetually sings its song and the sound creates each moment dense or subtle forms.

Words if pure and spoken with a concentrated mind in tune with the meaning have great force. Thus the words of sages are creative. What they say comes to pass. Seekers also may partake of this power to some extent depending on their spiritual advancement, concentration and purity of thought.

OM being the primordial sound from which all sounds and forms emanate can be uttered and remembered at all times. It only has to be recollected as ever present in the heart. When in doubt about outward initiation it may come from deep within from one's own heart as a continuous reverberating sound, as described already, all-embracing in well-being.

Shankara asserts that there must be some point of attention for concentration (*alambana*). This arrests the centrifugal tendency of the mind and steadies it. Ultimately the point of attention for concentration gets dissolved in That in which all duality ceases.

In the *Vishnu Purana* we read that the man born in Kali Yuga is very fortunate because by mere invocation of the Name of God he can obtain liberation whereas in the past *yugas* arduous tapas was an absolute necessity.[3]

According to Gaudapada OM is to be known as the Lord present in the heart of all. In Christianity the practice of the Presence of God in the heart, in the ground of one's being in wordless invocation was for the ancient monks the secret of the control of thoughts and of victory over the ego.

The monks of the Oriental Churches of Greece and Russia have for centuries used a handbook of prayer, called the *Philocalia* which concerns itself with the ' prayer of the heart ' consisting in the abandonment of distracting thoughts, the humble invocation of the Lord Jesus Christ and an interior recollection stripped of all non-essentials. " The best is the repetition with the mind ", Sri Bhagavan reminds us. " The point is to keep out all other thoughts except the one thought of OM or Ram or God..... When by conscious effort, or invocation or meditation as we call it, we prevent our minds from thinking of other things, then what remains is our real nature, which is OM..... Invocation which is now regarded as the means, will then be found to be the goal.... Meditation, contemplation and mental invocation are the same ". " There is no difference between God and His name ".

Gaudapada defines the *Pranava* as the immutable ; the beginning, middle and end of all and the best and most efficacious of all *mantras*.

Sri Bhagavan sums it up :

" When a *mantra* is repeated if one watches that from which arises the *mantra* sound into that is the mind absorbed."

[3] *see* the *Editorial* of our October, 1972 issue.

THE NAME

By **Arthur Osborne**

In most religions (though not in Christianity)[1] *invocation of the Divine Name is one of the most important techniques of* bhakti marga, *that is of the path of devotion and submission. The following passage in praise of it is taken from Namdev, one of the great Maratha poet-saints of the 13th and 14th Centuries. In his youth he was a bandit and murderer. One day he came upon a young mother comforting her fatherless child and with sudden horror it flashed on him that it was he who had slain the father. In violent remorse he rushed to the nearby temple and tried to commit suicide, but he was prevented. He then vowed the rest of his life to penance and worship. He became an ecstatic* bhakta *and a saint.*

[1] Where invocation is not direct but mediate — as for instance in the prayer of the heart.
—*Editor*

ALL-PERVADING

The Name permeates everywhere from the heavens to the lowest regions of the entire universe. Who can tell to what depths in the nether regions and to what height in the heavens it extends? The ignorant undergo endless types of rebirth without knowing the Essence. The Name is immortal, says Namdev. Forms are innumerable but the Name is all.

The Name itself is form, and form is the Name. There is no distinction between Name and form. Becoming manifest, God assumed Name and form. Thus the Name and the Vedas were established. Remember that there is no mantra beyond the Name. Those who say otherwise are ignorant. The Name is God Himself says Namdev. This is known only to loving devotees of the Lord.

The all-pervading nature of the Name can be understood only when one realizes his Self. As long as one's own name is unrecognized it is impossible to grasp the all-pervading Name. When one knows one's Self one finds the Name everywhere. To consider the Name different from the Named creates illusion. Ask the Saints, says Namdev.

None can realize the Name by the practice of Knowledge (*Jnana*), meditation or austerity (*tapas*). Surrender yourself first at the feet

of the Guru and learn to know that the 'I' itself is the Name. After finding the source of that 'I', merge your individuality in that Oneness which is Self-existent and devoid of all duality, that which pervades beyond all duality. The Name has come into the three worlds. It is *Parabrahman* Itself, where there is no action arising out of duality.

NAMDEV'S ENLIGHTENMENT

[This was read out before Bhagavan in the hall and he said: "Namdev must have written this after he had obtained full Realization on touching the feet of Vishobakesar." The point of this remark is that for a long time Namdev, although a saint and an ecstatic, was not fully realized. He worshipped God under the name of Vithoba (as is common in Maharashtra), and so intense was his devotion that the image of God in the temple used to come to life for him and speak to him as a friend. This sort of manifestation is apt to occur for the ecstatic bhakta. *A modern example is Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, for whom the image of the Mother, Kali came alive.*

Bhagavan continued with the following story of Namdev's final Enlightenment]:

Gora, another saint, who was a potter by trade, held a feast to which he invited the saints, including Namdev and Jnanadev. In the hope of enlightening Namdev, Jnanadev said to Gora: "Your job is making pots. You daily test them to see which are properly baked and which are not. There sitting in front of you are the pots of God, so test them to see which are sound." Gora who had been told privately of the purpose of the test, agreed and, taking up the stick with which he used to test his pots, went round among his guests, tapping each one on the head. They all submitted meekly till he came to Namdev, who cried out indignantly: "What do you mean, potter, by coming to tap me with your stick?" Gora whereupon replied to Jnanadev: "All the other pots are properly baked; only this one is not yet baked!"

At this every one burst out laughing, Namdev was so humiliated that he got up and rushed out of the house straight to the temple of Vithoba where he complained bitterly, crying out: "Am I not your child and your closest friend? How could you let such a humiliation befall me?"

Vithoba appeared before him as usual and seemed to sympathize, but then said: "Why could you not sit quiet and submit to the tapping, like all the others? Then there would have been no trouble."

At this Namdev became still more upset and cried: "You too want to humiliate me! Why should I submit? Am I not your child?"

Vithoba then said: "You have not yet understood and even if I tell you, you won't. But go to such and such a ruined temple in the forest and there you will find a saint who will be able to give you Enlightenment."

Namdev went to the forest, as he was told, and when he reached the ruined temple he found a simple old man lying asleep there with his feet resting on a Siva-lingam. He could hardly believe that this was the man from whom he, the chosen friend of Vithoba, was to obtain Enlightenment. However, as there was no one else there, he went up to him and clapped his hands to wake him whereupon the old man opened his eyes and said: "Oh, so you are the Namdev whom Vithoba has sent here."

At this Namdev was taken aback and began to think that this must be a man of power to know his name and why he had come. Still, man of power or not, he had no right to rest his feet on a lingam, he thought; and he told the old man so.

"Oh, are my feet on a lingam?" the old man said; "All right, put them somewhere else."

So Namdev, out of reverence for the lingam, moved them to another spot. There too a Siva-lingam sprang up, and so in one place after another, whatever place he put them. Finally he sat down and took them in his lap, and he himself became a Siva-lingam. And at that moment Enlightenment dawned on him.

After this Namdev returned home. For some days he did not go to the temple at all,

although it had been his habit to go there daily and spend most of the day there with Vithoba. After a few days Vithoba appeared before him in his house and asked, apparently guileless, why he had forgotten to visit him.

"No more fooling me now," Namdev replied, "I know now. Is there any place where You are not? Do I need to go to the temple to be with You? Do I exist apart from You?"

"Yes, now you understand," Vithoba said.

[Commenting on this story, Bhagavan said: "It is to be noted that it was only when he surrendered and touched the feet of the Guru that he obtained Enlightenment."]

VERILY, THE NAME IS GOD HIMSELF

[In modern times Swami Ramdas also, like most bhaktas, *prescribed the invocation of the Name. The following is an article about it that he distributed privately among his disciples. It is printed here with the kind permission of Mataji Sri Krishnabai of Anandashram.]*

God and His Name are not distinct from one another. Name is God Himself. The moment we think of the Name our mind is filled with the presence of God. There is no easier way of focussing thought upon God than taking constantly His Name. When we repeat the Name aloud, we feel our heart is flooded with the ecstasy of love, because the sound of the Divine Name awakens the heart to the bliss and love of God.

Although mental repetition of the Name is held to be far more efficacious than the verbal repetition, still the rare experience of sweetness and joy derived by uttering the Name aloud is incomparable. When the entire being of the devotee thrills with rapture to the music of the Name he realizes that the *Name is Brahman.*

God is both manifest and unmanifest. The Name stands for such a God. Here the unmanifest is the all-pervading, infinite, immutable, tranquil and static spirit of God. The manifest is the entire universe of name, form and movement with all its beings, creatures and things. The Nature stands for this all-inclusive and all-transcendent God-head, who is both personal and impersonal.

The Divine Name is thus the beginningless source of all creation and the creation itself. God, the absolute, is the nameless Name.

The Name can free the soul from bondage. The Name can take it to the highest consummation of spiritual life. The Name can grant a blind soul Divine sight. The Name can bless an individual with a universal vision full of sublimity. The Name can lift the soul to inconceivable heights of God-realization.

The power of the Name is invincible. A mind which is considered to be unconquerable, by the soothing influence of the Name becomes docile, yielding and submissive. The mind itself is transformed into God by the power of the Name. He who takes refuge in the Name can work wonders. Death itself will stand in awe of him. He can command all the forces of nature and direct them to bring about a spiritual awakening in the hearts of men. The Name can make a human being an embodiment of eternal love and joy. The Name can convert an individual into a Cosmic Reality -- an ignorant soul into a very God.

Where the Name of God is sung, the atmosphere is permeated with purity, peace and bliss; for the symphony of the Name spreads everywhere the splendour of love.

The Name is all-sufficient. The utterance of it is itself meditation. The ecstasy born of it is itself *samadhi.* The Name is love, light, power and joy.

The writer can vouch for it from his own experience that the Name by itself without any other *sadhana* can grant one the fullest vision of God everywhere and may merge him in an ocean of never-ending love and joy.

There is no *sadhana* which can be so universally adopted by all people and is at the same time so simple for realizing God as the Divine Name. It is perfectly true, in the words of a saint, that he who has God's Name always on his tongue is a *Jivanmukta*, or a liberated soul.

So, dear friends, to whatever race, caste, creed or colour you may belong, take up the

Name of God, and feel the sweet communion with it, and you may depend upon it, your souls through constant bathing in the nectar of the Name will not only be purified but will also be illumined with the omnipresent and omniscient light and love of God. This practice of taking the Name will lead the unyielding spirit of man to complete surrender to the omnipotent power and will of God. In the earlier stages when the Name is repeated with earnestness, faith and concentration, the face and the body of the devotee will shine with a peculiar lustre, his mind will be filled with wisdom and heart with love. This is due to predominance of *sattva guna* in the devotee. Later when the repetition is continued with the same zeal, he will behold the universe before him as the very expression of God. Becoming one with God, he will have the vision of God everywhere.

CURE FOR DESIRES

[In Islam, as one would expect from a religion whose very name denotes 'submission' no technique is more prized than invocation of the Divine Name.]

"The food and drink of the saint is remembrance of the Name of the Lord," said Abu'l Hasan.

Al-Ghazali, the great theologian, said: "What the slave of God derives from His Name is deification, by which I mean that his heart and purpose are drowned in God and he sees none other."

"Recital of the Name is a certain cure for all desires," said Dhu'n Nun Misri; "Whoever hears it faithfully finds the way to God."

BESTOWS DIVINE WISDOM

For the Sikhs there is no more patent technique than invocation of the Divine Name, as the following hymn from the *Granth Sahib* shows.

Hearkening to the Name bestows
Truth, divine wisdom, contentment.
To bathe in the joy of the Name
Is to bathe in the holy places.
By hearing the Name and reading it
A man attains to honour;
By hearkening the mind may reach
The highest blissful poise
Of meditation on God.
Saith Nanak, the saints are always happy;
By hearkening to the Name
Sorrow and sin are destroyed.[2]

OM

By **Kavana**

silent the sound
as it softly passes
into the Infinite....
my heart feels
the hum of the Om
merge within its flow.
the Moment and I
are One....
even as the air and the wind.
It is the everpresent Being,
where thoughts
are as footprints
on the sands of Time.

LEADS TO SALVATION

[Buddhism is the most impersonal of religions. Its essential and original teaching seems to have no place for a Path of devotion or for personal worship. In the Pure Land School, however, in China and Japan, Mahayana Buddhism has developed such a Path for those who need it. A passage in Zendo's Commentary on the Pure Land Sutras *runs as follows]:*

"Only repeat the name of Amitabha with all your heart, whether walking or standing, sitting or lying; never cease the practice of it for a moment. This is the work which unfailingly issues in salvation, for it is in accordance with the original vow of Amida Buddha." It was on the basis of this instruction Honen founded the Japanese School of Jodo.[3]

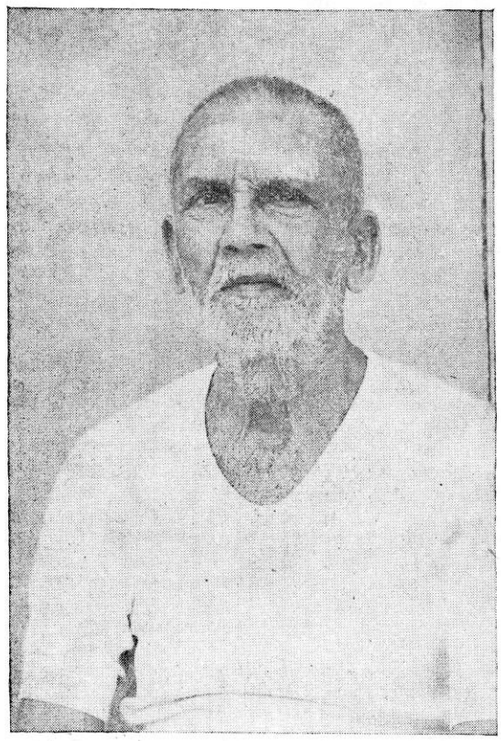
[2] *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, p. 34, Allen & Unwin.
[3] *Buddhism*, p. 162, by Christmas Humphreys, Cassell.

IN MEMORIUM SRI MURUGANAR

(1890—1973)

By **Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN**

The passing away of the great poet-saint Sri Muruganar at Sri Ramanasramam at 7-45 a.m. on August 28, 1973, will be deeply mourned by the devotees of Sri Bhagavan all over Tamil Nadu and outside. He was born in the district of Ramnad, lost his father early in life, and had his education at Coimbatore. Though known as C. K. Subramania Iyer, originally his parents named him as Sambamurthi. He specialised in Tamil and was a scholar-member in the Tamil Lexicon Committee presided over by Dr. Chandler. He became a great Tamil pundit and served some years in the Norwich Girls' High School, Madras. There he was reputed for proficiency and spotless character. He was not merely a noted scholar in his chosen language but also an ardent nationalist and reformer. Great was his interest in Mahatma Gandhi's national liberation movement. His many songs in praise of Gandhiji and his constructive activities appeared in various Tamil periodicals of the time and were later on collected into a volume entitled *Swatantra Geetam.*



It was in September 1923, while yet a Tamil pundit that he first came to Sri Bhagavan. This *darshan* **and the intense gaze of Sri Bhagavan transformed his being. When thus he came under the spell of Sri Bhagavan, all lesser lights were absorbed in the radiance of His presence, and he never again wrote on any theme other than the glories and sayings of the Master. From 1926, when he came for good to the Ashram, Sri Muruganar was totally content with composing poems and having them read by Sri Bhagavan. For him there was no ' wider public ' to whose notice they should be brought. He thus turned into a " shadow of Bhagavan " !**

After Sri Bhagavan's *Brahma Nirvana* **in 1950 Sri Muruganar has been expounding from time to time many of Sri Maharshi's works (***Nool Thirattu***). His commentary on** *Aksharamana-malai* **(***The Marital Garland of Letters***), published by the Ashram, provides a good example of his powers of exposition. In 1953 there appeared a small booklet of Sri Natanananda's verse-tributes to Sri Muruganar. Sri K. V. Jagannathan's Foreword to this booklet describes the poet-saint as " the simplest of the simple, the purest of the pure, unconquerable in his courage, a flame kindled by**

the flame of Ramana's *jnana,* a tributary of the Ramana Ganga " and so on. The poems praise Sri Muruganar as the senior-most of the spiritual sons of Bhagavan and enumerate his enormous contribution, direct and indirect, to the Ramana canon.

Besides *Ramanadevamalai, Ramana Sarana Pallandu* and *Ramana Sannidhi Murai,* which are devotional and lyrical, he also compiled *Guru Vachaka Kovai* (The Garland of Guru's Sayings), which now consists of 1254 stanzas and forms a clear and comprehensive redaction of Bhagavan's teachings.

