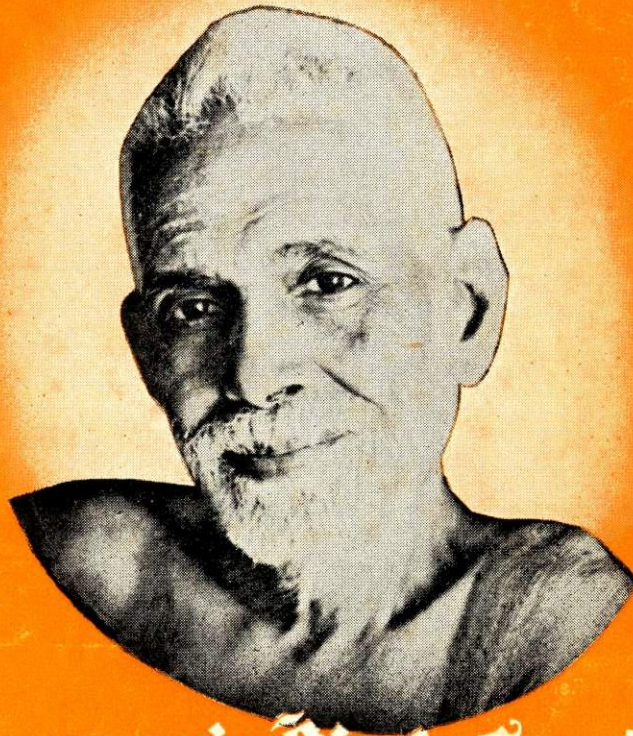




THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Vol. 17, No. IV

October 1980



Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary



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

Where is (my) Ignorance
of (Thy) Wisdom, if I am
blessed with Union to Thee,
Oh Arunachala?

—*The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 68*

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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

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OCTOBER 1980

No. IV

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drawn by Sri Bhagavan Himself.

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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.

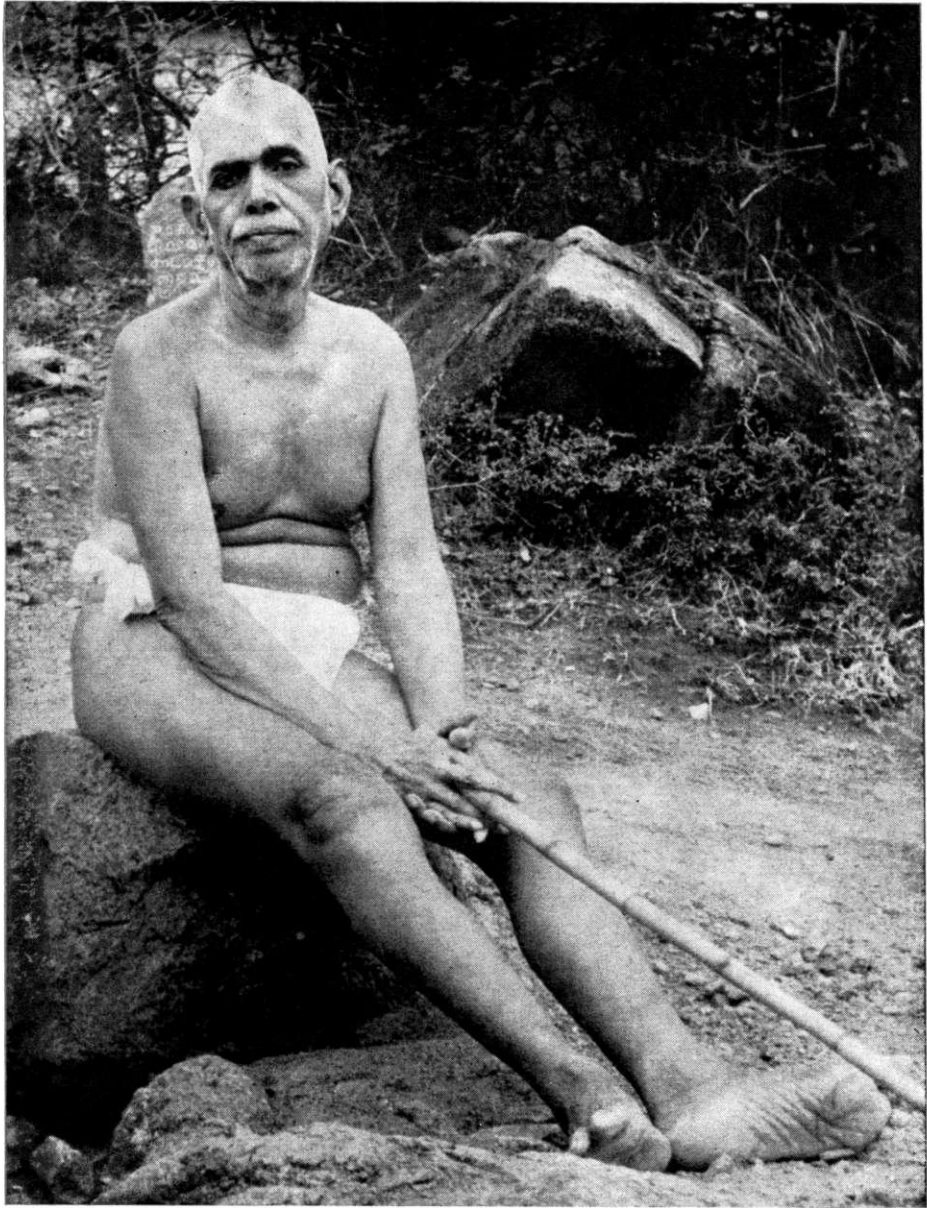
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

Vol. 17, No. IV, October 1980

EDITORIAL

MEDITATION AND ACTION

IN the *Bhagavadgita* (vi, 34) Krishna says: "The mind, O Arjuna, is unsteady, turbulent, powerful and tenacious. Controlling it is, in my view, as difficult as controlling the wind." Earnest seekers throughout the ages have confirmed the truth of this statement from their own experience. In the path of spiritual progress the mind remains the most difficult hurdle to cross.

Could all the ceaseless thinking, feeling, desiring that make up what we call the mind be curbed by reflection, by the mind dwelling on itself? Hardly. For mind studying itself is mind engaged in activity—the very thing we are bent on restraining.

Could the stillness be achieved by concentration, i.e., by directing psychic energy to one specific idea or object and keeping it fixed there? Here again the answer must be in the negative, for concentration is intensification, not cessation, of mental activity.

In so far as the mind is but a dimension of the ego, the most effective way to control the mind would be to attack the ego. Meditation is one way of doing this. For meditation is not intellectual activity, or conative activity, or libidinal activity. It is a procedure by which we sink the ego in the swirling waters of awareness, by gradually identifying ourselves with the totality of Being and arriving at a state

where only the Self is. Time as transience is then dissolved in eternity, space that separates is metamorphosed as the Infinite. Arriving at the bliss of Being, the separate ego ceases to exist. The wave subsides in the stillness of the sea. When the ego has dissolved into the Self, one's individual personality vanishes and one becomes and abides as pure awareness. The *jnani* is impervious to praise and blame, untouched by pain and pleasure. There is a beautiful Zen story to illustrate such total detachment:

A beautiful Japanese girl and her parents lived near the cottage of the Zen master, Hakuin. One day her parents discovered she was with child. They were angry and ashamed and wanted to know who the father was. After much harassment, the poor girl named Hakuin. When the parents complained to the master, all he would say was, "Is that so?"