During the last 20 years of his life Sri Muruganar composed thousands of poems of which the bulk is yet to see the light of day. Only two volumes of *Sri Ramana Anubhuti* (Ramana Experience) have so far been published. The vast range and variety of his poetical output still await understanding and appreciation by the general public. Even in the poems of praise, which start off as variations of themes and modes immortalized by the mediaeval singers, there is nothing merely repetitive ; for inspiration came to the modern poet not from some lovely image in some dear familiar shrine embodying an ancient myth, but from a human being, historical and contemporary, whose presence radiated love and knowledge and a shared beatitude.

For all his traditional wealth of style and imagery Sri Muruganar is no backward-looking poet. While making free and splendid use of the old mythological stories and situations, he never ceased to be an authentic modern poet uttering with authority and in strikingly appropriate language his own direct experiences, his own original thinking and his own genuine insights. No doubt he was more fortunate than most poets in finding a hero who combined in himself the most freshening simplicity, rocklike firmness, spontaneity and all-embracing love, a Master who taught not only the sublimest truth in the simplest language but a method of enquiry safe to handle, infallible in effect and available to all. To sing His praises, to practise His presence and to explain His teachings the poet uses words, which whether richly sensuous or austerely intellectual, are invariably appropriate, while his repertory of metrical forms is astounding in its vastness, flexibility and power. Like some great temple complex, with its shrines and towers, its tanks and groves, the immense output of this poet constitutes a massive and worthy literary monument to the Master, whose mighty message Sri Muruganar manages to convey, because he is himself a consummate and humble scholar, manipulating with unerring tact and taste the inexhaustible resources of an ancient and still living language unsurpassed in the range, depth and continuity of its devotional and metaphysical poetry.

Despite his physical ailments over the years Sri Muruganar remained calm and peaceful to the last and passed away amidst the chantings of the devotees in praise of Sri Arunachala and Sri Ramana. In the passing away of Sri Muruganar, aptly called the Nightingale in the garden of silence, the large and ever-growing family of Bhagavan Ramana's devotees have lost their beloved elder brother and the world of Tamil scholarship a lyrical and metaphysical poet of outstanding excellence. His passing away is a void among Bhagavan's devotees. But having merged in Sri Bhagavan's Lotus Feet Sri Muruganar will ever remain in our hearts !

TRIBUTES
To
Sri Muruganar

Dr. U. V. SWAMINATHA IYER :

" His love and devotion flowed to Sri Ramana Bhagavan's feet ; a Tamil poet of pure taste and classic style."

* * *

Rao Saheb M. RAGHAVA IYENGAR :

" A bard whose expressions are sweet and significant."

* * *

SRI YOGI SUDDHANANDA BHARATI :

" Of clear expression he spoke the voice of Saint Manickavachagar."

* * *

Sri-La-Sri SIVASHANMUGA MEIJNANA DESIKA SIVACHARIAR SWAMIGAL :

" He has gained the Great Good through worshipful adoration of Sri Ramana."

* * *

SRI K. VADIVELU CHETTIAR :

" An adept who sees the Seer."

* * *

Sentamilkavi RAMACHANDRA AIYER :

" By his devotion to his Guru, he swam the ocean of *samsara*."

SRI V. S. CHENGALVARAYA PILLAI :

" Sri Mugavai Kanna Muruganar has conquered birth by the attainment of *Sivajnana* (Knowledge of Siva) by pursuing the path of enquiry, *Who Am I ?*, by the Grace of Sri Ramana."

* * *

SRI K. V. JAGANNATHAN :

" Having drunk of the Nectar of Grace of Sri Ramana who ruled over him, he was as a bee intoxicated with the ecstacy of True Knowledge."

* * *

" WHO " :

" The foremost among Lord Ramana's disciples, Sri Muruganar, is a man of retiring disposition and deep understanding."

* * *

SRI SADHU NATANANANDA :

" He was fully rewarded with literary knowledge and spiritual experience. He was foremost among the devotees ruled by Sri Ramana."

* * *

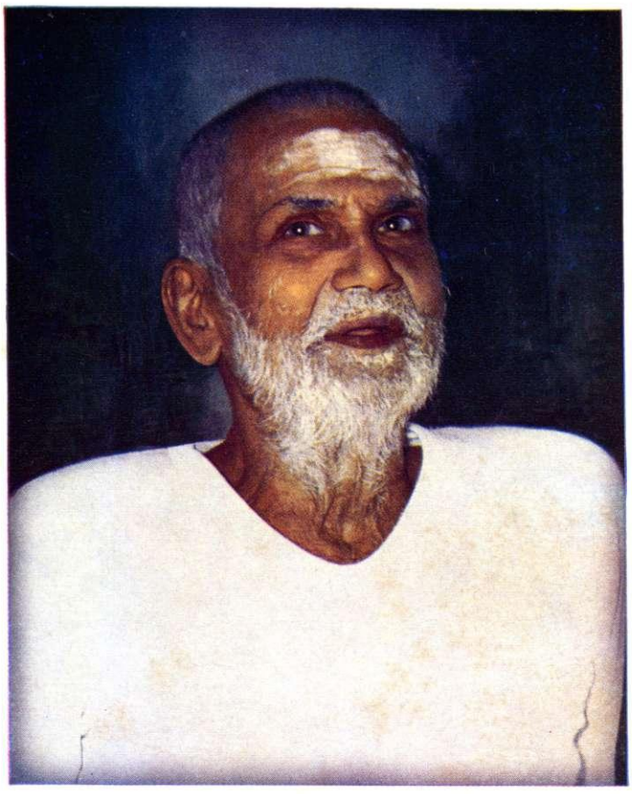
SRI SADHU OM :

" He made known to the Vedantic world its Source, Sri Ramana, who spread His rays of direct experience through Self-Knowledge."

* * *

SRI M. ANANTANARAYANAN,
Ex-Chief Justice :

" Scholarship and mastery of words are but the subsidiary instruments ; the *anubhava* (experience) is the source of his greatness as a poet."



SRI MURUGANAR

THE MERGING

By **Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan**

IN the passing away of Sri Muruganar Swami the Tamil literary world has lost an outstanding poet cast in the classical mould, and the realm of the spiritual seekers a great devotee-saint. A spiritually orientated nationalist, he was active for a few years as teacher, scholar and inspired bard and then was drawn to the august presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, which at once became his exhaltation and spiritual captivity. From that moment onwards, Sri Muruganar realized that in his heart and mind, there was no room for anyone or anything other than Sri Ramana, who was his God, Guru and his All. The muses started coming to him at a greatly superior level ; and he dedicated them, all his life, to the Lord who was his Saviour. Thus the sole theme of the poems which have welled forth in profusion from Sri Muruganar's heart is *Sri Ramana :* the glory of the great Master and his matchless teachings !

A collection of poems published in 1933 -- *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* indicates in its preface clearly the mode of grace which was responsible for the composition of the poems, as well as their content and goal. "Know that the purport of *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* is to abide at the Feet of the bounteous Guru Ramana, so that the darkness of the delusion of egoism my cease dispelled by the illumination of the Lord's grace."

In another poetical work of unique significance, *Guru Vachaka Kovai,* Sri Muruganar gives the teachings of Sri Ramana in the most authentic manner. After listening to the Master's instructions, as and when they were imparted to aspirants, he used to record them in verse. These verses were shown to the Master, who read them, corrected them where necessary, and approved of them.

Apart from being the author of numerous hymns and songs centred round Sri Ramana, Sri Muruganar provided the occasions for the Master to compose verses in Tamil conveying the supreme truth of non-duality. He it was who implored Sri Bhagavan to have His stray verses, composed from time to time, collected and also add new ones which have come out as *Ulladu Narpadu (Forty Verses on Reality).* So also it was at his entreaty that Sri Bhagavan gave the *Upadesa Sara,* in which He set forth the truth of Vedanta, and the path that leads to the realization of the Truth.

A long life -- totally dedicated and inspired -- has come to an end. But, could there really be an end to such a life ? The pure and unsullied river has joined the vast and limitless ocean. The glowing spark has gone back to its source, the effulgent Fire. Sri Muruganar in visible form has disappeared in Arunachala-Ramana ! The invisible Truth of which he sang so melodiously and movingly will ever remain ! !

Obeisance to the Poet-Saint: Sri Muruganar

By **V. Ganesan,** *Managing Editor.*

SRI MURUGANAR is absorbed in Arunachala-Ramana ! He who was composing daily spontaneously a number of verses in Tamil in praise of the Master Ramana and His teachings, now rests at the feet of the Master ! We will not be able hereafter to listen joyously to his expositions of the glories of the Master, moving him and us to tears !

As one among those who have had the privilege of sitting and listening to his wonderful reminiscences I would like to write the following as my homage to that illustrious poet-saint.

* * *

It was through his father-in-law, Dandapani Swami, who gave him the copies of *Five Hymns to Arunachala* and *Who Am I ?* in Tamil, that Sri Muruganar came to Sri Bhagavan. Devout Siva *bhakta* that he was he went straight to Arunachala Temple after reaching Tiruvannamalai, where bowing down to the Lord he wanted to proceed to the Ashram. It was in September, 1923. While about to start he felt he should not go empty handed when going to meet a Sage. He sat within the Temple itself and composed a hymn of eleven verses in praise of Sri Bhagavan. They were inspired ones in the pattern of Saint Manickavachakar's *Tiruvachakam*. What was to happen later the poet unwittingly mentioned at the very outset, for he was acclaimed even in the days of Sri Bhagavan as Manickavachakar, and Bhagavan Ramana, as Siva !

A few of those verses (translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan) are given here to show how even before he saw Bhagavan he was totally taken in by Sri Bhagavan :

Guru Ramana, Siva, as once you left
Mount Kailas and the company of Gods
And came to cool Perundurai [1] to drink in
The sparkling words of Vachagar,[2]
Now again you have come to fair Aruna Town
Wishing to hearken to this fellow's
puerile words. (1)

Guru Ramana, Siva, rejecting the stature
Stretching beyond the vision of the two
great Gods,
You have assumed a humble human form
And vowing, with band [3] on wrist and
loins well-girt,
To save your devotees from birth and death,
You are seated in glory in Aruna now. (2)

Guru Ramana, Siva, you have concealed
Your matted hair, the crescent moon, the eye
In the forehead, the palms up-bearing
the deer and the fire,
And the laburnum flowers with honey flowing.
But is it proper to conceal the sapphire
throat also
Which saved all creatures, human and other ?
(3)

In days when you performed austerities
As a lesson to renunciates risen above pleasures,
You slew with a glance
The God of Love who loosed an arrow at you.
To you thus passion-free renouncing
The body and all things else as a needless
burden,
A strip of cloth to cover it with
Is sheer excess indeed ! (5)

[1] Tirupperundurai where Siva blessed Manickavachagar.
[2] Saint Manickavachagar.
[3] Symbolising protection.

Guru Ramana, Siva, to those who reach
Your Feet and long to taste the bliss
Free from the unbearable pain of birth
and death,
You straight vouchsafe
The mind desireless and the vision flawless,
Bringing anear the once too distant goal. (7)

Guru Ramana, Siva, deign to look
With grace on me lying helpless here;
revive me;
Sustain me with one whispered "Fear not."
Crown my head with the golden lotuses
Of your twin Feet. Say one kind word
and save me. (8)

Guru Ramana, Siva, by day and night
I have pondered on the pain, the filth of life
Affliction-filled, stretched 'twixt the womb
and tomb.
I am perplexed and shiver with disgust.
Purify this mind and give me grace. (9)

Rid of this existence cruel made up
Of two conflicting kinds of actions,
I fain would live a new life filled with joy.
And such a life is mine for ever
If at this instant moment you would wed me
To this fair, fresh bride, pure Awareness,
Guru Ramana, Siva, dwelling
On comely grove-clad Aruna Hill. (10)

Like a dog loafing up and down the streets,
Sniffing at the same stuff all the time
Much have I suffered in countless lives already.
Condemn me not to birth again, I stand
And wait on you. Glance on me with grace,
Sweep clean the pride of "I and mine"
and give me,
Guru, Ramana, Siva,
Your heaven, your state supreme! (11)

EPILOGUE

Brahma Lord of the Vedas four,
A clumsy carpenter, has built
The kennel-body this lazy dog has entered.
Now needing a new abode, O holy one,
For your gift of leavings here it stands,
Begging at your twin Feet.

With this hymn he reached the Ashram. He did not know how to meet the Sage, not knowing of regulations, if any, to be observed as is usual in mutts and ashrams. In those days there was only a thatched shed in which Sri Bhagavan and others lived.

Discerning the predicament of this potential devotee, as it were, Sri Bhagavan Himself came out of the cottage when Sri Muruganar reached its entrance. Sri Bhagavan looked straight at him. A miracle took place! The look of the Master on that day kindled the fire of poesy in him which glowed in him everafter. "What?" Sri Bhagavan asked. Sri Muruganar was totally absorbed in Him and the *vichara* brought him back to life. He started singing (in the particular specified tune) the verses composed by him at the Temple. Tears welled up in his eyes and he could not proceed. The tune of his reading was obstructed. "Can't you read? Give it to me. I shall myself read it", said Bhagavan. (Sri Muruganar narrated this to me with tears and added that though he had specified tunes to each of his thousands of verses that was the only occasion and the last one too, when he read out to Him his poems attuned to its *raga*: never afterwards could he sing!) He also added that from that very day he was made a non-entity, losing his separate individuality. He then became the "shadow of Bhagavan", as a devotee put it so aptly.

In Sri Muruganar we see a glowing example of a traditional *Guru-sishya* (Master-disciple) relationship. He was great not because he wrote thousands of verses on Sri Bhagavan but because he *lived* what he learnt from his Master. Not only was he living a life of complete self-surrender to the Master but also urged those who went to him for guidance, to do so. Never did he claim anything for himself nor did he look upon any one as his disciple. He always directed all those who approached him for help or guidance to go to Bhagavan, saying that Bhagavan Ramana was the only Master for all. His devotion to the Master was supreme. His understanding of the Master's teaching was unparalleled. Thus he was ever one with his Master!

May Sri Muruganar's name be linked with Sri Bhagavan! May his glorious verses on the Master shine for ever!

My obeisance to Sri Muruganar, the utterly dedicated devotee at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

MY MEETING WITH SRI MURUGANAR

By **Miss Sarada Natarajan**[1]

SRI RAMANA'S Grace has made me visit Arunachala many times from my childhood days. And ever since it has been my favourite place.

Sometime back when I started reading a few religious books, I went through Sri B. V. Narasimha Swami's *Self Realisation.* After reading it, I felt inspired to do self-enquiry and that I could accept Sri Bhagavan as my Guru.

But since the Hindu Scriptures emphasise on taking formal *mantra* initiation from a Guru, it was decided that Sri Muruganar should be consulted on the subject. Hence, when we visited the Ashram during the last vacation (June '73), we went to meet Sri Muruganar. When the question "Is it enough if I take Sri Bhagavan as my Guru and do *Atma Vichara*?" was posed before the great poet-saint, he was extremely moved. With tears welling up in his eyes, he said in a voice choked with emotion: "Enough! Enough! Hundred per cent sufficient!" He paused for a minute and again emphasised that point by saying that was even more than hundred per cent sufficient! He further said that Sri Bhagavan is the only everlasting illumination within us. His presence is the only existence everywhere and for all time.

We sang a few songs on Sri Bhagavan from *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai.* Muruganar got very emotional and tears flowed from his eyes.

I can never forget this incident in my life and it will always remain vivid in my mind. I am thankful for the golden opportunity I got of seeing Muruganar before his *samadhi* and asking him my doubt which would otherwise have remained unanswered.

I hope and pray that Sri Bhagavan's and Sri Muruganar's Grace will be with me and help me in the path to realisation.

[1] a school-going girl of 13 years!

LOVING DEVOTION

By **T. P. R.**

An old devotee vividly relates how Major Chadwick once resorted to a stratagem to induce Sri Bhagavan to improve his health by taking a medicine.

IT was some time during the early forties -- Sri Bhagavan showed symptoms of slight jaundice and was growing weaker and weaker every day avoiding medication. Devotees implored Him to have some treatment but without success. Some of us prayed and a few others were silently doing circumambulation round the Hall in which Sri Bhagavan was seated. Mr. Chadwick [1] was prominent among those beseeching Sri Bhagavan to take some medicine.

One day while I was just starting from home to my office at Madras, the postman handed me a letter. It was from Mr. Chadwick. The letter I recollect read like this : " Dear T. P. R. I am sorry to tell you of the declining health of Sri Bhagavan who is growing weaker day by day, and would do nothing to alleviate it. He will not take any medicines, or heed our requests, and persuasions. It is misery to be seeing this. Today just a thought came to me. You know that Sri Bhagavan always avoids medicines, but all the same he does not reject Ayurvedic preparations like ' black halwa ' (*lehiyam*) which if offered he may be pleased to accept. So why don't you go to some ayurvedic expert or pharmacy and ask for something, mentioning the symptoms and conditions and send it to Him (to the Ashram). If it is your good *karma* he may be pleased to take it. But don't say I wrote to you or expressed concern. You can say that by chance you met so and so and found a *lehiyam* well prepared which is good for many things and that it is only a tonic and not a medicine, etc., etc. I shall expect your immediate response."

On reading this letter, I went straight to the Venkataramana Dispensary in Mylapore, before going to Court, and meeting the senior physician in charge there narrated the symptoms without disclosing the identity of the person for whom it was meant. I requested him to prescribe and give some thing helpful. The doctor asked me if I could not bring the patient for examination and on expressing my inability to do that, merely gave the age and other details. He then wrote two items with instructions to follow. The first was an ' oil ' and the second was a *lehiyam*, called *Jiraga-vilvadi Lehiyam* and advised how to use them. I knew Sri Bhagavan was not usually given to consuming any ' oils ' internally and so left it out and purchased one pound of the *lehiyam* and went to my office. Retaining a

[1] For an article on whom see our issue of Jan. 1972, p. 11.

small part with me, I packed the rest and sent it to Sri Niranjananandaswami, the then *Sarvadhikari*,[2] with a letter saying : " Dear Sri Chinnaswamigal,[2] Today as I was passing through Mylapore I peeped into the Venkataramana Dispensary where a fresh *lehiyam* was being prepared and ready for sale called *Jiragavilvadi Lehiyam*. I felt impelled to buy it and did so. It is so sweet and good that retaining a portion for me, I have sent the rest to you which I request you may place before Sri Bhagavan as any other offering is done. This is not medicine but belongs to the class of tonics generally taken by all." Sri Chinnaswami accordingly appears to have placed both the parcel and the letter before Sri Bhagavan.

That week-end, as was usual then with me, I left for Tiruvannamalai. On arrival at the Ashram and in Sri Bhagavan's Hall as I rose up after obeisance Sri Bhagavan turned to me on his couch with a small container in hand and remarked : " See ! This is the *lehiyam* you have sent. I am using it regularly four times. *Jeeraga* and *Bilva* are very good for biliousness ", and all that. I felt elated and happy at the success of Mr. Chadwick's scheme and sat down before Sri Bhagavan. Within half-a-minute Sri Bhagavan asked " What ? Did any one write to you to send this ? " I immediately admitted it and said : " Yes Bhagavan, Chadwick wrote to me all that I have said in my letter, and my expectations and hope also being the same, I did what he asked me to do and faithfully wrote to Chinnaswamigal without even mentioning his letter as if all this was my own initiative ". Sri Bhagavan laughed graciously saying : " See that, see that ! "

That evening Chadwick entered the hall at 4 p.m. as was his routine, inwardly also elated and happy. But hardly did he rise from his obeisance, when Sri Bhagavan said : " Chadwick ! Did you write anything ? " This was a moment of shock and surprise for Chadwick and he having done all this out of his extreme love and devotion to Sri Bhagavan, happily declared : " Yes Bhagavan, I wrote all that to T. P. R. What can we do ? Sri Bhagavan never will take any thing and it was miserable for us devotees to be witnessing Sri Bhagavan growing weaker day by day. So I did all that and I am happy now."

He resumed his seat and began to meditate as usual. Such was Chadwick's devotion and love to Sri Bhagavan ! He was one among the many old devotees whose devotion to Him was boundless.

[2] Sri Bhagavan's brother, who was then the all-powerful manager (*sarvadhikari*).

Looking at Arunachala

By **Jean Clausse**

When all is burnt,
when nothing remains that belongs
to this world,
out of the white and pure ashes,
rises transcendental Truth.
No more You and I —
and yet — what else is real —
but I ?
The world is God's dream,
Spirit, God's reality.
Is my reality.

O Arunachala !
Flames spring out of thy stones —
and it is Transfiguration —
eternal Beauty in eternal Evolution.

O Arunachala !
Flames spring out of thy stones —
and they burn all that is not thee.

And who art thou, Arunachala,
if not the Spirit that destroys the world ?
Who art thou,
if not the Fire of Love that awakens
us to Reality ?

The Practice of Buddhism in Tibet

By **The Dalai Lama**

A clarification of diverse modes of Buddhism designed to meet the various needs of aspirants in different stages of development.

THE methods employed for the practice of the *Buddha Dharma* (the Teaching of the Lord Buddha) are diverse, for they depend upon the capacity and inclination of the individual mind. This is because those to be trained are not endowed with a uniform standard of intelligence. Some people have a sharp intelligence while others are gifted only with mediocre understanding. Accordingly, the Lord Buddha delivered His Teaching to suit varying degrees of intelligence and receptivity. Notwithstanding these many levels of instruction, it is still possible to provide a description of the general methods of practising the *Buddha Dharma* as a whole.

From the doctrinal standpoint, the *Buddha Dharma* can be said to consist of four schools of thought. These are: (i) *Vaibhasika*, (ii) *Sautrantika*, (iii) *Vijnavada* and (iv) *Sunyavada*. In terms of practice, the *Buddha Dharma* is classified in three categories, also known as the three vehicles, viz. (i) *Cravakayana* or *Hinayana*, (ii) *Pratyeka Buddhayana* and (iii) *Bodhisattvayana* or *Mahayana*. As *Cravakayana* and *Pratyeka Buddhayana* are basically of the same form, they are commonly known as *Hinayana*. So we have the two main vehicles — *Mahayana* and *Hinayana*.

Mahayana is further subdivided into the vehicles of *Prajnaparamitayana* or the 'Cause Vehicle of Perfection' and the *Vajrayana* or the 'Effect Vehicle of the Adamantine Wheel' which is also known as the 'Great Secret'. (*Tantrayana* or the 'Vehicle of Esoteric Teaching' is regarded as one of the essential parts of *Mahayana* in its *Vajrayana* form.)

Whether one practises *Mahayana or Hinayana,* the 'Cause Vehicle' or the 'Effect Vehicle' of *Mahayana,* each of these is a valid form of the glorious Teaching of the Lord Buddha.

Sometimes it may happen that a person who has not made a proper study of, or not yet fully realised, all these doctrines of the Blessed One, will find himself puzzled by what appear to be some elementary contradictions between the concepts of *Mahayana* and *Hinayana,* or of *Sutra* and *Tantra.* Indeed, the *Buddha Dharma* does have different and contradictory aspects, namely permissive and prohibitive precepts, within the vast concourse of its philosophical system. This gives rise to different and varying forms of practice and conduct. Only by delving deeply into study and by clearly comprehending the body of Lord Buddha's Teaching in all its aspects, will one acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the methods and procedure and practice.

When this knowledge has been attained, the realisation will dawn upon the seeker that those permissive and prohibitive aspects of the Buddha's Teaching have both been designed to right the defiled and untamed mind of an individual, according to his capabilities and intellectual discipline, and to strengthen and clarify the precepts in accordance with the progressive development of his mind.

Then in what way can the Teaching be fully carried out by a person practising the *Buddha Dharma* ? A Tibetan saying answers the question in the following way :

> "Outward conduct is practised in accordance with *Vinaya (Hinayana),*
> Inwardly, mental activity is practised with *Bodhi-citta (Mahayana),*
> Practised in secrecy is *Tantra (Vajrayana).*"

This may be amplified as follows. A *Sramanara* or *Bhikshu,* having pledged himself to observe the vows, acts in accordance with the rules of the *Vinaya.* Such a person is then motivated with the thought of attaining the status of Buddhahood for the liberation of all sentient beings. He therefore strives to practice all.

A Study of Reality

By **Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan**

The unbounded pure Conscious Energy
Fills the Hearts, the centres of awareness
Of all beings ; It's pure Existence ;
***It is,* the *Real Now ;* and hence truly**
Nothing apart from *It* exists ; verily
***It* has intrinsic Self-Intelligence**
Which in humans takes the form of I-sense
— The reference pulse of Reality.
Like the I-pulse, the rising and falling
Pulsations form intelligence network ;
Its changing field patterns have ingredients
Of its pure state, of rising and falling
Energy states forming *modes,* and innerlink
As manifestations — beings and worlds.

You see the sun, the moon, the stars, clusters,
Quasars, pulsars, expanding, contracting,
Withering, and disappearing —
What goes on ; why so, who says it happens ?
You see the stars after light years
Your 'now' is no *now,* but a happening
In the subjective past ; your now seeing
The sun is the sun before eight minutes.
All world occurrences range about
The I-sense ; it having risen is known ;
Therefore is the *subjective now,* not real.
The *real now* is that from which 'I' comes out,
***It is,* unchanging, and remains unknown**
The awakened-dreaming men ; be the real.

SAINT THERESE OF LISIEUX

By **Gladys Dehm**[1]

This year marks the birth centenary of St. Therese of Lisieux, whose humble autobiography : *Story of a Soul*, continues to be a rich source of inspiration to many. Therese endured tremendous trials in treading her ' little way ' of love. Yet, " love has the knowledge of turning all things to gain ", she wrote. So for this saintly soul bitterness of inner conflict was transformed into joy in the face of her outstanding humility and heroism.

LOUIS and Zelie Martin were blessed with their ninth child a daughter, Marie Francoise Therese, on the January 2, 1873 at Alencon in France.

Zelie Martin died four years after the birth of Therese and it was then that the family moved to Lisieux where Therese's childhood was spent in peace and harmony.

Therese entered the Carmelite Order at the early age of fifteen, taking the name Sister Therese of the Infant Jesus.

She died at the age of twenty four and was canonised on the May 17, 1925.

The autobiographical works we have of Saint Therese were written upon the request of Mother Agnes, the Reverend Mother of the Convent. This request was made one winter evening whilst Sister Therese was relating childhood memories. The spontaneity, freshness, transparent innocence and candour with which these events were evoked so pleased the hearts of her listeners that Sister Marie suggested to their Superior that these be recorded.

So it was that after Church service in the evenings, Therese seated herself on a low stool in her cell and wrote the ' Story of a Soul ' by the light of a small oil lamp.

Also upon the gentle insistence of her eldest sister Marie who was a Carmelite in the same convent, Therese wrote about her secret ' little way ' which leads to the Sacred Heart of Love. Later still in the year 1897 Therese was asked to complete her notes by enlarging upon her religious life. The Prioress told her that this work would serve as a guide to others who sought the Way to God. Obediently, laboriously – for by that time Therese was ill – she completed the manuscript finishing the latter part in pencil as her weakness was such that it became an effort to dip the pen into the inkpot. The humility with which she proferred her work was revealed in her words

[1] formerly *Gladys de Meuter.*

to her Superior, Mother Agnes : 'My little mother, do please revise all that I have noted down. If you deem it fit to delete anything or to add anything I have related to you, it will be just as though it had been done by me. Recall this in the future and entertain no scruples in this matter.'

After Therese's death the manuscripts were published under the title, 'The Story of a Soul'. This story written by a humble Carmelite nun was to touch countless hearts all over the world. Millions have felt in their spiritual lives the beneficial influence of that small book.

Therese died very young yet she had discovered the 'little way' of love which she walked with childlike confidence towards that Heart of Divine Love beating so ardently for all. To Therese there was no transgression which could not be pardoned, no fear or doubt that the Beloved would put aside the sinner. Her boundless trust in the Sacred Heart sparkles like a jewel throughout her work. In that flower-like soul there was no place for the fiery jaws of hell, the anguish of eternal punishment ; she knew naught of a God of Anger, of thundering condemnation. Instead the 'little way' is one of gentleness, of healing of divine understanding and forgiveness. Withal, Therese Martin did not blossom into the Saint-Flower without incredible fortitude, tests of courage and hidden suffering. Throughout her experience with the conflicts of her ego she persevered, undaunted by the resistance which she encountered within herself. Although her life in the Convent was a sheltered one, Therese was exposed to all the temptations which the ego conjures up when engaged in spiritual warfare. Bravely she confronted them and in holiness triumphed over them. Before death claimed her, Sister Therese wore the crown of saintliness – a crown not lightly won away from worldly strife.

With beautiful simplicity she describes to Mother Agnes of Jesus the trials she suffered just before she took her vows.

'My darkness became so complete that only one fact emerged -- I did not truly possess a religious vocation and must consequently return to worldly life. My agony was indescribable. What aught one to do in such a crisis ? Confide to the Novice Mistress. Accordingly I went to her immediately, called her out of choir and, greatly embarassed, explained my state of soul to her. Fortunately her vision was clearer than mine ; she laughed at my doubts and reassured me totally.

'The next morning, 8th September, the "peace which passeth all understanding" encompassed my soul and it was in this holy peace that I took my sacred vows...

'How sweet the path of Love, Mother ! I know that one can fall ; there may be unfaithfulness, yet Love has the knowledge of turning all things to gain, immediately annihilating everything which displeases Jesus and leaving in the depth of one's heart only a peace which is deep and humble.

Arunachala Terminal

By **J. de Reede**

Looking out of a train window,
Standing still at some nameless station,
Another stray train, moving,
Awakens the false but vivid illusion :
We move.

Remembering the only remedy :
Look in the opposite direction !
I check, and through that other
Window see Arunachala,
Standing still.

The illusion is destroyed !
Beholding Arunachala, I-I is known
As Standing Still.

'The works of St. John of the Cross have radiated light to me. I read no one else between the ages of sixteen and eighteen.

'... whilst meditating, the Gospels sustain me above all else. They feed my soul's every need, always enlightening me further and bringing to light deep, mysterious meanings. Experience has taught me that the kingdom of God is within us ; that Jesus has no need to make use of books or doctors to teach the soul ; it is He, the Doctor of doctors, who instructs us in the silence. I have never heard His voice yet I feel His Presence within my soul. He guides me at every moment, inspiring me, and it is when I need them that "lights", till then invisible, are made manifest to me. It is not at prayer that this takes place ; more often than not they come while I am engaged upon my round of daily activities.

'Abundant graces, Mother ! ... I think if everyone were the recipient of such graces no one would fear Him but would love Him with boundless love ; for it is not fear but love which causes us to avoid the smallest voluntary transgression.

'I realised however that we cannot all be alike ; there must exist different kinds of holiness so that the divine perfections can be glorified. He has shown me His Infinite Mercy, and it is in this shining apparel that I look upon His other attributes which are shown radiant with love, all of them – justice as well.

'What happiness in the recollection of Our Lord's Justice, that allowances are made by Him for our weaknesses. Why then should I be fearful ? It is certain that the Infinitely Just God, who forgives the Prodigal Son with such mercy, will deal justly with me, who am always with Him'.

Written for Mother Marie De Gonzagne

'It is now months since the Divine Master has completely changed His Way of handling His little flower ; no doubt because He considers she has received enough water as it is, He permits her not to blossom forth under the warm rays of the sun. His smile is upon her now, and this too she owes to you, Reverend Mother.

'... when I mention that compliments do not affect me Mother, I am not pointing out the confidence and love shown by you – this affects me deeply, but I consider that praise does not disturb me any more ; in all simplicity I can derive satisfaction from it by attributing all the good which is in me to the goodness of God.

'... you know it has always been my desire to be a saint ; but when I make the comparison between myself and real saints I know assuredly that I am not like them. I am as a grain of sand which passers-by tread upon, or like a mountain with its peak obscured by clouds.

'yet this knowledge does not discourage me for I say to myself : "God would never allow me to have such aspirations if they could not be realised, therefore despite my littleness, I can still entertain the hope of being a saint". I could never grow up. I must accept myself as I am, full of weaknesses, but I will discover a new way to Heaven – one very direct and short – a completely new way."

'We are in the midst of an age of inventions ; the rich do not have to climb the stairs, making use of a lift instead. That is what I must discover – a lift to convey me straight up to Jesus, because the staircase of perfection is too steep for one so small.

'So I looked in the Scriptures for some inkling of the lift I wanted until these words were found coming straight from the mouth of Eternal Wisdom : "Whosoever is a little one, let him come to Me." I drew closer to God, feeling certain that I was on the right way.

'... I have experienced trials of all descriptions and known a great deal of suffering. When I was young I used to be saddened by suffering ; now its bitter taste renders me joyful and peaceful.

'... how surprised you would be if you knew of the martyrdom I experienced last year.

'At midnight I retired to my cell but hardly had I lain my head upon the pillow that I felt a warm stream come into my mouth. Having

already put out the light I refrained from seeing what was wrong and discovered in the morning that my handkerchief was drenched in blood. It was good news and hope flooded me ; I was sure my Beloved had allowed me to hear His first Call, on the anniversary of His death...

'. . . It was with joy that I knelt before you to tell you of my happiness.

'. . . still happy I went to my cell that night to receive the same signal of my Lord's call.