The child was born and was brought to Hakuin, who took very good care of it.

A year later the girl-mother could stand it no longer. She told her parents the truth—that the father of the child was a young man who worked in the fish market. The mother and father of the girl at once went to Hakuin to ask his forgiveness, and to get the child back again.

Hakuin was willing to let the child go. All he said when he heard about the real father was, "Is that so?"

The Master whose ego was dead had no reputation to lose or regain. He had attained *mano-nasa*.

Sri Bhagavan points out how *japa* and other methods lead to *laya* (subsidence), but not to *nasa* (destruction) of the mind. "Every kind of path except self-enquiry presupposes the retention of the mind as the instrument, and none of them can be followed without the mind. The ego may take different and more subtle forms at different stages of one's practice; it is never destroyed. The attempt to destroy the ego or mind by methods other than Self-enquiry is like a thief turning policeman to catch the thief that is himself. Self-enquiry alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists and enable one to realize the pure, undifferentiated Being of the Self or the Absolute." The protean forms of the diabolic mind are well displayed in C. S. Lewis's clever book, *The Screwtape Letters*. One has to discover that no such entity as the mind exists though it seems to be indispensable for empirical life. "The mind turned outwards results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards, it becomes itself the Self." Once the self is experienced as bliss, there is nothing else to realise, and the "outer world" and "other selves" are all seen as the one Awareness common to us all.

Sri Bhagavan's method, which permits all other paths like *nishkama* karma, bhakti and yoga, stresses self-enquiry as the basis and the goal of all spiritual sadhana. The seeker seeks who it is that practises karma, bhakti and yoga. Thus he preserves the integrity of "I" and grows unconsciously in the power of being, which is love, and in the bliss of awareness, which is the sole reality. Self-enquiry cleanses "the doors of perception" and reveals all things as they are, Infinite.

Modern man is fragmented and alienated. Reliance on the senses and the intellect has shattered his wholeness. There is bliss when the mind, withdrawing from the outer world of becoming, returns to its source in the inner world of pure being. Then one regains the natural state of happiness. Spirit alone exists and nothing else. The water in the ocean wave, the water in the running stream, the water in the black cloud, are all in substance one. So are all beings one being and all lives one life, one wateriness, *nirmai*. Of this potent and auspicious word the Tamil poets are very fond and make frequent use. Robert Frost also uses the same lovely image for the mind ever seeking rest and finding it at last on returning to the source.

Speaking of contraries, see how the brook
In that white wave runs counter to itself.
It is from that in water we were from
Long, long before we were from any
creature...

Our life runs down in sending up the clock.
The brook runs down in sending up our life;
The sun runs down in sending up the brook.
And there is something sending up the sun.
It is this backward motion toward the source
Again the stream; that most we see
ourselves in,
The tribute of the current to the source.

'Peace of mind' is a misleading term. When there is stillness, there is no mind, for mind is a movement, not a thing. The clapping of one hand is the music without sound. "It cannot be domesticated and made use of. It is the silence in which the observer has ceased from the beginning." (J. Krishnamurti)

Effortless identity is reached only after much strenuous effort. The still mountain is for Bhagavan a living symbol of this final achievement. Water moving and birds in the air represent the path we climb, but the Mountain stands sustaining the path and spanning the base and summit. As he says in the *Ashtakam*:

The raindrops showered down by the clouds
Rose from the sea and will not rest
Till they, despite all hindrance, reach
Once again their ocean-home.

The embodied soul from You proceeding
May through various ways self-chosen
Wanders aimless for a while
But knows no rest till it rejoins
You, the source.

A bird may hover here and there
But cannot in mid-heaven stay.
It must come back the way it went
To find at last on earth alone
Its resting place.

Even so the soul to You must turn
O Aruna Hill,
And merge again only in You,
Ocean of bliss. . .

We have to manage to survive as animals before we can become gods. And in order that we might survive as animals, Mind at large has to be funneled, according to Aldous Huxley, through the reducing valve of the brain and the nervous system, and further petrified by the local language. What comes through these reducing and distorting media, this selected utilitarian material alone, is what hard-headed people deem to be "real". But as Ornstein says, the mind is a theatre of simultaneous possibilities. Other minds, other worlds. Hence the need and the utility of mythos and logos, of *upasana* and *vijnana*. We make up new worlds of poetry and science. The former helps us to get away from our ordinary world for a while and return to it, whether to find it fresh and new or to remould it nearer to our heart's desire. And in this "remoulding" science should be our servant.

Now art, science and meditation pursued for their own sake, regardless of our common human nature and mutual obligation, are fraught with danger. "The great instrument of moral good is the imagination," as the poet

Shelley truly says. But imagination can serve this purpose only if it develops empathy, identification, caring and sharing among human beings. Loving and serving one's neighbours is a means and a measure of inner growth. In *Upadesasara*, verse 3, Bhagavan insists on the indispensable process of purification of the mind — through selfless action, and in the last verse he defines all *tapas* as egoless behaviour. Again in verse 5, he recognizes and reveals the actual presence of spirit in sun, moon, the elements and all *living beings*. The manifestation of spirit is to be seen and enjoyed in this world and in living beings. And we are called upon to worship God through service of our neighbours, of those who form our circle (*swakiya*), the people for whose sake egoless behaviour becomes possible, necessary and natural.

In *Talks* (No. 58) Bhagavan defines *swadharm*a as the action which is one's own, which proceeds from the self, which is the expression of the awareness and the bliss of *atman*. It has nothing to do with caste or status. It is action which makes for happiness and harmony and frees one from fear and doubt and so differs from *paradharm*a, the action of the non-self, of personal ambition and temporary desire. Such selfless action is the sum and substance of the *Gita* teaching; it is manliness and heroism.

As stated in *Talks* (No. 393) "our very being is meditation. I am the body and the mind and the heart. The self includes all these." Men are walking trees and trees are men in meditation. There are many ways of co-operating with the sun, but the safest is the way of the tree whose rootedness in earth gives it strength to drink in warmth and light. I am, my circle and my circumstances as well as my body and mind

The journey inward is not an escape from the world. The heart, or the Self, is neither within nor without. It is beyond all spatial and temporal categories. However, it is con-

venient to think, as we are taught in *Ramana Gita* (Ch. V) that, "The universe is in the body and the body is the Heart, and that the Heart is the nucleus of the whole universe." Hanuman's method of meditation is service; that is why he lives eternally on earth as the embodiment of an ideal. When he is conscious of his body, he is only Rama's servant and exists only for His service.

Deha buddhya dasosmyaham

When he thinks of himself as a *jiva*, his life is only an *amsa*, a particle of the universal life.

Jiva buddhaya twad amsakah

When he is the *atman* free from thought, when he is pure awareness, Rama's very self is he.

Atma buddhya twamevaham

The purposeful agility of Hanuman is as integral a part of Self-Enquiry as the meditative stillness of the tree.

Whether as *sadhana* (deliberate effort) or as *lakshana* (spontaneous flowering), action has its place in the spiritual evolution of the individual and the race. In the words of Thoreau, "action from principle, the perception and performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything that was.

WHY SKANDA ?

By

M. G. Shanmukham

Like many other devotees, I find it most satisfying to view Sri Bhagavan as a modern *avatar* of Skanda, Kumara or Subrahmanya, the *gnana pandita*.

He himself regarded Shiva as his Father. The great poet Kavya Kantha Ganapati Shastri hailed him as Skanda. He was Kumara, a youngster when he heard and obeyed the call of his Father. He had no guru. The *Vichara* method that he taught is the most direct and fearless and yet loving confrontation of Self by self, of the Father by the child.

It not only divides states and churches, it divides families, aye, it divides the individual separating the diabolical in him from the divine "

When young Venkataraman courageously confronted Death and was caught up into the Self Immortal, he no doubt acquired a permanently and totally "altered state of consciousness." But he also heard, soon after, a call which compelled him to take a train and travel to Tiruvannamalai.

Once St. Teresa was amorously complaining to God in prayer about her sufferings and trials. She heard the Lord telling her: "Teresa, so do I treat my friends!", making her understand the purification character of suffering. But Teresa, who knew it already, answered boldly: "That's why you have so few (friends)."

A Seminar On Saints

AUSTERITY

By
Arthur Osborne

THE introduction to "Who am I?" contains within it the germ of the intellectual explanation of religious austerity. Everyone is involved in the unending search for happiness. So long as the person mistakes the body or individuality for the Self he seeks pleasure from events and contacts, but in the measure that he approaches the true Self he discovers that true happiness which, being his real nature, requires no stimulus to provoke it.

If a man renounces the extraneous and fitful happiness given by pleasure for the deep, abiding inner happiness, there is no austerity—he is simply exchanging the lesser for the greater, the spurious for the true. More usually, however, a man's pursuit of pleasure (or his hankering after it even if he does not pursue it) is itself what impedes his realisation of the Self, being due to his false identification with the ego. Therefore he normally has to renounce the pursuit of pleasure not after but *before* the attainment of eternal, indestructible happiness, not because it has ceased to be pleasure but because he realises, partly through faith and partly through understanding and pre-vision, that indestructible happiness does exist and is his goal and his true nature and that it is shut off from him by his mistaken identity and by the indulgence of desires and impulses that this entails. That is to say that he has to renounce the false attraction before it has ceased to attract. Therefore the renunciation hurts him and is austerity.

Religious austerity may bear fruit without understanding the intellectual basis of it and there may be many who practise it without this understanding; nevertheless, this is its

basis. To some extent every spiritual seeker must follow the two-fold method of turning his energy away from the pursuit of pleasure and towards the quest of happiness, away from the gratification of the ego and towards the realisation of the Self. They are two complementary phases of one activity. However, a method may concentrate more on one phase or the other.

That taught by Bhagavan concentrated almost entirely on the positive phase, the quest of the Self, and he spoke very little of the negative, that is, of austerity or killing the ego. He spoke rather of the enquiry that would reveal that there was no ego to kill and never had been. This does not mean that Bhagavan condoned ego-indulgence. He expected a high standard of rectitude and self-control in his devotees but he did not dictate any actual programme of austerity.

The basic forms of austerity are celibacy and poverty, further heightened by silence and solitude. Let us see in more detail what was the attitude of Bhagavan in such matters.

In speaking of celibacy one has to remember that the traditional Hindu society with which Bhagavan was familiar has no place for the worldly celibate; either a man is a householder or a mendicant. When any householder asked Bhagavan whether he could renounce home and property and turn mendicant, he always discouraged it. "The obstacles are in the mind and have to be overcome there," he would say. "Changing the environment will not help. You will only change the thought 'I am a householder' for the thought 'I am a mendicant.' What you have to do is to forget both and remember

only 'I am.' He similarly deprecated vows of silence and solitude, pointing out that the true silence and solitude are in the heart and independent of outer conditions.

Yet Bhagavan showed a benevolent interest in the personal and family affairs of his devotees—their marriages and jobs, the birth and sicknesses and education of their children, all the cares and obligations that family life entails. His injunction was to engage in it like an actor in a play, playing one's part carefully and conscientiously but with the remembrance that it was not one's real self.

Neither did he denounce the small indulgences common to the life of a householder. Indeed, there was a time when he himself chewed betel and drank tea and coffee. The only specific rule of conduct that he advocated and that some might call austerity was vegetarianism. He spoke of the benefit of restricting oneself to *sattvic* food, that is to vegetarian food which nourishes without exciting or stimulating. I have also known

Bhagavan to say different things to different kinds of people. But they should be taken to suit particular occasions and not as a general rule.

The standard set by Bhagavan was uncompromisingly high but it did not consist in disjointed commands and restrictions. It was a question of seeking the true Self and denying the imposter ego, and in doing this he approved rather of a healthy, normal, balanced life than of extreme austerity. It is true that there was a time when he himself sat day after day in silence, scarcely eating, seldom moving, but that was not austerity; that was immersion in the supreme Bliss after the Self had been realised and there was no longer any ego to renounce, that is, when austerity was no longer possible. His abandoning it was not indulgence of the ego but compassion for the devotees who gathered around. He said that even in the case of the *jnani* the ego may seem to rise up again but that is only an appearance, like the ash of a burnt rope that looks like a rope but is not good for tying anything with.

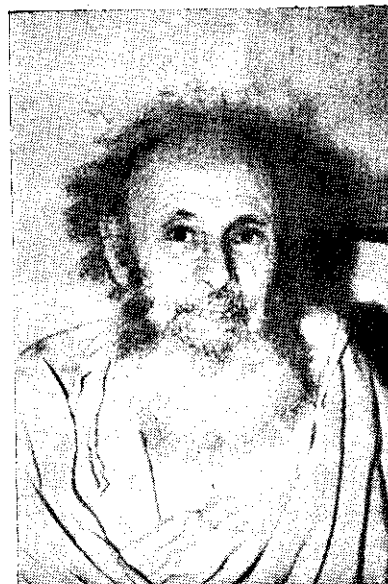
“If you have any doubt about the truth, or if you want to support it by your intellectual skill or learned lore, by all means study the several books. But if you have no doubt about the truth and only want to realise it in actual experience, all that trouble is unnecessary. If a cook wants to serve a tasty dish to another, he has to know what thing and how much of each thing go into its composition and how they have to be prepared and mixed in proportion and so on. The person who is asked to relish it need not have that knowledge. So leave the dialectics of our philosophy to the learned among us. You may confine yourself to the practical enjoyment of the peace and joy of the Self.”