'My faith was strong and intense and when I thought of Heaven I was very joyful.

'. . . Then followed anguish and strife in my soul. This trial lasted for months and I am still awaiting deliverance. I find it impossible to explain how I feel. I wish I could do so. I am encompassed by a dark tunnel, and only one who would know how dark it is must go through it oneself . . .

'Your child O Lord, understands. She is content to partake of the bread of sorrow . . .

'When tired of being surrounded by naught else but darkness I try to encourage and console myself with the thought of life eternal which will follow, matters become worse. Voices of unbelievers seem to mock me . . .

'This picture of my tribulation is nothing else but a rough sketch in comparison with reality, but I will not add more since it could become blasphemy.

'. . . Perhaps you will think there is exaggeration in my telling of the night of the soul.

'Yet the realisation of God's gentleness and mercy comes to me ; I was not sent this heavy cross until I was strong enough to carry it.

'. . . I am perfectly satisfied to endure tribulation of body and soul for years, if it would be pleasing to God. I do not fear having to live a long time ; I am prepared to go on fighting.

'We have no enemies in Carmel yet we must deal with our natural feelings ; we are attracted by one sister, whilst another we seek to avoid. Jesus instructs me that this is the very person whom I must love ; even though this sister shows no inclination to love me I must pray for her.

Contemplative meditation is the preparatory step before pure meditation without words or thoughts, and its main purpose is to keep the mind stayed on God — to acknowledge Him in all our ways — so that in quiteness and in confidence we may "be still, and know that I am God".

JOEL GOLDSMITH

'. . . Love is not enough unless proved by action. It is much more difficult to offer help spontaneously than to give it when asked. Unless we have our roots in perfect charity we take umbrage if a request is made tactlessly.

'What joy fills me whenever my soul rises above natural feelings !

'At that time there was a certain sister who caused me much irritation. Satan had his part in it, for it was he who disclosed to me all her bad points. I went out of my way to act towards her as though she were most loved by me. I prayed long and hard for this nun who was the cause of so much inner conflict. I tried to do things for her and whenever I was tempted to give a sharp retort I quickly gave her a friendly smile and turned the conversation to something else. It also happened that sometimes I preferred to slip away like a deserter, leaving her no knwledge of my inner struggle. The result was that she accosted me one day with a beaming countenance. She said : "What is it that you find so attractive in me ? You never fail to give me a gracious smile whenever we meet."

'That which had attracted me was Jesus in the sister's soul depths. It is Jesus who renders attractive that which is most bitter.

'My heart is fixed on God alone. He alone it has loved, and this has so developed my heart that it is capable of loving those loved by Him with a tenderness far greater than any sterile, selfish feeling.

'In instructing others, as I have already mentioned, I have been taught a lot. From the

outset I realised that everyone has to endure the same conflicts, although from another viewpoint, there are great differences between one soul and another ; and because they are not alike they cannot receive like treatment.'

Written for Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart

'My beloved sister, you have requested a memento, and having received permission from our Mother, I am happy to reveal my heart to you.

'Jesus teaches me in secret, never allowing Himself to be seen or heard. Books are not made use of because I lack understanding of what I read. Now and then however a phrase consoles me.

'Jesus has been pleased to point out to me the Way which leads to the Divine Fire of Love ; it is the path of childlike self-surrender, the path which a child takes who sleeps unafraid in the arms of its father.

'Jesus does not ask us for valorous deeds. Self-surrender and gratitude are what He requires.

'It is wholly impossible to put divine secrets into words.

'. . . Love, I realised, sums up all vocations – love is all in all, enfolding every time and place in an embrace, because Love is eternal.

'Ecstatically I cried : "Jesus my love, at last I have discovered my vocation ; it is love. I have discovered my place in the Church – it is the heart. You yourself have given me this place. Yes, *in the heart of Mother Church I will be love* ; so it is that I shall be in all things, and so shall my dreams be realised.

'. . . Ah ! Love, my shining beacon light, at last I know the Way to you, and I have discovered the invisible secret of making my own Your radiant flames.

'. . . Although I am more helpless than a little child, yet, my Jesus, it is this very helplessness which causes me to have the daring of offering myself as a victim to Your love.

'. . . Great deeds will not be mine. The Gospel will not be preached by me ; my blood will not be shed. Yet, what matter ? These things are done for me by my brothers, whilst I, a small child remain close to the regal throne and engage in loving for those who do battle.

'. . . Love requires deeds and what shall I do to prove mine ? The small child will throw flowers whose sweet scent will reach the regal throne, and in a clear voice she will sound the Canticle of Love.'

Saint Therese of the Infant Jesus called the Path of love which she trod the 'little way', yet it was full of true heroism and austere self-denial. Therese did not occupy an important role in life, she was simply a Carmelite nun performing humble tasks. What transformed these simple activities however and drew them up to the noble realm of spirituality was the spirit with which these tasks were performed. Therese concentrated intensely on pleasing her Heavenly Bridegroom, it was for him that she denied herself, controlled herself, humiliated and scorned self. She fought a mighty battle with the ego by imposing more and more rigorous disciplines upon herself. She went out of her way to perform acts of love to everyone, even those members of the community who were antagonistic towards her. Remarkable above all is the fact that this holy life was clothed in so humble a garb that few perceived its radiant saintliness. Therese cherished her great love, she nurtured it, treasured it as a hidden, secret bower. It was only after her passage from this world that her true inner greatness was made manifest. Her way was not that of analytical, discursive reasoning ; she was not called upon to expound theology ; her mysticism was a sacred union within the Heart of Love. Bathing in the warmth of Divine Love Therese knew no fear, gazing upon her Beloved with the trusting eyes of a child and in that wonderful vision she walked with God.

Saint Therese has a message for every individual. The humblest task can be transformed into the noblest activity when the heart offers it up to the Beloved. It is not what we do but how we do it that enriches our inner life. When the heart submits to Love the low is raised high, the small made great. The 'little way' leads to the heights.

GREAT TRUTHS IN SIMPLE WORDS

By **M. S. Nagarajan**

Sri Bhagavan had a unique method of expounding profound truths with illustrations taken from everyday life. His words were never premeditated but came spontaneously They were also apt, as the following incident will show.

IT was in 1932, I think, when I was in charge of the daily puja at the Mother's shrine, that a devotee known as P.W.D. Ramaswami Iyer arranged for a special food offering of *sarkarai pongal*[1] and *vadai.*[2] They were to be offered at the time of the *ushah puja.*[3] I had many things to do and there was no one to help me. So I got up very early, at about half past three, and after taking my bath in the Pali Tirtham, removed the old flowers from the shrine, swept and cleaned the floor and lit two fires over one of which I placed the pot of rice for the *pongal* and over the other the pan of oil for the *vadai.* I then sat down to grind the black gram which I had soaked in water previously. By the time the dough was ready the oil was sufficiently hot. I had not actually prepared *vadais* previously at any time. But I took some dough and tried to spread it out on the leaf in the form of a neat round *vadai* as I had seen others do, but it would not come out properly. I tried again and again but it was of no use. I then got annoyed and threw the dough in disgust back into the vessel. The next moment I noticed some movement behind me. When I turned round I saw, to my consternation, Sri Bhagavan standing behind me and watching my efforts to make *vadai.* I was naturally agitated but He said quietly : "It doesn't matter. You have added too much water while grinding the black gram. Now make round balls of the dough and fry them. They will then be *bondas !*" I did accordingly.

When the *bondas* were served to the devotees at breakfast, as usual, Ramaswami Iyer said to me angrily : "Look here. Did I not ask you to prepare *vadai ?* Then why have you made *bondas ?*" I was afraid to say anything and so merely looked at Sri Bhagavan who immediately turned to Ramaswami Iyer and said : "What does it matter ? If the cakes are flat and circular they are *vadais,* if spherical, *bondas.* The stuff is the same and the taste is the same. Only names and forms are different. Eat the *prasadam* (food offered to a diety) and don't make a fuss." Everyone was astonished at the ready and apt reply of Sri Bhagavan. Ramaswami Iyer could not contain his joy ! He exclaimed : "Wonderful ! Wonderful ! !" Later in the day, when he saw me, he said : "I say, you are a lucky fellow. Sri Bhagavan Himself is supporting you."

The world consists of names and forms. These are naturally many, but what lies behind them is one and the same. Names and forms are not real although we think that they are. Brahman which underlies them is real, but we forget it. What wisdom lay in Sri Bhagavan's words !

[1] a kind of rice-pudding.
[2] a small round cake of blackgram fried in oil.
[3] *puja* conducted before day break in the month of *Margasira* (December-January).

Construction of a Christian Zen-Hall

Increasingly Christians are turning to Zen meditation as a means of enriching their own faith — threatened by modern influences. To cater for this need, a special Zen centre has been opened in Japan where all denominations may practise zazen. Father Lassalle who was recently at our Ashram assured us that he will come back again to this abode of Peace !

Father Lassalle

By **H. M. Enomiya-Lassalle S.J.**

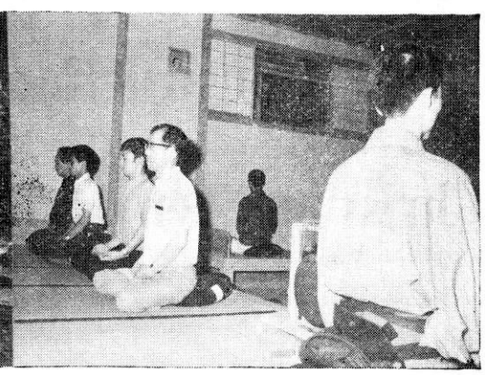
THERE are many people, even in the West, who try to find a remedy for the unrest of modern life in the practice of Zen meditation. Many have discovered from their own experience that this exercise is a very effective means for preserving their physical health. Some have also realised unexpectedly that zazen (Zen meditation) may become an invaluable prop for their Christian faith, which as a unique source of truth seems more and more threatened today by the influence of rationalism and science.

In Japan itself, where zazen is at home, Zen-meditation until recently has been considered unfit or even dangerous for Christians. Fortunately the Second Vatican Council has corrected this misunderstanding, pointing out that methods of meditation found in non-Christian religions should also be known by Christians and if possible integrated into Christian spirituality. Consequently there are now many Christians who desire to be initiated into Zen and many who practised such meditation before becoming Christians are able to resume it again under the guidance of a Christian Zen-Master. One does not have to be attached to any religious group to practise Zen. Any one, no matter to what religion he may belong, is able to profit in body and soul provided he is sincere and has a sufficient degree of bodily and spiritual health.

There are of course many Zen monasteries in Japan where one can learn and practise this kind of meditation. Nevertheless at present it seems to be desirable to have also one or even several Christian Zen-Halls. Times have changed and fortunately opposition between religions has given way to ecumenism and dialogue. It is not rare nowadays for people of different religions to pray or meditate together.

A first experiment with zazen was made ten years ago in the neighbourhood of Hiroshima city in a small house built for the purpose. The project was continued successfully until it had to be given up because of the construction of an electric powerhouse nearby. Fortunately we had already embarked upon building a bigger centre near Tokyo. The centre in Tokyo is called "Akikawa-Shinmeikutsu" which means "Cave of Divine Darkness on the Autumn-river." Construction was started in Spring 1969 and accomplished in December 1971.

The Meditation Centre.



Pracitsing Zazen

This Zen-Hall is designed to give the opportunity for study and practice of zazen to Christians as well as to believers of other religions, who wish to deepen their spiritual life without making commitments in the religious sphere. The new centre is situated on a very suitable piece of land, well separated from the noise of the capital about eight miles from Itsukaichi, a railway terminus town to the west of Tokyo. Nestled in the mountains, in the beautiful valley of the upper Autumn-river, it may be reached by ordinary transport within two and a half hours of down town Tokyo.

The new centre was designed by Togo Murano, one of Japan's leading architects.

Its facilities may be of special benefit to foreigners, since there will be Zen-masters there able to guide in other languages besides Japanese. Eventually it is hoped the place may become a training centre for Christian Zen-masters also.

Construction was made possible thanks to generous contributions from benefactors in Germany and Japan. Buildings include meditation and lecture halls ; rooms for the Zen-master and his assistant ; rooms for fifty participants of Zen retreats or training courses ; chapel, library and other necessary facilities. Total floor-space amounts to 1,580 sq. yards on a 16,000 sq. yard plot of land.

Activities were started soon after the opening ceremony in December 1969. News of the Christian Zen-Hall was received with great interest by the general public. Daily papers and national magazines again and again published illustrated articles. There were also television shows from time to time. As a result of all this publicity the new work became known in the whole country much quicker than we had expected. People interested came not only from Tokyo but from far away also.

The main activities are as follows :

1. Practices every week-end particularly meant for beginners.
2. Retreats of five to seven days called *sesshim* which means " recollection of heart ".

During these days people get up at 4 a.m. and have ten meditations of 40 minutes each during the day. There is one instruction every day by the Zen-master and personal direction during the meditations. Day and night strict silence is observed. Such retreats are held almost every month.

3. Individual practices over one or several days for those more advanced in zazen.

The number of participants in these three groups varies according to the season. During vacations in summer or spring there may be as many as fifty – less during the ordinary week-end sessions. Most of the pupils, aged from 18 to 40 and from all professions, are Japanese but sometimes groups are for foreigners only.

As already mentioned it is hoped to train Christian Zen-masters, a hope already being realized. With foreigners there are of course the additional expenses of travelling – on the other hand the need for teachers of zazen is more felt in Europe and America than in Japan.

SONG OF MEDITATION

By **Hakuin**

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

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

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

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

Praise and adoration
Gain great good fortune
But one who turns towards this
Proves his true self directly :
True self is no-self
  -- this is not idle talk
    it can end here with idle talk

THE SECRET OF MAYA

By **Dr. Robert Fuchsberger**

While musing on a description of the dissolution of the world, the author had a living experience of the Indian myth of *maya*.

A FEW years ago I sat some evening in my room and read in Heinrich Zimmer's book : " Maya, The Indian Myth ". It was an extraordinary experience by itself to peruse the deep and flowery descriptions of this unsurpassable German Indologist.

I went through the passage where the dissolution of the whole world is described. In the following cosmic night when the whole world becomes one vast ocean, the almighty God sleeps lonely, surrounded by darkness. He sleeps many thousand years in the form of a gigantic man floating in this vast ocean.

Then something strange happens. The great saint Markandeya, who walked through the God's body for many a century, emerges out of this body through the God's mouth. Out of the God's body the saint sees the whole world transformed into a single vast ocean surrounded by darkness. In this ocean there floats a gigantic man like a huge mountain. He is like a cloud suspended on this ocean, a cloud shining from some inner source like a sun in the night. Markandeya approaches the floating God and wondering intends to ask him : " who are you ? " But in this moment the saint disappears again in the God's body. Travelling now as before in this body, he begins to muse upon his adventures . . .

At this point I stopped reading and began to muse upon this myth. Was Markandeya travelling in the God's body dreaming of the cosmic night outside or was the saint in the midst of the cosmic darkness dreaming of those travels ?

I somehow felt that this mythical event or rather picture has some deep meaning, alluding to the secret of creation and touching thus on the very mystery of Maya.....

Thus musing I suddenly lost my everyday consciousness and became aware of a surrounding vast golden ocean consisting of shining waves vibrating slowly but continuously. These shining and slowly moving waves were everywhere and they were equally distributed in space. Nothing existed except these waves, not even any notion of I. There remained no trace of I, but only a blissful feeling of eternal peace amidst this shining ocean.

After some time there appeared in this homogeneous ocean of golden waves a spot around which the concentration of the waves became more intense. The slow vibration remained the same, but the distances between the waves were diminishing. Within this concentration appeared a shining centre like some kind of sun. It was somehow like the origination of a crystal shining in primary matter.

At the same time there simultaneously appeared some kind of consciousness becoming aware of these changes in the golden ocean.

The shining centre became greater and denser, approached the observing consciousness and somehow enveloped it. At this moment there appeared from the above mentioned consciousness some vague notion of I. At first it was vague and undefined, but slowly it became more distinct, beginning mentally to acknowledge the world and at last the body. .....It is really very difficult to describe such experiences !

After the returning of my individual consciousness I remained sitting with closed eyes and meditated on my vision. I knew intuitively that I experienced the creation of the I-consciousness from the universal awareness : that means the creation of the subjective world. At the same time I admired the really unsurpassable Indian mythology which could express through such flowery stories the inexpressible ! The myth of Markandeya is somehow a picture of my experience !

Now after many years, when I muse on this experience – still vivid in my memory – I find that the best description of it was given by Bhagavan Sri Ramana himself in the following explication :

" Only one Consciousness, equally distributed everywhere. You through illusion give It unequal distribution. No distribution, no everywhere ! "

CONSCIOUSNESS

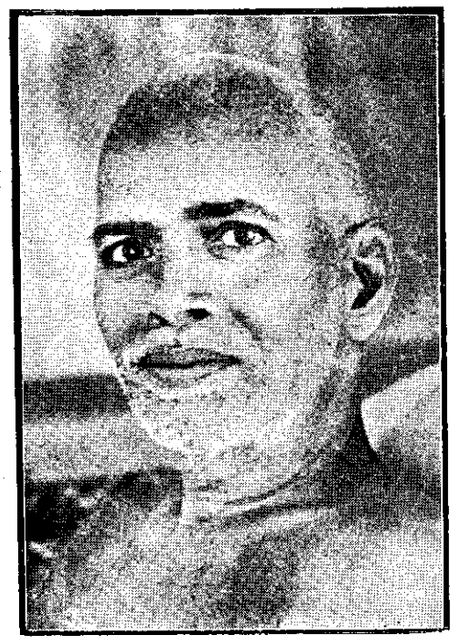
By **Lama Anagarika Govinda**

Is our consciousness
only a flash of light
In an eternity
of gloom and night ?
Or but a dream, a race with death
in time and space ?

The sun is setting. — Why ?
Because we ourselves
Throw our shadows dark
into the universe,
Creating birth and death,
dividing day from night.

And thus we hide
by our ego's shadow-form
The boundless light
that ever shines
And in which space and time
are ever born.

This " ever " is
the moments timeless treasure,
The flash that liberates,
the ray of light,
The rainbow-bridge
that leads beyond the night.



How Bhagavan Came to Me

By **Jean Dunn**

THIS is offered as homage to Sri Ramana Maharshi, the *Sat Guru* in the Heart. A testimony that even after the shedding of the physical form, He has not gone anywhere but is *Here* and *Now*.

I had little religious training, Sunday school classes at the nearest church for a few years. I sometimes would be sent on errands which took me past a church whose doors were always open and I would go in and sit at the feet of the statue of the crucified Jesus, not knowing how to pray, just talking to Him in my heart.

Growing up, I put away the 'dreamer' and adjusted to things as they are in this world and soon became engrossed in daily living. This was my life until the war years and the birth of my first child. It was a difficult birth, extending over three days, neither myself nor the child was expected to live. The doctor and nurses were engrossed in trying to deliver the baby alive and at this time I had the experience of death. An indescribable experience. There simply was nothing of all this which we take to be so real ; only complete joyous freedom, 'Being-Consciousness-Bliss'. My mother saw that I was not breathing and her alarm brought attention to saving my life and soon I was breathing again. Let me assure you that we have it all backwards, this 'life' is *death* and that 'death' was *life*.

The experience was consciously forgotten over the years, but not deep within, and though unaware, it was the start of the long search. I began to wonder what life is all about ; is there a God, what is Truth ? I studied books on the different religions and joined a church for some years. Despite a sorrowful outer life (for which I am now

grateful as it drove me on in my search), there was a feeling of being protected, brief glimpses of Pure Being, the sense of the oneness of all life.

One night about ten years ago, my life seemed to be at its lowest ebb and I did not know which way to turn. I retired for the night and had just closed my eyes when a face I had never seen before appeared in clear detail before my closed eyes ; a 'grizzled sailor's' face with white hair, beard and moustache, looking at me with beautiful eyes. It frightened me because I had never before (nor since) 'seen' anything with my eyes closed.

I put this experience completely from my mind, but soon found myself studying metaphysical books. On moving to Hawaii in 1966 I joined a metaphysical group. Soon I found I had no interest in social affairs and concentrated on the search for Truth. I began to realize that while there was much of Truth in the teaching of the group I had joined, my answer was not there. I chanced to see the book : *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge* by Arthur Osborne at a friend's house and on glancing through it asked to borrow it. After reading the book I knew "This is It".

Soon afterwards I was on a visit to a friend living on the mainland and told her of the book and, to my surprise, she knew of Sri Ramana Maharshi and also knew of a bookstore which might have books on Him. We drove to a small coast town where the book store was located ; as we walked in the door, looking at me from across the room was a picture of the 'face' I had seen four years before. I walked directly to it and picked up the book on which the picture appeared. The face belonged to Sri Ramana Maharshi ! From then on I read every book I could find on Him and His teachings, subscribed to *The Mountain Path* and through His Grace, three years ago, visited Arunachala and Sri Ramanasramam on a two-week vacation. His vibrant Presence is felt strongly there, there is a deep peace and a complete aliveness ; His Grace pours forth in abundance. Bhagavan and Arunachala are One. It is a great blessing to visit His abode.

The Silencing

By **paul rePS**

silently
in this
SILENCING
AWARE
WORD SPOKEN
RETURNS TO
SILENCING

a thought
becomes
all thought

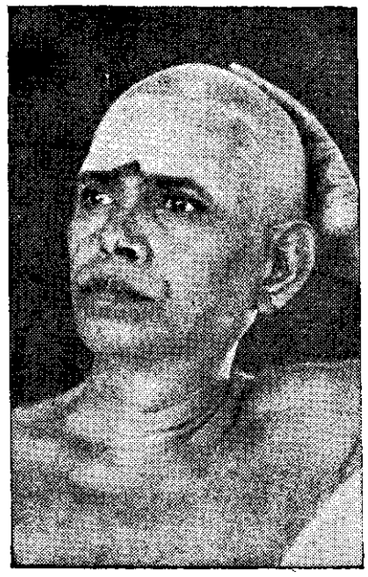
busy
intertastes
still

in your
SILENCING
PRESENCE

On leaving sorrow overwhelmed me and tears flowed continually on the flight to Calcutta, where I was to spend the night. On arrival at the hotel I was very tired and very sad. I unpacked my picture of Sri Bhagavan, placed it on the table and sat down to look at Him. Without warning I was engulfed in the Light of His Love. When I became aware of this world again, two hours had elapsed. There was no more tiredness or sorrow, instead there was a peace past understanding, a joy of Being, impossible to describe. This lasted for many days.

As all *sadhakas* find, after this the real work begins. *Vasanas* never dreamed of crop up, the ego throws up every kind of block and one learns that Sri Bhagavan meant exactly what He said and that constant practice and alertness are necessary. By His Grace are we enabled to follow and practise the teachings of the *Sat Guru* who is ever in the Heart !

The Symbolism of Sri Ramana's 50 years on Arunachala



By **Sadhu Ekarasa (Dr. G. H. Mees)**

FIFTY years ! From the point of view of the restless worldly mind which delights in movement and change, an unbroken stay of fifty years in one place seems to be a tremendous achievement. It is indeed unique. But surely Sri Ramana has never looked upon it as being in any way remarkable. He had attained to the Great Magnet of the World, the Centre of the Heart, and became as immovable as his Father, Lord Arunachala. How could the piece of iron leave the magnet of its own accord ? It has no will of its own.

In a large number of traditional contexts the number 50 suggests and symbolizes fullness and perfection, in connection with the World of Manifestation. In Hinduism it is found in the 50 letters of the Sanskrit Alpabet, the 50 ' beads ' of the *varnamala* or Rosary, of the Goddess Kali, and the 50 coils of *Shakti.* In Greek, Hebrew and Arabic traditions the number 50 symbolises the manifestations of new life in spiritual birth and resurrection. In Jewish tradition the number 50 finds expression in the mystery of the Pentecost, the 50th day of spiritual resurrection and joy, and in the Jubilee year, every 50th year, which was one in which spiritually a new beginning was made in the World of Manifestation. The very word ' Jubilee ' is derived from the Hebrew word ' *Yobel* ', which is a word for the trumpet calling men to Resurrenction !

The Jewish Jubilee was a commemoration of the Original State, the State of Paradise in which man lived at one with God. Bhagavan Sri Ramana called that state the ' Natural State '. What has been called by older traditions the Resurrection from the Dead, is nothing but the return to that Original State of Oneness in which there is no separateness, duality or multiplicity. The Resurrection from the Dead is the same as the attainment of Self-Realisation which is the re-attainment of the Natural State. The end is the beginning, and the beginning is the end !

Written in 1946 during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations.

VIRTUALITY[1]

By **Wei Wu Wei**

I am the Absence
of which every 'thing' (object)
is the presence,
and
without whose absence
no 'presence' could appear.
In the absence of 'things'
I neither AM nor AM-not,
and there is then no longer a presence
or an absence (any 'thing' to which either could be such).
The space-time in which objects are extended
is then no longer such,
but is the Presence in which their extension appears.
This Presence is what I AM,
and what you ARE as I.

Note : 'Presence' and 'Absence' are *relative concepts.*

* * *

"STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW . . ."

What are 'you' looking-for ?
It is I who AM looking,
'You' are 'there',
but I AM 'here'.

N. B. : Looking via objects only 'sees' objects.
Looking directly is BEING.

AS THE WIND WHISPERED TO THE WILLOW

Be still
and know
that 'you'
ARE I.

* * *

PERSPECTIVE

When you 'look'
you see Subject as objects.
when I Look
I see objects as Subject.
That which
is seen
cannot look :
this which is looking
cannot be seen.

[1] Sometimes termed 'Suchness'.

BUDDHIST MEDITATION BEADS

By **Dorothy C. Donath**[1]

The writer delves into the historical background and significance of Buddhist meditation beads, which form a valuable support in religious practice.

THE subject of the *Māḷā,* or ' prayer beads ' used as an aid in meditation is a fascinating one, taking us back into the mists of time. In order to do it full justice I must first touch on something of the *Māḷā's* ancient pre-Buddhist history, background, and origin in so far as we know, or with reason, can infer them.

We do know that the use of ' prayer beads ' for concentration in meditation is of great antiquity – arising long before modern historical times. Their origin was in the East -- the Mother of so much that we have all inherited -- probably not far to the east of the Tigris–Euphrates Valley, in the general area of what is now North–western India and Pakistan, several millennia before the Christian era.

In recent years archaeologists digging in the Indus Valley sites have found traces or prototypes of later features of Indian life : solid wheels on terra-cotta toys identical in form to wooden wheels of bullock carts in modern Sind ; the Pipal tree (the same kind as the ' *Bodhi*-tree ' of the Buddha's enlightenment) represented as sacred ; and traces of Shaivaite worship in the form of Siva's emblems exactly as we see them today.

But most important to our theme, the *Māḷā,* are the small clay images of *Yogi*-like figures sitting cross-legged in the meditation posture which have been unearthed. While there is no direct evidence (beads of wood or of seeds are perishable), this leads one to believe that if *Yoga* and some of its meditation practices were known from the 3rd millennium B.C. -- even in a crude form -- then the *Māḷā* which so often accompanies them, may have been known also.

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the *Mālā* has been used in India as a prayer or meditation aid for thousands of years -- of course long before the Christian era -- and its own adaptation, the rosary.

In time the *Mālā* was carried westward along the trade routes, adopted by subsequent invaders (including the Muslims who use it in their own form), and perhaps carried by intermediate stages to Christendom to assume the form of the rosary, or brought back more directly by Nestorian missionaries who travelled to Central Asia in the 5th century -- although this origin has been disputed.

Buddhism naturally fell heir to the *Mālā,* probably very early in its existence, and by or before the 8th century had introduced it into Tibet (where meditation beads are in constant use by all devout Tibetan Buddhists). Not long after this the *Mālā* found its way into Mongolia also. Eventually meditation beads were spread throughout all Asia, and their counterparts found in many parts of the Western world.

[1] Author of *Buddhism for the West — Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana,* The Julian Press, Inc., New York, 1971.

Now for the beads themselves :

Buddhist *Mālās* (like the Hindu) in the long strings, contain 108 beads, and in Buddhism at least are often separated into sections of 9 by larger beads as dividers. The shorter, or " wrist rosary " types contain 9 or multiples of 9 depending upon the size of the beads, and in Japan sometimes multiples of 7, or 5.

The meanings of the number 108 are many and varied. Here are a few of them :

The number 108 is derived from its multiple, 10,800, in ancient India considered to be the number of moments in a year. 108 also stands for the 108 major upanishads, the oldest Aryan scriptures known ; for the 108 votive lamps in the temple ; for the 108 knowledges ; for the 108 signs of Buddhahood ; and for the 108 names, or virtues of the Buddha. In Tibet, 108 also represents the 108 volumes of the *Kanjur,* " The Word Translated," that is, the sacred Buddhist scriptures translated into Tibetan from ancient Chinese and Sanskrit sources.

108 itself is a multiple of the number 9, and the divisions in the long *Mālās* are made to emphasize this fact. Nine is a special number because it is equivalent to 3 multiplied by itself -- and 3 is a sacred and esoteric number the world over. Some of the meanings of 3 are as follows :

(1) Three represents the creative principle of life in the material universe : mother, father, child -- the trinity -- as found in *some* form in nearly all religions.

(2) Three equals the Indian *Tamas* (inertia), *Rajas* (activity), and *Sattva* (balance, or equilibrium) -- the three cosmological principles of Indian philosophy.

(3) Three represents the cycle of life on earth : Creation, or manifestation in visible form ; Duration ; Destruction -- birth, continuity, death -- symbolized in Hinduism by the gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, and in Buddhism by the Wheel of Existence, or the Cycle of Birth-and-Death.

Another, parallel analysis may be stated thus :

108, besides representing the 108 virtues of the Buddha, stands for the 108 forms or desire, or craving. These can be divided into 3 sections or divisions :

(1) Craving for sensuous existence, or sensation.

(2) Craving for becoming, that is, lack of any permanent satisfaction.

(3) Craving for annihilation -- a form of escapism or aversion (in terms of Western psychology, the " death wish ").

Multiplying these three sets of cravings by *6* (the " six doors " of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind -- the senses through which cravings arise) we get *18.*

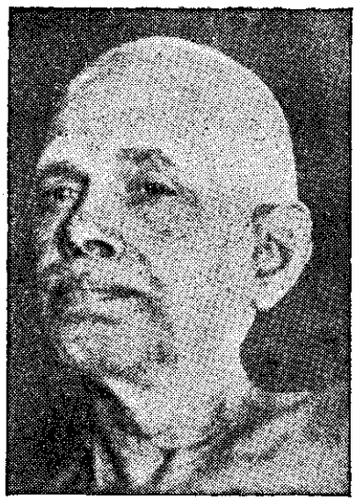
Multiplying 18 by *2* (the internal and external sense processes) we get *36.*

Multiplying *36* by *3* (past, present, and future) brings us to the original *108.*

Thus, in meditation with the beads, the 108 forms of craving (listed in the Buddhist scriptures) are brought to awareness. By meditating upon these, bead by bead, we are led to purification of mind, which is the Way to Enlightenment.

Mālās may also be used in the silent or audible recitation of *mantras,* or invocations, a bead being passed through the fingers for each syllable, or for each repetition of the *mantra* as a whole. The " counters " attached to some strings allow one to keep track of the number of times a *mantra* is recited -- a feature of many Tibetan disciplines, where in certain Schools the repetition of an assigned *mantra* 200,000 times (of course in a devout and intuitive spirit and over a reasonable period of time) is required.

In closing I think I should add that, however used, *Mālās* are only a means to an end -- a support in the mediation process. Like other means (ritual, images or pictures, chanting, visualization, concentration, etc.) they are not an end in themselves, but only one of many aids to those who have yet to reach the summit of Buddhist practice --meditation *without* an object -- where all means may be discarded even as is the raft when we have reached the Other Shore -- and beyond. This is the unimpeded realization of Mind -- an awareness of Awareness itself, and the highest meditation practice of all.



How I Came to the Maharshi

By **R. O. Aminu**

I AM a Muslim born fifty-two years ago and my parents brought me up as a devoted follower of the faith I was born into. This was shown by my ability, due to the Grace of God, to complete the Quran-reciting by the age of 15 years. This was unusual even in those days as the normal age then to finish the Quran was between 25 to 30 years.

Later on in life, after the secondary education I began to ponder about the assertion of Muslim leaders who told us that you have to keep certain rules otherwise you will end up in hell after death where one's body will be consumed by fire. These utterances of *mallams* made me dis-illusioned about the truth of their preaching and this was made worse by the fact that although I could recite the whole Quran by memory I did not understand its meaning. In fact there was no translation of Quran into Yoruba or English in those days. Millions of people in Nigeria are Muslims and less than ten percent understand Arabic. This is what may be termed a blind faith but it works.

Due to Sri Maharshi's Grace I was privileged to come across a book in 1959 written by Yogi Ramacharaka entitled *Fourteen Lessons of Yoga.* The contents of these lessons made a profound impression on my mind particularly the realisation that plants, animals and human beings possess one 'life force' or God. From then on I started reading different Yoga books. Then I began to see that orthodox religions – Muslim, Christian and Hindu – teach the same truth that the Kingdom of God is within them, not up in the clouds and that we are punished by our own sins or karma not by God at all.