—SRI CHANDRASHEKARA BHARATI SWAMINAH

Anchoresses of Arunachala

By
Swami Abhishiktananda

AN unending succession of hermits has occupied the caves on the slopes of Arunachala, the sacred mountain of South India; pilgrims never cease to throng the temples at its foot, and each year crowds gather from every part of Tamil Nadu to adore the holy fire which is ignited at its summit on the night of the full moon of Karttikai (November-December), regarded as the most blessed time of the year. Ramana Maharshi, whose name is certainly the most renowned in the last fifty years of India's spiritual history, first made his home in the temple of Arunachala, then on the mountain itself and, finally, at the Ashram at its foot. I often had the privilege of spending months of recollection in those caves which are hallowed by the saints of earlier times. These caves also came to know Radhabai Ammayar and Lakshmi Devi, two saintly women who chose the slopes of Arunachala for their place of seclusion.



Sri Swami Abhishiktananda

The first time I met them was in August, 1950, on the occasion of my second visit to the Ashram. One morning, with a young lad as guide, I climbed up to Ramana's old haunt, Skandashrama, which later he had to abandon in order to make himself more accessible to his disciples, as their number continually increased. On our return, instead of going by the goat-track which led from one ashram to the other, my companion suggested that we should take the path down towards the temple of Arunachala.

All the way down to the temple and the town there was a series of caves and little cells, mostly hidden in the bushes. In these caves and huts were to be found all sorts of hermits. The one who was seated in the

Virupaksha Cave did not even blink when we entered and inspected his dwelling; others had transformed their caves into temples, like that of Mulaipal Tirtham. Our pilgrimage reminded me of Cassian's visit to the desert of Skete, going from cave to cave, from cell to cell, from one holy man to another, seeing marvel after marvel

In this way we came to the cell of Lakshmi Devi. We knocked at the door, but when she opened it to us, the only expression of her welcome and greeting was her beautiful smile. She had taken a vow of silence which was due to last for twelve years. Now she was living there in silence, praying and meditating. Underneath her small room she had constructed a kind of cave, lit only by an

oil lamp, into which she was accustomed to withdraw for deep meditation. People often came up from the town to see her. She listened patiently to her visitors, replied in sign language, and sent them back with her blessing.

A short distance further on was the cave and hut of Radhabai Ammayar, or the 'Vadalur Ammayar' as she was more commonly called.

Later on, I often had the joy of being the neighbour of these two women hermits. The cave that I most often used was just beside that of Lakshmi Devi. Later still, when Radhabai had built herself another cottage nearer to the tank, I moved into the old one she had occupied.

Radhabai had come to Tiruvannamalai some twelve years earlier. At first she had lived in silence with Lakshmi Devi in the cave which I afterwards used, each of them sitting and meditating in her own corner. Then she moved fifty yards higher up the hill and settled in a rocky cleft that she had noticed. This was so small that it was impossible for her to lie down straight, and so low, that even when seated, her head touched the roof.

She lived there for three years without uttering a word, her only possessions being an oil lamp and a book of hymns of Ramalinga Swami. Her only meal, taken during the afternoon, consisted of a mixture of curds and grilled rice flour. When the three years of silence and severe *tapas* (austerity) were over, she put up a minute hut in front of her cave and installed herself there with a woman disciple.

Lakshmi Devi wore *kavi*, the saffron-coloured dress of the Indian *sannyasi* (one who has renounced the world), but Radhabai kept to white after the custom of *sadhus* (monks) in the tradition of South Indian Saiva Siddhanta. Even to see her, seated thus in her home dressed all in white, was a joy and a blessing.

We had no need to exchange words in order to understand each other, and she knew that I too loved silence.

One festival day — I forget which festival — I was invited to take my meal with Vadalur Ammayar. While her disciple was preparing the food, I sat on the verandah together with another *sadhu* whom she had also invited. He soon began to read in a loud voice from some book which happened to be within reach. Not only did he read aloud, but he proceeded to comment on it in even louder tones. Vadalur Ammal quickly sensed my irritation — I was not so patient as she was! She gently explained to the *sadhu* that I had a very special love for silence. He seemed quite astounded that I was not all eagerness to receive his words of wisdom! However, out of deference to Ammal, he gave way and continued to read it to himself, while Ammal and I were left to enjoy our silence.

On another occasion her guru came to visit her. I never managed to discover on what grounds she called him her guru, but no matter. He normally lived at Mount Abu in the far north, but that year he had come to spend several weeks at the ashram of his 'disciple.' Alas, the arrival of the so-called guru soon destroyed the silence of the hermitage. He had invited some other people to accompany him, no doubt with the idea of sharing his wisdom with them also. Day and night the ashram rang with hymns, addresses, conversations. Ammal introduced me to her guru, and I greeted him with all due respect, but we never could discover any common ground on which we could converse.

When I was alone with Ammal, she showed me her little room, all cluttered up with images, statues and lamps. Right in the middle had been placed a Sri Chakra, for the guru was a devotee of Shakti, the Divine Mother.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" said Radhabai, as she showed it all to me. "Of course," I replied, "but, all the same, it strikes me as

terribly inconvenient in your tiny hermitage. It leaves no room even to turn around." "Ah so you also know how I feel," she said quickly, "I am so glad. But 'he' needs all this, so why should we upset him? When he leaves, I will clear it all away and once again enjoy peace and silence."

The day came when Lakshmi Devi completed her twelve years of silence. With a woman companion she went to Tirupati to be released from her vow. After that she had to return to her home near Mysore. However, in the following year, when I came back to Tiruvannamalai, I was surprised to find her once again in her hermitage. I asked her what had happened. "Yes, indeed, I went back home as arranged," she answered, "but when one has spent twelve years on Arunachala, where else can one find *shanti* (peace) to compare with the caves of this mountain?"

SUNDARAMMAL

And now, a tale from the Golden Legend¹

During April, 1953, Sundarammal arrived to spend forty-eight days in retreat in a hut close to that of Lakshmi Devi for whom she had a great admiration. We were thus living very close to each other but, apart from the customary greetings, neither she nor I made any attempt to get into conversation.

One day, towards the end of her retreat, she invited me and some other *sadhus* to share a meal at her cell. It was the Telugu New Year's Day. It was then, before the meal began, that she told me her story.

She belonged to a wealthy Telugu family of Madras. She married young but very soon lost her husband. As a widow, she continued to live at home, surrounded by the love of her parents and brothers. She rarely went out, and when she did, it was always with her father.

One day he took her to the neighbouring temple to hear a talk given by a *sadhu*. This

sadhu was a devotee of the Maharshi. He told his audience about the sage's 'conversion,' his disappearance from the world, his resort to the mountain of Arunachala, and the rest. Sundarammal was deeply moved. She begged her father to allow her to accompany some pilgrims to Arunachala. He refused, but promised that he would soon take her there himself.

But the promise was not fulfilled. Sundarammal passed the time thinking of Ramana and praying to him. She soon lost her appetite and was unable to sleep. But her father always had some specially urgent work which prevented him from taking her to Tiruvannamalai.

One afternoon, about four o' clock, she seemed to see Ramana coming down the mountain and approaching her. "Sundarammal, have no fear!" he said to her. "It is I. Enough of this weeping and not eating or sleeping. Come, I am expecting you." Her heart was filled with joy. Once more she appealed to her father, and once more he put off the pilgrimage to another day.

Some weeks later, she was alone one night in her room, weeping and calling on the Maharshi. Then, quite worn out, she fell asleep. Suddenly she felt a blow on her side and awoke with a start. It was about three o' clock in the morning. There was the Maharshi standing by the head of her cot. "Come," was all he said.

She followed him downstairs, crossed the hall and came out on the verandah. Hardly had she reached it when to her alarm she found herself alone. The Maharshi had disappeared. She sat down uneasily.

Soon a rickshaw appeared, and the rickshaw-puller asked: "Is this Number 12, and are you Sundarammal? An old *sadhu* told me to come here and take you to the bus. Get

¹ A collection of saints' lives and of accounts of events in the lives of Jesus and Virgin Mary.

in." Sundarammal thought quite simply, "It is Bhagavan, the Maharshi," and got into the rickshaw.

At the bus stand she and the rickshaw-puller were both surprised not to find the old *sadhu*. However, she asked for the Tiruvannamalai bus and got in.

Somewhere on the way her bus passed another one from which someone alighted and then entered the Tiruvannamalai bus. "Are you Sundarammal?" he asked. "Yes, I am," she replied. "Good. Bhagavan has sent me to look for you."

In the evening she reached Tiruvannamalai and retired for the night to one of the large halls kept for pilgrims. She prepared a cake to offer to Bhagavan and fell asleep full of joy.

The next morning she went to the Ashram and fell at the feet of Bhagavan. "Here you are at last," he said to her.

Some days later her brothers arrived, unable to understand how this child, who, by herself, had never set foot outside her home, could have managed to reach Tiruvannamalai. But

Sundarammal was so deeply absorbed that she never even saw her brothers, either in the hall or at midday in the dining hall. Only in the evening were they able to approach her. They told her how upset everyone was at home and begged her to return. If she wanted, they would build her a hermitage in the garden. But nothing moved her, and the brothers even spoke of taking her home by force. "If you do, I will throw myself into a well," she said. Her brothers had to yield; but they soon returned with their father. They found her in a cottage near the Ashram and arranged for her continued stay there as well as they could.

During the fifteen years that remained of the Maharshi's life, she never left Tiruvannamalai even for a day.

This was the story that Sundarammal told me that morning — Sundarammal who could never speak of God without her voice breaking with emotion and her eyes filling with tears.

(Rendered from French into English by
Father James Stuart)

"Virtue is not to be aquired; what remains after the renunciation of vice is virtue."

"To know the world you forget the Self, to know the Self you forget the world."

"To be nothing, to have nothing, to keep nothing for oneself is the greatest gift, the highest generosity."

"Don't pretend to be what you are not, don't refuse to be what you are."

"If you do not care for pleasure, you will not be afraid of pain."

"What you need will come to you if you do not ask for what you do not need."

"The essence of saintliness is total acceptance of the present moment, harmony with things as they happen."

"Desire is the root cause of all suffering. We suffer more by the desire for things than by lack of things."

"As long as you are a beginner certain formalized meditations and prayers may be good for you. But for a seeker of reality there is only one meditation — the rigorous refusal to harbour thoughts. To be free from thoughts is itself meditation."

— SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ

SADHU VASWANI

For him, to live was to love.....

By
J. P. Vaswani

THE world knew him as T. L. Vaswani, spiritual leader, pioneer educationist, prolific writer on a large variety of subjects, and superb orator. But to us, who lived with him in his ashram, he was Dadaji, elder brother. And Dadaji was verily a brother of all men, of all races and religions, a brother of birds and animals, who believed in the fellowship of all creation in the One God, the Divine Father of us all.

Service of the poor was the most important tenet of his faith. Everyday, he sat underneath the trees he loved, gave to the poor and broken ones who came in their hundreds. Food, money, clothing and, above all, the benediction of his loving heart. "The noblest temple," he said, "is the heart of the poor man who gets his food and who blesses the Name of God."

All scriptures, all religions, he said, were custodians of spiritual wisdom. Communism too enshrined a truth to which it owed its dynamic character. All sectarian strifes and quarrels in the name of religion were due to lack of understanding. "I belong to no sect," he said. "I adore but one God. And my faith is—to worship the one Mystery and to do good to all."

A Modern Rishi with many Interests

Born on Nov. 25, 1879, in Sind—Hyderabad, a land that has given birth to many saints and servants of God and Man, Dadaji had a brilliant scholastic record which got him a Professorship in a Calcutta College. Later he became Principal of Dayal Singh College, Lahore. But so many and deep and varied



Sadhu Vaswani

were his interests that he renounced teaching when his mother passed away and threw himself into the service of the nation. Those were the times when India needed not professionals and experts so much as generalists and fighters for justice, freedom and other nationalist causes.

Politics attracted Dadaji for a time. He played a significant part in the agitation against the partition of Bengal. He was also one of the earliest supporters of Mahatma Gandhi's nationalist movement and a close associate of the leader himself. The very first article on the front page of the first issue of Gandhiji's *Young India* was by Dadaji. He also wrote several books which include *India's Adventure*,

India in Chains, Builders of Tomorrow, Apostles of Freedom, exhorting the youth to dedicate their lives to the service of Mother India. Some of them were proscribed by the then British Government of India.

Dadaji not only worked for India's political liberation but for its elevation as the cultural leader of the East. Of him, the French Savant, Mon. Paul Richard, had said: "Amidst the deserts of Sind, I have found a new Prophet, a Messenger of the New Spirit, a Saint, a Sage and a Seer, a Rishi of New India, a leader of the Great Future — Sadhu Vaswani."

This *rishi* of modern India realised the need for synthesis between the culture of the East and that of the West, between freedom and spirituality. He was fired with faith in the limitless power of the soul and of human progress, believing humanity to be on the brink of new knowledge, new power and new possibilities.

"To be truly spiritual is to be truly free," he said. "for spirituality is inner liberation, and out of the inner come the issues of outer life." He felt strongly that India had a world mission to fulfil.

He exhorted people to turn away from creeds and dogmas to the Religion of Life, of the One-Spirit who is in all races and religions, prophets and saints. And Dadaji worked in the faith that this Religion of the Spirit would be India's gift to the nations of the world in the coming days. "The chanting of hymns in temples or mosques is of little value compared to the true prayer of service and sacrifice," he said. "Kill not animals," also said Dadaji. "Kill only the animal within thee, thy little ego!"

His speech as one of India's representatives at the Welt Congress, the World Congress of Religions in Berlin towards the end of the first decade of the 20th century when he was barely thirty, and his subsequent lectures in different parts of Europe, aroused deep interest in Indian thought and religion.