However, due to my desire to find out more about life, I became an Infinite Way student and studied the teaching of Joel Goldsmith in 1964. I was attracted to the Infinite Way through the book called "*Contemplative Life*". The regular reading of the monthly letters and constant meditation enabled me to realise for the first time that the Truth which all of us are searching for is within our own Consciousness.

In 1964 I read about *The Mountain Path* in the Infinite Way monthly letters and I immediately became a Life Subscriber and since that time I have been receiving regularly *The Mountain Path* including the early copies of 1964.

I found the articles I read in it very illuminating but very difficult to follow the teaching of Bhagavan and the method of enquiry "Who am I". In 1965 I ordered the book of Mr. A. Osborne, *The Teaching of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words,*[1] and studied it in order to follow his teaching, but I found that much as I desired to understand the message, I still preferred the Infinite Way method. I continued to meditate regularly and listened to the inner voice by using the mantra as taught by the Master of the Infinite Way by reciting "I and my Father are one, the ground where I stand is holy ground, all that the Father has is mine". During this time I found an improvement in my attitude towards life. This pleased me but I failed to hear the small voice until four years later when during my waking and deep sleep I felt a strange vibrating sensation all over my body and heard a clear voice telling me "Not by might, nor by power but by my Grace". This condition was very strange and elating. When I got up I felt that a big load had been removed from me and for a few days I was in a very happy and contented mood. I would have loved to have more such experiences but unfortunately inspite of my regular meditations by Infinite Way method there was no recurrence.

Some two years ago Swami Chinmayananda from India visited my town, Lagos, Nigeria, and gave a two weeks' course on *The Bhagavad Gita,* Chapters twelve and thirteen, which my wife and myself attended and enjoyed. At the close of the course he taught us another method of meditation which I took up and started to use instead of the former Infinite Way method.

Last year I went on holiday and study leave to the United Kingdom which lasted about two months and during this time inspite of my daily *japa* I experienced restlessness and discontent. In fact, I could hardly sleep at night. Unfortunately, before I returned home from my leave, I had a relapse of an ailment which had healed ten years ago. Altogether I was beginning to be dissatisfied and disillusioned about my spiritual progress and decided to turn to some other teaching. One day suddenly I had the urge to read again Arthur Osborne's *The Teaching of Maharshi in His Own Words* and I went through it carefully. Then I discovered, to my surprise, that this is the teaching I have been searching for all along. I read the book from cover to cover within a week, took notes and started to practise the method of 'Self Enquiry' in meditation.

After a few months, to be precise about four months ago, I dreamt and saw Bhagavan, I sat in front of Him and He asked me whether I am ready to follow His teaching now, which I confirmed. The dream was brief but when I woke up I felt very happy that at last I have been initiated and accepted by Bhagavan.

My wife who for the past few years had been a student of the Infinite Way, has also suddenly become attracted to Bhagavan's teaching. We are now both reading through all the past copies of *The Mountain Path* and find that the articles and the 'Letters to the Editor' from readers have cleared some of the questions and doubts in our mind. Also we find the articles 'How I came to the Maharshi' very illuminating.

My experience as stated above has clearly shown to me that the Maharshi guides His devotees slowly until their soul is ripe enough to embrace His Teaching which is the highest, wholeheartedly. May the Grace of Sri Bhagavan continue to guide us.

I wonder if there are some regular readers of *The Mountain Path,* or some devotees of Bhagavan in my country, Nigeria, or any other country in West Africa, so that we may correspond with each other and meet if possible to celebrate the *Jayanthi* locally.

[1] Published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai. & Rider & Co., London.

SONGS OF THAYUMANAVAR

In our series of selections made by Sri Bhagavan from important great works, we publish in this issue ten stanzas from the songs of the Tamil Saint, Tayumanavar. *The first nine stanzas are from the song known as* Akāra Bhuvanam *and the tenth from the song known as* Pāyappuli. *The numbers in brackets indicate the numbers of the verses in the original.*

1–2. As soon as the ego-sense in the form of 'I' rises and becomes troublesome, *Maya* in the form of the world of multiplicity also comes into play. Who can describe the endless misery which it brings in its wake? It manifests itself as the flesh, the body and the senses, as interior and exterior, as the all-pervading ether, as air, fire, water and earth, as mountains and forests, as great physical and mental scenes and as forgetfulness and memory. The waters of delusion then rise in successive waves and beat against the man as pleasure and pain, as the acts which produce them, also as the various religions which show the ways of rendering these acts ineffectual, as God and seekers of God, and as authority for these in the shape of dogmas and counter-dogmas more numerous than the fine grains of sand lying on the seashore. (15-16)

3. Numerous unforeseen calamities cropped up for no reason whatsoever. But God, in His mercy, gave me the wisdom to look upon them as no more substantial than a mountain of camphor on fire which burns itself out completely. He took the shape of a silent Guru (*mouna guru*), a human being like myself in every respect, who ate and slept, sorrowed and rejoiced, bore a name, belonged to a place and acted like one who decoys one deer with the help of another. (17)

4. He came and, after assuming complete control over my body, life and possessions, spoke these words which are in accordance with the traditional method of teaching: "You are not the five senses, nor the five elements, nor the organs, nor their attributes, nor the body, nor knowledge, nor ignorance. Like a crystal which is not affected by the colour of the object which is in contact with it you are pure consciousness. I tell you this since you are fit to be instructed. (18)

5. "If you wish to attain the Supreme State of pure awareness and bliss which is imperishable, identical with all, and housed in

the refreshing temple of Grace, listen to the course which I indicate. May you realize the pure Heart (i.e. the Self) and remain there for ever ! May your dense ignorance vanish ! May you attain the state of pure Consciousness-Bliss ! May you get rid of your sense of bondage ! " (19)

6. The Guru then taught me the state of absolute quiescence characterised by wisdom which releases one from the sense of bondage. He said : " In that state there is no thought, no sense of 'I', no space, no time, no direction, no duality, nothing to discard, no sense of another, no words, no phenomena of day and night, no beginning, or middle or end, no interior or exterior, nothing at all. (20)

7. " But when I say 'no – no' do not think that it is a state of non-being ; it is natural and eternal being which is inexpressible by words. It does not manifest itself as 'I' but engulfs all. It engulfs ignorance like day engulfing night. It completely engulfs your relative knowledge. It transforms you into Itself. It manifests Itself as a state of self-luminous silence. (21)

8. " It is all. It does not allow anything separate from it to rise. Whatever encounters it ceases to exist like burnt-out camphor. There is then no individual knowledge, the knower disappears along with knowledge ; and the object of knowledge, though they do not truly disappear. Who can describe Its greatness and to whom ? Those who realize It are transformed into It. It itself will speak. (22)

9. " If it is described as 'That' the question will arise 'What is That ?' Therefore kings like Janaka and sages like Suka lived like bees intoxicated with honey, without even speaking of 'That'. This state is Godhood." I shall now realize it, by His grace, in the state of *nirvikalpa samadhi* (*samadhi* in which there are no concepts) and enjoy Supreme Bliss. I shall do nothing, not even sleep, until I realize it. (23)

Bhagavan, The Northern Star

By **Jeannette Kilkus**

Bhagavan, Ramana
For sake of the wayfaring devotee
Tossed by crossed currents
Of samsara's sea
Thou fashioned a form
Like the still star of light
Which beckons the heart
Through storm-torn night
Thou fashioned a fisherman's net of God's grace
A skein of beauty, Sri Bhagavan's face
Silently eloquent, Bhagavan's face

Within my house
Thou agreed to reign
In measured space
And golden frame
That I may hold
' Till I am free
The guiding star
of eternity

10. When the ego-sense in the form of 'I' falls down abashed there springs up within me the real 'I' (the Self), the Plenum. It gives rise to bliss, obliterates all relative knowledge, produces a sense of wonder and leads to serenity. At this stage what is there for one to say ? (24)

Impressions at Sri Ramanasramam

By **L. S. Varghese**

A visitor from Ceylon describes a short visit to Sri Ramanasramam, and the impressions it left on him.

I HAD long desired to visit Sri Ramanasramam, in fact since 1955. But the opportunity came only recently in 1973.

I arrived in Tiruvannamalai at day-break by train from Villupuram and made my way to Sri Ramanasramam on foot. The Holy Mountain Arunachala was towering above me in the dim morning light. When I told them at the office that I came from Ceylon they straightaway provided accommodation.

That day I visited all the familiar landmarks, the Old Meditation Hall, the Samadhi of Sri Bhagavan, the Mother's Samadhi, the Samadhi of Cow Lakshmi, etc. Though before arriving at the Ashram I intended to ask some old devotee or other a number of questions, once I entered the Ashram precincts all these questions ceased to occupy my mind. There was no desire even to speak to anyone. I think this to be very remarkable !

There was a vague uneasiness in me as to Sri Bhagavan's presence, but by chance I met one of Sri Bhagavan's oldest devotees, Sri Kunju Swami, who came to my room, and without any prompting from me spoke to me about Sri Bhagavan and His teachings for about half-an-hour. I was quite surprised to note that Sri Kunju Swami was actually answering the questions I had formulated before reaching the Ashram. And Sri Kunju Swami spoke to me in my own mother-tongue (Malayalam) and his exposition, I sensed, was the *upadesa* Sri Bhagavan was transmitting to me.

I was also glad to meet and speak to Sri Raja Iyer, the old post master of Sri Ramanasramam Post Office. In the few minutes of conversation with old devotees I was particularly struck by their child-like simplicity and transparent sincerity. It is not easy to meet such people in the world at large.

Though I stayed only two days at the Ashram, I feel that I have gained much by the visit though, as Sri Bhagavan Himself once told some despairing devotee, " It is not easy to gauge one's spiritual progress ".

I left the Ashram in the evening of the second day. Again I walked back to the railway station. As I walked, there was a song in my heart : " I have felt the presence of the Lord " !

GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

CHAPTER XI

THE GODDESS KILLS MAHISHA WHEREUPON THE LINGA IN HIS NECK ADHERES TO HER HAND

Brahma continued :

MAHISHA rained arrows and many weapons on Goddess Gauri who was mounted on her lion. But she stopped them all from a distance with her arrows and pierced his body in many places. Although the king of the asuras was pierced in this manner he stood his ground and, valiantly fought on. While assailed thus with discs, axes, maces, spears and many other weapons he disappeared suddenly and came back in a moment in the form of a fierce lion. Roaring terribly he raged about the battle field attacking with teeth and sharp claws. The lion which was the mount of the Goddess then struck the asura lion with its paws. The latter retaliated mauling with its claws the chest of the Goddess' lion. Mahisha then transformed himself into a tiger. The Goddess lifted her sword to kill it. Marked with long blue streaks and stripes red and broad like cart tracks, it looked like a big mountain of gold. It came running to attack the Goddess who shot an arrow at it even as Siva shot an arrow at Tripurasura. That arrow instantly lodged itself in its face, drained its blood and passing through the body disappeared into the sky. The asura then transformed himself into an elephant and rushed towards the Goddess whose lion warded off the attack and cleft its skull. Immediately there arose from it (the elephant) a fierce warrior armed with a sword. The Goddess who was carrying a sword and shield and a disc fought with him and cut his head off. But he resumed his form of Mahisha and fought with her tirelessly.

Then the Devas and Munis approached Gautama who praised the Mother of the world and reminded her of her innate glory in these words : " Bhagavati ! You are the vital principle of the world and also its destroyer. It is you who are described as Energy (*ojas*), wisdom and strength. What a wonder ! You are fighting to delude us (i.e., only to make us believe). Let this asura be now annihilated for the welfare of the world. His many forms which were sacrificed to you have now become bestowers of boons. So say the Agamas. Moreover, is any effort on your part necessary at all to kill this foe who is no more than a blade of grass before you, the world-consuming fire ? Please manifest your power and withdraw into yourself the life of this foe with your trident composed of the three *gunas* ".

When the Goddess was praised in this manner she attacked Mahisha and pierced him with her trident. His body was a big as a mountain range but he could not withstand the valour of the Goddess. He fell and although he rolled (on the ground), roared, quivered and vomitted blood, he could not extricate himself from the trident. He looked like a red sea with blood flowing from his face and limbs. The Destroyer of Mahisha (*Mahishasura Mardhani*) cut his head off with a sharp sword and stood dancing upon him. Seeing this the Siddhas, Gandharvas and Maharshis acclaimed her as Goddess Durga. Indra, the king of the Devas, bowed down before her and praised her with folded hands.

Indra said : " Mother of the world ! Thou that art the Consciousness which is the source

of the elements ! Obeisance to Thee ! Thou art the devotion of devotees as well as faith and power. Thou art the root-cause, the Supreme Power (Para Sakti), fame, peace, patience and humility. The world is Thy form, variegated and described by various names. Thou existest in the form of *siddhis* (supernatural powers) suited to the austerities performed by each person. Killing the foe Thou shinest as Siva (the auspicious one). O Sambhavi, this wicked Mahisha has been killed by Thee. Although his head has been cut off he appears to be still alive. We will always remember his red eyes, sharp horns, lolling tongue, swaying head and Thou standing on him. O Goddess that bearest in Thy hands the disc, the horn, the bow, the arrow, the sword, the shield, the spear, the jewel, the goad, the noose, the skull, the axe, etc., and showest the gestures of granting boons and reassuring those who are afraid ! Kindly kill all our enemies. All kinds of weapons are the tokens of Thy glory. Those who hate dharma, even though they may be kings possessing weapons, conveyances, chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry, will be conquered in a moment and lose their valour if they do not have Thy grace. But the righteous souls who worship Thy lotus feet, although they may be devoid of support and valour, will attain sovereignty over the three worlds and become famous. Those who meditate upon this extremely ferocious form of Thine and adore it will always meet with success. They need not fear foes. Let Devas and devotees of the three worlds always worship this form which is adored by all celestial beings for attaining their desires. The mothers (goddesses) who fulfil all desires were created by Thee. Let them be worshipped always everywhere along with the *ganas*. This asura who was slain by Thee has fallen at Thy feet. Therefore let him, by Thy Grace, be always worshipped by Thy devotees in Thy presence."

When the Goddess was praised in this manner and worshipped by Devendra and adored by the Devarishis, she complied with their request and said : " Let it be so ". She created an image bearing all kinds of weapons and installed it in the world of the Devas. Then she took her place here again with the Mothers and assumed her peaceful and pure form surrounded by her companions. She looked at the severed head of Mahisha. While talking about it to her companions she looked closely at his neck which was like an ornament to the world. Seeing a linga there she quietly took it with the object of worshipping it. She looked at the blood, smeared (linga) carefully for a long time. When she did so the linga stuck to her hand. She could not remove it ! She exclaimed : " Why has this happened ? " and wondered. In distress she went to the Maharshi (Gautama) and said : " This devotee of Siva was killed by me. I am therefore overcome by sorrow. It was folly to do so. I killed a devotee of Siva thoughtlessly." Pained at what she had done she continued :

" Bhagavan ! You who know all the dharmas ! I wanted to protect the Devas. So I assured them of my protection. While keeping my word, though meant for protecting dharma, it turned out to be not dharma. I have by mistake killed Mahisha, a devotee of Siva. People whose minds are *rajasic* (active, not thoughtful) cannot follow dharma. They meet with many obstacles. But it can be easily followed through guru's grace. Devotees of Siva should not be oppressed or attacked even if their actions are bad. This is especially so in the case of those who wear lingas. For Siva himself holds them in great esteem. In ancient days the residents of the three cities could not be conquered so long as they wore lingas. It was only when they discarded their lingas that they were burnt up by Siva. This linga which was inside his neck cleaves to my hand. How shall I expiate the sin of killing a devotee of Siva ? Until I obtain the grace of Siva I shall go on a pilgrimage with this linga and do penance. Afterwards I shall bathe (in the holy waters attached to) important places sacred to Siva, like Kailasa and expiate my sin." Hearing these words of Gauri who was afraid that she had done an act contrary to dharma, Gautama who was well-versed in the dharma of Siva said : " Gauri ! Do not fear that a devotee of Siva has been killed by you by mistake. Daughter of the Mountain ! Those who have understood the secret of dharma are rare. Twenty-eight crores of

Agamas have come out of the five faces (of Siva) such as Sadyojata. They are known to the devotees of Siva alone. Some of them were practised by the Munis. Of these five Agamas, namely Kalonmukha, Kangala, Saiva, Pasupata and Mahavrata, are accepted in the Saivite path. There are many variations even among these. But their chief purport is that Siva alone should be worshipped. Siva, the granter of boons, is alone worthy of worship by methods like doing puja, following dharma, overcoming hatred, carrying out the commands of Siva, following the path of the Vedas, and dharma according to Srutis and Smritis, performing *yajnas* and *yagas* and showing devotion (to Siva). Violence should never be used against living beings. Especially those who perform austerities should be non-violent. Those who corrupt the dharma of Siva should certainly be punished. The linga worn by hypocrites should not be recognised. Nor should any attention be paid to their lives. A hater of the dharma of Siva should be exterminated without a second thought. This is what has been taught by those who are well-versed in dharma. Corrupting the dharma of Siva automatically diminishes the power of the perpetrator.