Dadaji was a dedicated believer in education and a strong champion of the movement to Indianise education. "Our schools and colleges," he said, "are prison cells. They keep out the sunshine of Indian ideals and Indian culture. This isolation of modern India's brain from the mighty soul that made *Aryavarta* a model of civilisation for the world long ago, this is the tragedy of our life today." Character-building is nation-building, he told the youth of India.

He started Youth Centres in different places. He opened at Rajpur a Shakti Ashram where young people were trained to serve the country in different ways and, in the garden of which, Mahatma Gandhi planted a 'Youth Tree'. Incredibly young at heart, he moved up and down the country exhorting the youth to prepare themselves to handle the freedom which was round the corner. They were going to be the leaders of free India, he said, and to serve as leaders they must develop a spirit of adventure, a love of danger and difficulties and, above all, an overpowering love for Mother India.

The Mira Movement

One of Dadaji's more successful experiments in education was the Mira Movement. Founded in 1933 it now has its headquarters in Poona. The Mira Movement attempted a synthesis of the vital truths of modern life with the old ideals of India and its culture.

But its auspicious and successful beginning in Sind was wiped out by the Partition. The best efforts of the most enlightened men in Sind could not revive this dream. Nothing daunted, Dadaji started St. Mira's College for Girls in Poona in 1962. It is inspired by the faith that, in the new unfolding of India's destiny, women have to play an important part. So while the students in the college are trained to take their studies seriously, the emphasis in the teaching is equally on character-building, heroic living and spiritual growth.

This great experiment of Dadaji's has flowered into a bouquet of institutions. The Mira Group

now includes, besides the original college, a number of St. Mira's Schools where education is given free to poor students; dispensaries where hundreds of poor patients receive free medical aid; a Welfare Fund; a Bhandara which provides free meals to the poor; a Publication Department which publishes books and journals including the *Mira* and *The East and West Series* which continue to carry to the remotest parts of the world the message of Dadaji which is the message of world peace, of compassion towards all creatures, of the harmony between the East and West and the fellowship of all races and of all the prophets and saints of all religions. There is a Shanti Seva Niketan, a Home Service through work where women are given opportunities to earn their livelihood; a Jiv Daya department dedicated to the welfare of brother birds and animals.

This "forerunner of the New Age" as Dr. Cousins, the Irish poet and mystic, called him, was also a superb and spell-binding orator. He has to his credit, in addition, over 200 books in English and over 500 in the Sindhi tongue. Some of his English writings have been translated into German and some Indian languages.

His earth-pilgrimage ended on January 16, 1966 at Poona where, at his place of work and final rest, has been built a beautiful shrine which is visited by hundreds of pilgrims every year.

The One-in-All

The emphasis today is on forms of government. Constitutions and political machinery, Dadaji taught, have their value. But there is something greater, something truly vitalising. It is the Vision of the One Life in All. Out of this vision grows true humanism. And

And God Said, Let it Be

By
Martin Leo

And God Said, Let it Be
and it Was
and the Light that was
God, moved in a radiant
fashion in and upon itself.
And out of it came Love
and out of it came Joy
and the ecstasy that is
God knew no bounds
and its power reverberated
throughout
echoing . . . echoing . . . echoing

I AM
THAT I AM, THAT I AM.
And the New Dawn arose
and the leaves glistened
and the Rose blossomed
and God saw that it was Good
and so it was.

democracies, without the spirit of true humanism — as we have seen in the West — are in danger of developing aggressive nation-cults and imperialist ethics. And they move in a circle of violence and strife.

Modern democracies have produced great leaders — great in organisation, rich in resources, forceful in their power over the mass-mind. But more than leaders, more than organizers, the world needs, today, men of true spiritual culture, men of understanding heart, seers, sages, prophets, apostles of the ancient way.

The world needs more people like our beloved Dadaji who, through the lesson of his life and by his teachings, set an exalted example of the best in Indian life and service.

SONG OF AT-ONE-MENT—(V)

By
K. Forrer*

20. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

(*St. John VIII, 32*)

TO know that Truth is to *be* it, for it is beyond the opposites of truth and untruth, and can therefore not be known.

To be That alone is to be free.

Truth, Being, Consciousness, Bliss, Heaven, Eternity and Self — all are but different names pointing to one and the same unutterable State, which is natural to all.

While depending on the senses for truth, a measure of untruth is always mingled with it.

Once the truth of scriptures has been grasped, to be reading on in further search of it is adding to one's burden, for one's Self cannot be found in books.

Searching without, then, employing one's entangling senses, nourishes and fosters the very obstacles to Pristine Wisdom, while diving within alone escapes their snares; for is it the eye that sees, or something within the eye? Is it the brain that sees, or something within the brain?

The eyes, the brain, the body, or 'I' — which is the seer? 'I' is the light of the insentient lamp. 'I' is rooted in the Seer, and to know whence and who he is, is to be veritably free — free of the deluding eyes, free of the obstructing brain, free of the fettering body, free of the world of things which they create.

Therefore, to search without for Truth is to be forever fooled by finitude. There is no end to the matter; whereas, within, Infinity itself awaits us as reward.

21. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

(*St. Luke XVII, 20, 21*)

IN truth the kingdom of God does not come at all, for where is coming and going for a timeless and dimensionless state?

The kingdom of God is everpresent; we are in it always, supported by it as the flickering motion pictures are supported by the cinema screen.

Here, there, now and then — places and time are created by the mind.

Like fleeting shadows thrown on the motionless screen, so is this world of space and time rising and falling in the indestructible Self.

Waking, dream and deep sleep move in alternating phases on the Everpresent and with them waxes and wanes that spurious offshoot of the Self, the ego.

Coming and going is for it, since it is itself a shadow on the screen, beholding a shadow world. When that ghost has permanently evaporated, then Lo! the kingdom of God.

Hence not the kingdom comes, but the ego goes and with it observation through the senses and their domains of place and time.

With a keen mind directed inwardly asking: "for whom is this world of 'here and there'?" is to honour Jesus' saying: "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

*Continued from our July issue.

22. "A wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart at his left."

(Eccl. X, 2)

TRACING the root of one's 'I'-thought leads from the head to the right side of one's breast.

There is the seat of the Heart, the *sanctum sanctorum* of this temple of the Lord.

That Heart has nothing in common with the physiological organ that pumps the blood and is on the left-hand side, for it is not an organ, but the seat of Consciousness.

Though Consciousness as such has no seat because it is beyond space and time, the Heart, in relation to the human body, can nonetheless be experienced as centred in that area.¹

Even in the ignorant state everyone points to the right of the breast when saying "me?" thus locating instinctively the Heart as the seat of Self.

Having the shape of a lotus bud in the ignorant, it is a blossom in full bloom in the Enlightened One.