" He (Mahisha) could not be conquered by the Devas not because he had the good fortune to possess the linga but because he had to be killed only by you, the beloved of Siva. He roused the anger of Maharshis who were the devotees of Siva, hated them and scorned them. Consequently he was cursed by them thus : " As you behave like a buffalo you shall become a wild he-buffalo." And he immediately became Mahisha (he-buffalo). But when he bowed to them, praised them and begged for release from his curse, they were pleased to give him the following advice : 'Although you have become a he-buffalo you will be slain by the Goddess herself by Siva's command. You need not be depressed on seeing your present form. Who is not punished for scorning the Siddhas who are really Siva ? Although you have, on account of your sin, become a he-buffalo you will be released from the curse through the grace of the Siddhas.'

" This wicked fellow who oppressed the entire world has also been saved. The form and nature of a buffalo produced by the curse has, O Gauri, now been brought to an end by you by virtue of your penance. If necessary you may for the sake of pleasing Siva, look at Arunachala, the effulgent linga. He (Mahisha) was surely a devotee of the Lord of Arunadri in his previous life. Afterwards he became a wild buffalo but somehow managed to get a linga. Who is there in the three worlds who can kill the wearer of a linga ? This became clear at the time of the destruction of the three cities. Even Rudra glorified the inhabitants of the three cities.

" Now, although he was in the form of a he-buffalo, there was inside his neck, severed by you with your sword, a linga. (It is said that) a linga which is worn without proper initiation will bring ruin upon (the wearer). Or did he perhaps fall away from the virtuous path by evil counsels ? There is no doubt that he has been liberated by coming into contact with your lotus feet, as a result of the austerities performed by him in his former lives, by the remembrance of his real nature and the wearing of the linga. In any case the sight of this noble hill is the sure means of expiating all sins.

" Goddess ! This sin can be expiated in the following manner : You must make some followers of the various aspects of Saiva Siddhanta to come and settle here. You must then make all the holy waters to meet here and form a single holy pond in which you must bathe bearing the linga and uttering the *agha marshana mantra* (*mantra* which expiates sins). You must bathe thrice daily and, at the end of one month, conduct a festive *Deva Yaga* (sacrifice for the gods) and worship the Lord of Arunadri, making all the prescribed offerings."

When Bhagavati, the Protector of all the worlds, learnt from the Muni this secret about Siva, she took the necessary steps for bathing in such a holy pond and expiating her sins.

(To be continued)

Garland of Guru's Sayings

SRI MURUGANAR

242.

For those whose hearts are filled with grace
All forms of darkness disappear.
Their vision, bright with meaning, seas
Each being everywhere as bliss.

243.

Those with physical eyes alone
See God in beautiful objects ;
Great yogis see Him in the heart-lotus ;
Priests see Him in the sacred fire ;
But the wise have a thousand eyes
And see Him everywhere.

244.

The joyous vision of the Lord destroys
The notion that the body is oneself
And all conceptual thought with trouble laden,
Till one becomes nought but an Eye of Grace,
One spacious heaven of pure awareness.

245.

When the treacherous senses are subdued,
Thought is eschewed and in the body still
One stands firm rooted in the heart's awareness –
In such concentration Shiva appears.

246.

The clear vision that destroys all false illusion
Is like a swelling ocean of sweet grace.
There is no fall or failure
In the accomplished silence of the Master
Who is pure Self beyond all thinking.

SANATSUJATIYA[1]

CHAPTER III

1. Dhritarashtra :

O Sanatsujata ! What you have said about Brahman is very important and comprehensive (*visvarupa*). Please therefore tell me also about the other transcendental matters which are rarely spoken about.

2. Sanatsujata :

O King ! This Brahman you are urging me to speak about cannot be realized by one who is impatient. The Wisdom which arises when the intellect is completely quiescent and the mind entirely free from thoughts is attained by living with a realized sage and observing celibacy (*brahmacharya*).[2]

3. You are talking about the primal and true wisdom which is attained by the virtuous through *brahmacharya*. On attaining it one turns away from the world of men. This wisdom is generally found in those who have learnt it from gurus.

4. Dhritarashtra :

O wise man ! Please tell me what is that *brahmacharya* through which this wisdom is properly acquired.

5. Sanatsujata :

Those who go to the *Acharya* (guru or teacher) and, are accepted by him as his disciples,[3] practise *brahmacharya* and become authors of scriptural works (*sastrakara*). And when they leave their bodies they attain the Supreme Being.

6. They conquer their desires and wait patiently to realize Brahman.[4] They clearly

[1] Continued from the last issue.

[2] This word ordinarily refers to celibacy or the life of a celibate student. But here it is used in the wider sense of practising the discipline necessary for realizing Brahman, that is living with a realized person and following his advice.

[3] Those who go to him and are accepted by him as his disciples (*sishya*).

[4] i.e., to realize that they are Brahman.

understand that the Self is not the body and detach it just as one extracts the pith of the *ishika* reed from its outer layers.

7. Father and mother bring only this body into existence. The birth which one takes from the Acharya is the true and immortal birth.

8. He (the guru) protects (the disciple) and makes him immortal. The disciple should not, therefore, knowingly transgress against him. He should salute the guru daily. He should be eager to learn from him and be always attentive.

9. The learning acquired by following the conduct prescribed for disciples is pure (beneficial). This is said to be the first quarter of *brahmacharya* (course of study).

10. The disciple should conduct himself towards the *Acharya's* wife and children exactly as he would towards the *Acharya*. This is the second quarter.

11. He should always remember what the *Acharya* has done for him, recognize its value, feel that he has been fortunate in having him for his *Acharya* and be grateful to him. This is the third quarter of *brahmacharya*.

12. He should please the *Acharya* with his body, mind and speech, giving up even his life and property, if necessary. This is the fourth quarter.

13. One quarter is gained by coming to the Guru, another by intelligent perseverance, a third by studying the scriptures and a fourth in course of time.

14. The twelve good qualities such as wisdom and the other requisites (see II — 19, 21-28) and strength (of mind) yield results only when one comes into contact with the *Acharya*. *Brahmacharya* becomes fruitful when one realizes union with Brahman.

15-16. The devas attained their celestial status through *brahmacharya*. The sages (rishis) became eminent through *brahmacharya*. The *apsaras*[5] living with the *gandharvas* became beautiful through *brahmacharya*. The Sun illumines the world by virtue of *brahmacharya*.

17. Just as one attains one's desires with the help of the wish-fulfilling gem (*chintamani*), so also they[6] attained their present status by first realizing the value of *brahmacharya*.

18. But they attained only worlds which are finite, not the Self, which is infinite. The wise attain that Eternal Effulgence through wisdom. There is no other way of attaining it.

19. Dhritarashtra :

A Brahmin of spiritual attainments[7] sees within himself the colours white, red, black, silvery and bluish. Which of these is the colour of the immortal and imperishable Supreme Being ?

20. Sanatsujata :

It is neither white nor red, nor black nor silvery nor bluish. It is not found on earth nor in the sky, nor is it found in the waters of the ocean.

21–22. It is not found in the stars or the lightning or the clouds or the air or the gods governing the sense organs or the sun or the moon or the Rig Veda or the Yajur Veda or the holy Sama Veda or the *rathantara*[8] or the *brihadratha*.[8] It is realized within oneself by him who practises great austerities.[9]

23. It is not possible to transcend It. It is beyond darkness (ignorance). Everything finally enters into It at the time of destruction (of the worlds). It is tinier than the tiniest and bigger than the mountains.

24. Everything shines in Its effulgence. The Knower of the Self perceives It by the Yoga of Knowledge (*jnana yoga*). The entire world is based on It. Those who realize this become immortal.

(To be continued)

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[5] celestial nymphs.
[6] devas and others.
[7] the word used is *vidvan* (a learned man).
[8] kinds of hymns of the Sama Veda.
[9] i.e., one who possess the virtues described in Chapter II.

IN THE CALM SHADES

By **Daniel G. Culla**

Arthur,

In the frenzied tempest of modern life
In the desert of our humanity
The
pages
of
The
Mountain
Path
Are flapping wild and sweetly.
I am touched by your breeze, by the pages of the Path.
I receive the shell from Scot Mary.
And
When
I break
open
this
shell
I
See much and
Nothing
And
yet
that
nothing
which
I
do
not
see
Is the Real, the sacred energy of life.
Could I enter it,
Knowing that I have never left it!
And
let
me
sit
In the calm shade
Of
your
tree,
eat of its truth,
read the leaves
And joyfully celebrate my oneness with
The living forces eternally at play in
The mountain.

LISTENING IN SILENCE[1]

By **Fr. Thomas Merton**

CONTEMPLATION is essentially a listening in silence, an expectancy and yet -- in a certain sense -- we must truly begin to hear God when we have ceased to listen. What is the explanation of this paradox? Perhaps only that there is a higher kind of listening, which is not an attentiveness to some special wave-length, a receptivity to a certain kind of message, but a general emptiness that waits to realise the fullness of the message of God within its own apparent void. In other words, the true contemplative is not the one who prepares his mind for a particular message that he wants or expects to hear -- but who remains empty because he knows that he never can expect or anticipate the word that will transform his darkness into light. He does not even anticipate a special kind of transformation. He does not demand light instead of darkness. He waits on the Word of God in silence and when he is answered it is not so much by a word that bursts into his silence. It is by his silence itself suddenly, inexplicably, revealing itself to him as a word of great power -- full of the voice of God.

But we must not take a purely quietistic view of contemplative prayer. It is not mere negation. Nor can a person become a contemplative merely by 'blacking out' sensible realities and remaining alone with himself in the darkness. First of all, one who does this of set purpose, as a conclusion to a practical reasoning on the subject and without an interior vocation, simply enters into an artificial darkness of his own making. He is not alone with God, but alone with himself. He is not in the presence of the Transcendent One, but of an idol: his own complacent identity. He becomes immersed and lost in himself in a state of inert, primitive and infantile narcissism. His life is 'nothing', not in the dynamic, mysterious sense in which the 'nothing (*nada*) of the mystic is paradoxically also the 'all' (*todo*) of God. It is purely the nothingness of a finite being left to himself and absorbed in his own triviality.

The Rhenish mystics of the fourteenth century had to contend with many heretical forms of contemplation and both Tauler and Ruysbroeck carefully distinguished between the dark night of genuine contemplation and the arbitrary self-willed passivity of those who adopt a quietistic form of prayer as a matter of systematic policy, simply cultivating inertia as though it were by itself sufficient to solve all problems. Of these, Tauler says:

"These people have come to a dead end. They put their trust in this natural intelligence and they are thoroughly proud of themselves for doing so. They know nothing of the depths or riches of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. They have not even formed their own nature by the exercise of virtue and have not advanced along the ways of true love. They rely exclusively on the light of their region and their bogus spiritual passivity."

The trouble with quietism is that it cheats itself in its rationalisation and manipulation of reality. It makes a cult of 'sitting still' as if this in itself had a magic power to solve all problems and bring man into contact with God. But in actual fact it is simply an evasion. It is a lack of honesty and seriousness -- a trifling with Grace and a flight from God . . . .

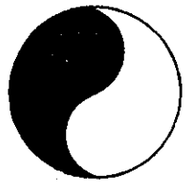
[1] from "The Climate of Monastic Prayer" (Cistercian Study Series).

YIN AND YANG

. . . on reading the first two chapters of the Tao Te Ching . . .

By **Murdoch Kirby**

The significance of *yin* and *yang*, the famed Chinese symbols for the polarity of Nature is examined in the context of the Taoist classic by Lao Tze.



THIS is a very old symbol, recognised in China as indicating the Universal Principle, the Ultimate Cause, the Universe Itself — everything and nothing. It is the Dark and the Light, Earth and Heaven, the Material and the Spiritual.

The design shows that the Dark and the Light, *Yin* and *Yang* and all the other meanings are in no way fixed or permanent ; they grow and diminish ; as one reaches an extreme it produces the other ; each follows the other in a never-ending cycle.

All ideas, it shows, have their opposite or complement, even within themselves. We cannot appreciate beauty without understanding ugliness. Good has no meaning if there is no evil. Existence means nothing without non-existence.

There is, nevertheless, one exception. It is TAO, the determining factor of the Universe. To this there is no opposite. It alone can never change, although it always appears changing. It cannot be described or named.

We may, however, call it TAO. TAO determines how the universe develops, how the stars wax and wane and sometimes explode. The planets were formed according to TAO and each has its own path to follow. Each animal, insect and plant lives according to the way it must go.

Man alone can excercise discretion and choose what he will do. If he is wise he will accept the world as it is and be content in his own state. It is desires which cloud the vision. If he is wise he will seek to flow with the tide of his TAO, and not struggle to swim against it. In this way he can achieve his life-purpose without effort.

* * *

Sometime during the third century, B.C., still another group developed an indigenous and probably very ancient dualism into a more or less systematic purview of nature. They became known as the "Yin-Yang" experts. Their writings have perished, but from quotations, it is known that they developed cosmological ideas and a limited amount of geographical information comparable to that of the early Ionian thinkers.

Yin and Yang are the famed cognates of Chinese thought about nature. Generally speaking, Yin stands for a constellation of such qualities as shade ("on the north side of a hill") darkness, cold, negativeness, weakness, femaleness, etc.; while Yang ("on the south side of a hill") denotes light, heat, strength, positiveness, maleness etc. The Yin-Yang experts regarded the interaction of these cognates as the explanation of all change in the universe. Not even politics was exempt: "Kuan Tzu said, the King's edicts should be seasonable; if they are unseasonable then look out for what will come because of heaven... Thus Yin and Yang are the major principles of the world, the great regulators of the four seasons. Even the most moral effects of punishments have to do with the seasons; if it accords with the season, it will be beneficial; otherwise it breeds evil." (Chap. 40 of the "Kuan Tzu" book).

The words Yin and Yang occur only once in the *Tao Te Ching*, in Poem 42, where they are covered up to some degree by their translation as "shade" and "sun" respectively. This passage, nevertheless, bears witness to the influences on the current theory on the mystics.

Far more important is the constant occurrence throughout the book of what Dr. Roderick Scott calls "Yinism". The "valley spirit" is praised (6) and called the "mystic female". Poem 28 agrees almost wholly with the mystic's preference for Yin over Yang, a remarkable point of view in a patriarchal society which exhorts the male at every point, as Dr. Scott has indicated. Weakness and softness are repeatedly praised. The Wise Man is generally described as having characteristics normally associated with women. The Way itself is described (59) as a mother. Even the ideal realm is described as female (61):

> The great land is a place
> To which the streams descend;
> It is the concourse and
> The female of the world:
> Quiescent underneath
> It overcomes the male.

when this breath

By **saniel bonder**

wonder of wonders

when this breath
seen as thought

speeds thought's death
all quicksand things

freeze into thought
the world's a thought

that I have wrought
what then am I ?

not this tanned flesh
body world as thought

with 'I' can't mesh
who then am 'I'

that 'thinks' these thoughts
who then am 'I'

BOOK REVIEWS

ZEN CATHOLICISM : By Dom Aelred Graham. Pub. : Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., New York. Pp. 228. Price : $ 2.45.

Subtitled "An inquiry into the religious encounter of East and West, with the suggestion that the two may meet at the spirit's centre," the book discusses "whether what is essential to Buddhism, with its Zen emphasis, does not have its counterpart in Catholicism ; whether Catholics might be helped, by Zen insight, to realize more fully their own spiritual inheritance ; and whether Zennists need be as exotic as they are."

Although the author finds many points of analogy between the attitude of Zen and the deeper aspect of the Catholic teaching — as he believes that "Whatever is substantive in any philosophy or way of life should have its counterpart . . . in Catholicism," — he is unable to bridge the vital theological gulf and reconcile ecclesiastical Christianity's dualism with the essentially monistic experience of Zen. Naturally his bias is towards asserting the validity of the Catholic viewpoint that the Creator and the created will always remain separate entities, and says : "How far could one, as a Catholic, agree with a position which many expositors hold to be implicit in Buddhism, namely, that to become aware of the inner self (Atman) is to become aware of the Ultimate Self (Brahman) which is God ? Succinctly the doctrine is expressed in the sacred Sanskrit formula *tat tvam asi* (That thou art). . . . We should be foolish to quarrel over words and descriptive terms. Provided we remember that our individual self is finite and creaturely, we may call it Atman, and call God Brahman," otherwise the author finds that the idea that there is no dependent subordination of creature to Creator as "incompatible with Catholic Christianity".