From that Heart is diffused our Consciousness Absolute in subtle passage² and, entering the brain, it becomes relative consciousness. With it rise from that same Heart all latent tendencies (*vasanas*) which come into play in the brain, from there projecting the world and its hundred thousand things.³

As in a film projector, where the source of light is pure and colourless, the Self shines in the cavity of the Heart self-luminously and untaintedly with an unlimited expanse of light.

The latent tendencies, the karmic seed accumulated through the ages, correspond to the film-roll in the projector, whereon are imprinted all the events of one's life, waiting to be screened.

That screening aided by the darkness portrays the stream of thought fathered by our ignorance.

The projected light, contaminated by the film-roll and inextricably mixed with its patterns, is a likeness of our 'I'-thought, which

at its Source is pure 'I-I' but, enmeshed in the world of objects, it becomes the 'ego-I'.

To halt the film-roll in between two frames, as it were,⁴ corresponds to halting in between two thoughts, a moment immeasurably small — the 'eye of the needle' through which one slips into Eternity.

The rich, who cannot enter through that door, are not the wealthy only, but all who cling to earthly images, mistaking them for Reality, no matter how few their material possessions may be.

Objects in themselves are neither good nor bad, but to lose one's attention in them is to forget one's True Identity, and that is Sui-cide indeed.

Therefore, to 'gain' one's Life, the return to the wise man's Heart is of necessity.

The Sun of Grace shines ever upon the lotus bud of our Heart, yet do they burst into bloom all at one and the same time?

23. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

(St. Matt. VII. 21)

SEEKING the kingdom of heaven is not a matter of words, but of attitude. To be fit for the kingdom of heaven is to be desiring unity with God or liberation from the ego so much as to wish for nothing else.

Just as a drowning man wants nothing more than a breath of air, so does the mature seeker crave for nothing but At-one-ment.

Weary of the throttling ego, the delusions of this world, he surrenders to God, losing his self-will in the will of the Father which is in heaven.

No amount of genuflexion can replace that inner surrender; the Lord is not deceived by words and gestures — ripeness is all.

24. "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

(St. Luke XVIII, 17)

BABIES, free from the subjections to the body, are wrapped in heavenly Bliss. There is no body-identification or personality-identification.

Their presence transfers some of that innocence, bliss and freedom from inhibition to us.

Little children live in the present moment; they show interest only in events that are happening now and in objects that are directly before them.

They do not fret for things lost or events past, nor do they hoard for the future.

They know neither good nor evil, have no vice nor virtue; they manifest no ego.

But as they grow older their latent ego develops gradually, and more and more do they learn and adopt from their parents and teachers the misconceptions and prejudices of bodily existence.

Thus, imperceptibly slipping from heavenly bliss they 'come down' to earthly misery, thanks to the unfolding ego.

In order to regain that state of Heavenly Bliss it is no use attempting to make the ego happy by gratifying the senses and so on. For, when it is said that we must become as little children to be able to enter heaven, it signifies that we must become ego-less; that alone enables us to experience the Bliss of Self.

Every man is born into this world as Adam; babyhood is the state of earthly paradise. When his Self-Consciousness has enmeshed itself in the brain, it becomes self-consciousness with its trail of guilt and embarrassment. He then can be said to have eaten of the 'tree of knowledge limited to the senses.'

Every man that 'leaves' the earth by way of Enlightenment, leaves it as Christ, who is

the ascending Adam,⁵ the returning prodigal son.

Such is the import of the myth: myth is the story of every-man.

¹ Apart from biblical evidence as in Eccl. X, 2, and Eastern scriptural testimonial and the verification of this fact by sages such as Sri Ramana Maharshi, contemporary psychology has found that spot in the body to be the center of being, as one American journal, the Modern Psychological Review, so reports. For some of Ramana's words on the Heart, the reader is referred to the *Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His own Words*, edited by Arthur Osborne, and the account of his second 'death experience' in the biographies.

² In Sanskrit, the conductors of consciousness are called *nadis*; they could be regarded as a type of nerve which is so subtle as to be imperceptible to the ordinary senses.

³ With this view-point both Hindu doctrine and Sufi teaching are in perfect harmony.

The Hindu:

"Its (the Heart's) place in the chest is on the right side and not on the left. The Light of Consciousness flows from it to the *Sahasrara* (the brain) through the *Sushumna* (a subtle nerve or *nadi*).

"The same Light (from the *Sahasrara*) flows to the entire body. Then occur experiences which are different (from the Self) as man becomes entangled in *Samsara* (the cycle of births and deaths).

"The Heart in the microcosm is like the sphere of the sun in the macrocosm, and the mind in the *Sahasrara* (brain) is like the orb of the moon.

"Just as the sun gives light to the moon, so the Heart imparts light to the mind.

"Unaware of the Heart, the mortal perceives only the mind, just as one sees light in the moon during night when the sun is absent." (From *Sri Ramana Gita*, Canto 5, verses 6, 7, 13-15, by Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni).

The Sufi:

"The Heart of Man resembles a glass lantern (*zujajah*) in the niche (*mishkat*) of the body; and in the heart is a lamp (*misboh*), namely, the inmost consciousness (*sirr*), lit by the luminosity of the spirit (*ruh*). The light reflected by the 'glass' irradiates the air (*hawa*) inside the 'niche.' This 'air' signifies the carnal faculties (*quwa-yi bashari*), while the rays that pass through it and reach the windows represent the five senses." (From Commentary Books I and II, *The Mathnawi* of Jalaluddin Rumi, translated by R. A. Nicholson).

⁴Or to pass between two frames in a split second compares with the ancient mythological concept of sailing between two clashing rocks, the gate to Paradise.

In an example from the Eskimo lore we have the Hero encountering two constantly clashing icebergs. To enter Paradise, he must drive his kayak between them. If he tries to sidestep the issue and find his way around the icebergs, they move wherever he attempts to move, constantly presenting a barrier.

In knight errantry a similar feat has to be accomplished. To enter the castle holding the Beloved, the Hero has to ride his horse through a revolving door which moves with incredible swiftness and is razor-sharp.

⁵The legend speaks clearly enough when it says that the cross was made from the very trunk of the tree of knowledge (of duality), and that the same cross was planted on the 'hill of skulls,' with Adam's skull right at its base; that same casing which contained the brain, the cause of good and evil, duality, is now, after the crucifixion, a mere shell, no longer containing a power evoking that distressing misidentification, man as the limited body-existence.

Adam has risen as the Christ, merged in the fullness of Supernal Consciousness, all activities and latencies of the mind permanently exterminated.

Conversations with the Maharshi—(1)¹

Swami Madhavathirtha: In the *Vedanta* of Sri Sankaracharya, the principle of the creation of the world has been accepted for the sake of beginners, but for the advanced, the principle of non-creation is put forward. What is your view in this matter?

Maharshi: "There is no dissolution or creation, no one in bondage, nor anyone pursuing spiritual practices. There is no one desiring liberation nor anyone liberated. This is the Absolute Truth."