Dom Aelred is far less sombre in his writing than most theologians, which is refreshing, however, he tends to see-saw between penetrating intellectual insight and intuitional paucity regarding the essential essence of Zen, so that at one moment you think that he knows but the next paragraph destroys what seemed his previous understanding. Throughout the book he continually emphasises adherence to Seng Ts'ans profound aphorism :

> "Try not to seek after the true,
> Only cease to cherish opinions."

Unfortunately the author does not follow his own advice, and makes disparaging remarks about D. T. Suzuki's intellectual capacities and about Zen statements the significance of which he has failed to grasp, comparing them unfavourably with 'Christian logic and consistent epistemology'. Of the Zen *koans* he says : "It may be suggested that the purpose of the *koan* is not unlike that of the New Testament parables — a question is posed in a manner that obliges the listener to reach mentally beyond normal conventions of thought and conduct to basic reality. By this comparison the average *koan* falls decidedly flat." And follows this up with an inner experience of St. John of the Cross in which he identifies himself with all things, and says, "It is a merging of the separative self in what it sees, the 'I live, yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me'," (*Galatians* 2.20), "describing the experience as the 'Catholic *satori*' and adding, 'By comparison the Zen experience may be thought to look a little thin'."

Thin and flat though it may be, Dom Aelred makes several brilliant and pointed observations for the improvement of practical Catholicism by the employment of Zen methods of approach. He concludes that "the spirit of Zen may find a congenial dwelling place within Catholism," so long as it is "placed in the context of faith in God and our dependence on His Grace," — in which case Zen

insight may 'cleanse the Christian mind a little' of its sense of overburdening guilt, its fears, anxieties, remorse, and its tendency for living in the past or in futile hopes for the future.

However, he warns against any temptation by Westerners to turn for any lasting enlightenment to Japan, since he affirms, quoting Edward Conze, that the creative spark of Zen died out a thousand years ago, and as vindication of this he cites the press statement of a leading Japanese Buddhist who said : "Unless we adopt the spirit and techniques of Christianity, specifically of the Catholic Church, Japanese Buddhism may soon be a thing of the past," which by no means vindicates his position, but merely indicates the sterility of both Eastern and Western Orthodoxies, both of whom are looking to each other's traditions for a way out of stagnation, while ignoring those enlightened free spirits who are far beyond the doctrinal assumptions of any established religion.

MUZ MURRAY

MEDITATE THE TANTRIC YOGA WAY : By Swami Jyotirmayananda Saraswati. Pub. : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Ruskin House, London. Pp. 117. Price : £ 3.50.

Recalling an incident in the life of Sir John Woodroffe, a judge at Calcutta High Court, the author narrates : "Dealing with a particular court case, he was appalled to notice that he was unable to give judgment. As this had never happened to him before, he began investigating and discovered that both parties concerned had been bombarding him with special Mantras to influence him in their favour. This was the beginning of his scientific career and he discovered that behind the Tantra-Shastra with the Mantra system lay a deep philosophical meaning which, up till then, had not been seriously considered by the West." (p. 40) He proceeds to describe ten different techniques of meditation or concentration in the Tantra Yoga from which the seeker is expected to choose any one that suits his nature and need. They are :

1. *Japa-Yoga* : Repetition of the Name or Syllable or Mantra ; it is verbal or mental or in writing.

2. *Trataka* : Concentration on an object with the eyes focussed on it. The writer warns the practitioner not to strain the eyes ; if they water or pain, he must shut the eyes, recover and then proceed.

3. *Antar-Trataka* : Concentration without a physical object ; it is mental.

4. *Chidakasa-vidya* : Visualisation and concentration upon the inner space.

5 & 6. *Chaya-upasana* : Concentration upon the shadow or reflection in a mirror.

7. *Yoga-nidra* : Controlled relaxation sliding into yogic sleep.

8. *Nada-yoga* : Meditation upon and pursuit of Sound as the creative Dynamism.

9. *Antar-mauna* : Self-withdrawn and inner silence.

10. *Ajapa-japa* : Combination of the mantra *So'ham* with the breath.

The directions are given in the form of a step-by-step series of instruction — a method very much in vogue in the West for courses in Physical Culture, etc. It may appeal to some while others may find it unnatural in a dynamic process like yoga.

PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY AND THE IMAGE OF MAN : By Dr. N. A. Nikam. Pub. : Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 160. Price : Rs. 30.

There is one note that runs through all of these eighteen essays and discourses on Philosophy, Mysticism, Hinduism and History and that is the warm humanism of the author. To Dr. Nikam all values are ultimately human values. The individual is the key to the progress of the collectivity. He quotes from Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi : "The level of truth of history is only the level of truth of the individual." (p. 115)

Discussing the question whether one must necessarily take to Sannyasa in order to obtain *moksha*, the writer cites Bhagavan's answer : 'Why do you think you are a *grahastha* ? Similar thoughts that you are a *samnyasin* (ascetic) will haunt you even if you go out as a *samnyasin*. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go for the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the mind, and it makes you think of being the *grahastha*. If you renounce the world you will only be substituting the thought of *samnyasa* for that of *grahastha*, and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. It is no help to change the environment. *The one obstacle is the mind ; it must be overcome, whether in the home or in the forest.* If you can do this in the forest, why not in the home ? Therefore, why change the environment ? Your effort can be made even now, whatever be the environment." (pp. 14-15)

The writing is deeply perceptive and underlines the abiding values of the Indian Seers : Equality of vision, sacrifice of self, direct experience of God,

SAMKHYA AND ADVAITA VEDANTA — A COMPARATIVE STUDY : Dr. Anima Sen Gupta. Pub. : Manoranjan Sen, Gour Ashram, A. P. Sen Road, Lucknow. Pp. 109. Price : Rs. 12.

Continuing her scholarly researches in the *Samkhya* system of Indian Philosophy, the author makes a comparative study of the dualistic Samkhya and the monistic Vedanta. She takes note of the opinions of certain scholars ascribing non-Vedic origin to the Samkhya, traces its development in the Veda, Upanishads, the Mahabharata till it came to be formulated by Ishwara Krishna as a system. She spots the origins of Advaita in the Rig Veda and brings it up to the post-Shankara period.

Important topics of Consciousness, Knowledge, the World — its cause, creation and status — and the meaning and content of liberation are studied in both the contexts with an effort to underline their common features.

A stimulating work.

M. P. PANDIT

VEDANTA SARA SANGRAHA : QUINTESSENCE OF VEDANTA : By Anantendra Yati. Translated into English with an analytical introduction by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan. Pub. : Ganesh & Co., Venkatanarayana Road, Madras-600017. Pp. 63 + xx. Price : Rs. 3.

In 224 sections the author presents the quintessence of Advaita Vedanta in a very clear and lucid manner. The exposition is in the form of a dialogue between the preceptor and pupil. The latter represents the ordinary type of enquirers and puts just the very questions which any one else who is eager to learn will address to the preceptor. The preceptor's answers are free from ambiguity and quite to the point.

Section 186 reads as follows : "The wise one who is liberated in life becomes, verily, liberated from the body in due course of time through always remaining in Brahman." This means that both *jivanmukti* and *videhamukti* are attained while one is still alive. This view seems to run counter to the usual belief that for *videhamukti* one has to wait for the fall of the body. But this difference is more apparent than real. Where the *jivanmukta* develops complete detachment from the body and disowns it, it is tantamount to dropping the body.

What is stated in the next section is logical sequel to the foregoing. If body-consciousness lapses, the world whose perception depends on the sense-organs and mind, disappears from view. He will then see with the eye of wisdom only Brahman and not the world of diversity.

Towards the close forty-four select verses from the *Vivekachudamani* are given in English translation. They bear on the points developed in the exposition.

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan gives a neat summing up of the contents of the book in his Introduction. The book is eminently worth careful study.

THE NASADIYA SUKTA : THE SONG OF WORDS, WISE AND LIVE : By M. R. Desai. Pub. : Principal, Desai Publication Trust, Kolhapur. Pp. 27. Price : Rs. 2.

The *Nasadiya Sukta*, occurring in the Rig Veda, is justly famous as the forerunner of what in later times came to be known as Advaita Vedanta. That it contains the germs of Advaita Vedanta is clear from the fact that Sri Shankara refers to it in two contents in his *Sutra Bhashya* (II.i.6 and II.iv.4). "This song," the author observes, "can rightly be called the nucleus of the Vedanta". Towards the close he writes : "The seer of the *Nasadiya Sukta* has spelled out the alphabet of thoughts that lay a firm foundation of the perennial philosophy, the philosophy of the Vedanta".

In view of the depth of thought that is imbedded in it, the *Sukta* deserves close study. The author has done it in a very clear manner with much understanding. The seven stanzas, which go to make up the Hymn, are taken up one by one and explained in detail. The stanza is cited, the words that go to compose it are given separately, then they are arranged in prose order, then the meaning of the separate words is given, then the full rendering in English and finally the notes. Towards the end there is an index which arranges the words in their alphabetical order and gives their English meaning.

It is a useful publication.

THE THREE FOUNTAINHEADS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY : By N. V. Joshi. Pub. : Somaiya Publications Limited, Bombay. Pp. 146 + x. Price : Rs. 25.

Besides an introductory chapter and an appendix, the book consists of four chapters of which the first deals with the teachings of the *Mantra* and *Brahma* portion of the *Vedas* ; the second with the *Upanishads* ; the third with the *Gita* and the fourth with the *Brahma Sutra*.

In the preface the author makes out that his study of both European and Indian philosophy had

convinced him that all the previous attempts at solving the main philosophical problems as to the reality or illusion of the world, were miserable failures because the right standpoint had not been adopted. He 'discovered' that the only correct standpoint was the ontological one and the only logical philosophy that could arise from it was the philosophy of Individuation.

The ontological premise of the author is that the Highest Reality must be conceived as a dynamic and creative principle which, by its own inner impulsion, expresses itself in finite forms, which are the manifestation of individuation.

Sri Joshi maintains that all the previous commentators on the great scriptures of India had failed to discover this obvious point of view, and thus the interpretations of sages such as Shankaracharya and Ramanuja are extremely misleading and philosophically static. Therefore he warns: "One thing, at least, is quite certain, that he who wants to make a closer approach to the mind of the *Sutrakara* will find himself in a sorry plight if he puts himself entirely at the mercy of these commentators."

He enjoins a proper study of the four major Indian scriptures to substantiate his ontological definition of Brahman — the Highest Reality, and says that it is not the logical approach that will enable us to understand the exact nature of this creative principle, but a kind of mystic communion. The method of knowing Brahman must operate in conformity with the requirements of existential experience — that is, by bringing the like into intimate communion with the like. This means that one has to rise beyond the limitations of the empirical world which is ruled by the logical intellect, and has to resort to some mode of ontological intuition which can "put one at the very heart of the dynamism of the real within one's own individual existence."

It is easy to condemn the interpretations of the great commentators like Shankara and Ramanuja, but not so easy to put forward a new line of interpretation which would be more acceptable — in this instance, the reader must judge for himself.

THE VEDAS: WHAT AND WHY: By K. S. Srinivasacharya. Pub.: By the author, Flat B-1, Ayodhya, 3/5, South Bank Road, Madras-600028. Pp. 84 + iv. Price: Rs. 2.

Besides a Foreword by Agnihotram Ramanuja Tatacharya, this tiny book consists of six chapters. The first is of an introductory nature dealing with preliminary topics like the timelessness of Veda, how they have been preserved through the ages, the modes of recitation and the universality of their message. Chapters two to five deal with the Rig, Yajur, Sama and the Atharva Vedas. The subdivisions under each Veda, the *Samhita*, the *Brahmana*, the *Aranyaka* and the *Upanishad* are set forth with a wealth of detail. The last chapter is devoted to a description of the secondary canon, viz., the six *Vedangas*. Towards the close some information is given about the *Dharma Sastras*. There is a very useful bibliography in the end.

Within the brief compass of the book, the author has furnished a fund of very useful information about the Vedas, their hoary antiquity, their application for all times, the lofty thoughts enshrined in them, the scholars, both western and eastern, who dived deep into them and brought out the precious gems, their translation into English and Indian languages, the publication of the primary canon running to forty four books.

The book is well-worth careful reading.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF RAMALINGAR: By SP. Annamalai. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 215. Price: Rs. 4.

This is a thesis submitted by the author to the Annamalai University for his doctorate degree and is therefore a work of research meant not so much for the ordinary reader as for the erudite scholar. It, however, gives a fairly simple account of the life and teachings of Ramalingar, the saint who lived in Tamil Nadu in the second and third quarters of the last century. More important than the saint's life are his teachings which lay equal emphasis on compassion to living beings, service to humanity, devotion to a personal God and high spirituality. He was a voluminous writer. Many of his poems and songs are in simple and lucid Tamil and make a profound appeal to devotees. But it is by no means easy to understand the works embodying his spiritual experiences which ranged from visions of gods to the advaitic experience of complete identity with Brahman or the Absolute and then to the experience of 'embodied immortality', a term coined by the author to describe the dissolution of the physical body into thin air, as it were, without undergoing the process of chemical decomposition at death. The author believes that this last phenomenon is not so incredible as it might seem to be and that some of the ancient Saivite Saints have experienced this transformation. He has taken great pains to make this and other obscure aspects of Ramalingar's spiritual experiences as clear as possible.

It is a pity that the book is marred by inelegant language in several places.

KRISHNAVATARA – IV : THE BOOK OF BHIMA : By K. M. Munshi. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 253. Price : Rs. 5.

Krishnavatara (Incarnation or Descent of Krishna) is the name given by the late K. M. Munshi to his modernised version of the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata* which appeared at first serially in *Bhavan's Journal* and was later published as a book of several parts in Bhavan's Book University series. As stated by himself, the author has taken considerable liberty with the old epics and drawn a great deal upon his imagination. He has eliminated almost completely the miraculous and divine elements and has transformed the heroes and heroines into glorified mortals with all the virtues and foibles of mortals. In this part which is aptly called the Book of Bhima the mighty hero is pictured as a blunt but loyal friend and an ardent and resourceful lover. The story moves from episode to episode with sustained interest. Mr. Munshi was not only a master of dialogue but also possessed in an eminent degree the dramatist's ability to bring out the character of persons from the words they utter. The book can be usefully recommended for extra-curricular study in our high schools and colleges.

M. C. S.

SADGURU'S BESTOWAL : By Ratnakar Nargundkar. Pub. : Dr. V. R. Nargundkar, 64, Kenilworth, Peddar Road, Bombay-400026. Pp. 162. Price : Rs. 5.

This is an account of the spiritual progress of an ordinary businessman of Belgaum and his final state of 'eternal happiness' developed in him under the guidance of his guru, Param Sadguru Shree Gajanan Maharaj of Akkalkot.

The author enjoins complete faith in the guru, but rightly points out that "we should be convinced of a Sadguru's abilities, before we leave our fate to him". On accepting a guru, and provided the guru accepts you, it is emphasised that simple guru-worship is not enough and one has to follow his word exactly if one is to experience Liberation. Ratnakar maintains that his own Sadguru bestowed a state of Self-Realisation on him *as a gift*, without his putting in any effort, and recounts this event, and others — ('In half a minute I was in the state of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* ! ! ! ') —

His Sadguru told him : "You have been bestowed with IT without consideration for your good and evil deeds. We have set aside your karma. . . . You have been shown the Blissful Vision in consideration of your abilities.... The Blissful Vision can be seen with open eyes and therefore IT is termed Self-Realisation". Since the Sanskrit term *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* means 'a temporary state of pure awareness in which the cosmos is no longer apparent', the nature of the 'Blissful Vision' is unclear; regarding this and other states of consciousness mentioned, one cannot determine if the confusion of terminology is in the mind of the reader or the author.

— MARCH

THE MONK

The monk who is truly a man of prayer and who seriously faces the challenge of his vocation in all its depth is by that very fact exposed to existential dread. He experiences in himself an emptiness, the lack of authenticity, the quest for fidelity, the 'lostness' of modern man, but he experiences all this in an altogether different and deeper way than does man in the modern world, to whom this disconcerting awareness of himself and of this world comes rather as an experience of boredom and of spiritual disorientation. The monk confronts his world at the deepest and most central point where the void seems to open out into black despair. The monk confronts this serious possibility, and rejects it, as Camusian man confronts "the absurd" and transcends it by his freedom. The option of absolute despair is turned into perfect hope by the pure and humble supplication of monastic prayer. The monk faces the worst, and discovers in it the hope of the best. From the darkness comes light. From death, life. From the abyss there comes, unaccountably, the mysterious gift of the Spirit sent by God to make all things new, to transform the created and redeemed world and to re-establish all things in God.

This is the creative and healing work of the monk, accomplished in silence, in nakedness of spirit, in emptiness, in humility...

Fr. THOMAS MERTON