This *sloka* appears in the second chapter (the chapter on falsity) of Gaudapada's *Karika* (a commentary on the *Mandukya Upanishad*). It means that really there is no dissolution and no creation. There is no bondage, no one doing spiritual practices, no one seeking spiritual liberation and no one who is liberated. One who is established in the Self, sees this by his knowledge of Reality.

S.M.: Is not surrender the chief *sadhana*?

M.: The *sadhana* of surrender is accepted, no doubt. But when surrender is complete, there will be no distinction. Often, when a disciple gets initiation into a *mantra* from a *guru* and believed that he has surrendered, his surrender is not real. In surrender, one has to give up one's mind, and after the mind is given away, there will be no duality of any kind. He who remains separate from God has not surrendered.

S.M.: If all actions and their results are surrendered to God, will the mind be controlled or not?

M.: By doing so, the heart will be purified but the mind will not die. Suppose a drunkard thinks that he has surrendered his *karma* and its fruits to God, and in his drunken state, if he commits a mistake and someone beats him with a stick for that mistake, he must surrender this beating also to God. But no one acts like that. His state changes at the time he gets the beating. Thus by surrender, the mind is not completely destroyed.

S.M.: It is believed that if we surrender to Guru or God, then the reality of the individual goes away, and in exchange we get the support of a bigger Reality and Divine power shines in us.

M.: To expect to receive a bigger Divine power after surrendering is not the true attitude of surrender.

¹Translated from the original Gujarati of *Swami Madhavathirtha*.

Meditation Not The Summit

By
M. B. Byles

WE all know that the first objective of meditation is to still the thoughts or, as the Buddha said, to contain diffusion of thought so that it stops jumping about like a monkey on a tree.

With intensive meditation, say twelve or fourteen hours a day for perhaps six weeks, this is not hard to achieve. But it does not yield any special result. When back in the world the monkey may start jumping about worse than ever, and the thoughts and emotions get annoyed over trivialities as badly or worse than before.

Progress is always slow for it is a matter of natural growth. It is for this reason that any sudden burst of insight also takes one nowhere. It is a beautiful experience but very soon it fades; one is back in the ordinary world and just as prone as before to become upset, and as far as ever from equanimity, joy and wisdom that constitute enlightenment.

Further, concentration of thought can lead to black magic as well as to white magic; to making of atom bombs as well as to making two ears of wheat grow where one grew before.

Sooner or later we are forced to recognise that the stilling of thoughts must be accompanied by a steady march, generally through suffering, towards goodness and kindness, and that ultimately nothing can be achieved until the 'due season' arrives, as the Buddha said.

The journey into simple goodness commences with an unshakable faith that the universe is governed by moral law — the law of love and truth — that our lives must be governed by that law and our whole being directed to submission to it. In turn this means that we must

start by giving up the feeling of 'I,' 'mine,' and 'me,' beginning with humility and passing by degrees to what Mahatma Gandhi called "reduction of self to zero." Why? Because if we examine our unhappiness, discords, dislikes and feelings of offence, always we find that our ego is the cause. We therefore give up the feeling of being separate from others by commencing our meditation with suffusing everything, animate and inanimate, with thoughts of kindness.

The practice of goodness, kindness and truth in our daily lives must go hand in hand with the practice of meditation, and we may not say that one is superior to the other. The pilgrimage has started and we need all together.

A long road lies ahead but progress is inevitable; as inevitable as the current of the river Ganges taking the boat down to the ocean, or, if you prefer another simile, as inevitable as the grace of Krishna or Christ will save the sinner from his so-called misdeeds. Patience and the due season will open the bud of spiritual endeavour into a lovely flower. Do not worry about trying to do things rightly. Merely practice and wait.

It is no part of this article to suggest ways and means of meditation which differ for each individual. Meditation has now become "popular" and people have been known to pay high fees for instruction courses. It would appear to be regarded as a magical short-cut to *Nirvana* or *Moksha*, Enlightenment or the Kingdom of God. People forget that saints and sages like Mahatma Gandhi never sat in meditation formally, and yet they were so at one with the indwelling God that their very lives were constant meditation.

It is therefore necessary to stress that the whole being must be oriented towards simple goodness, and the other seven steps of the Buddha's Eightfold Way, which is taught in all religions, though less systematically. Without all eight steps being trodden at the same

time meditation is useless, and this applies to the beginner as to one supposed to be more advanced. Though, of course, no one is 'advanced' really, for Life is a pilgrimage that never ends.

Conversations with the Maharshi—(2)¹

Swami Madhavathirtha: It is believed by some that the human body is not the last on this earth. Establishment in the Self is not perfectly attained, and Self-Knowledge is not imbibed naturally in a human body; therefore *vijnanamaya sarira* (literally the body made of pure knowledge) in which Self-Knowledge can work naturally must be brought down on this earth.²

Maharshi: Self-Knowledge can shine very well in the human body, and so there is no need of any other body.

S.M.: It is believed that the *vijnanamaya sarira* will not be attacked by disease, will not grow old, and will not die without one's desire.

M.: The body itself is a disease. To wish for a long stay of that disease is not the aim of a *jnani*. Anyhow, one has to give up identification with the body. Just as "I-am-the-body-consciousness" prevents one from attaining Self-Knowledge, in the same way, one who has got the conviction that he is not the body will become liberated even without his desire.

S.M.: What about bringing down God's power in the human body?

M.: If after surrendering, one still has a desire, then surrender has not been successful. If one has the attitude, "If the higher power is to come down, it must come in my body", this will only increase identification with the body. Truly speaking, there is no need of any such descent. After the destruction of the "I-am-the-body" idea, the individual becomes the form of the Absolute. In that state, there is no above or below, front or back.

S.M.: If the individual becomes the form of the Absolute, then who will enjoy the bliss of the Absolute? To enjoy the bliss of the Absolute, we must be slightly separate from it, like the bee which tastes honey from a little distance.

M.: The bliss of the Absolute is the bliss of one's own nature. It is not born or created from anything else. Pleasure which is created is sure to be destroyed. Sugar being insentient cannot give it's own taste; the bee has to keep a little distance to taste it. But the Absolute is Awareness and Consciousness. It can give it's own bliss, but it's nature cannot be understood without attaining that state.

S.M.: What about bringing a new Divine race on this earth?

M.: Whatever is to be in the future is to be understood as impermanent. Learn to understand properly what you have now so that there will be no need of thinking about the future.

¹ Translated from the original Gujerati of *Swami Madhavathirtha*.

² *Editor's Note*: Usually in Vedanta, the body of pure knowledge refers to the intellect, but in this case, the questioner is probably referring to the ideas of Sri Aurobindo, who was known to hold similar views to the questioner.

THE UNFINISHED GAME¹

By
Ratanlal Joshi

ON account of ill health I had been feeling weary and melancholy for quite some time and this had made me shun company and become disinterested in life itself. I tried my best to overcome this feeling. I started re-reading those books that had once interested me; brought about drastic changes in my daily routine; for some time, dropped all rules and became a profligate and a libertine. But the weariness did not abate. And the burden of life continued to grow heavier.

Worried, my family accepted my doctor's suggestion that a change of place and climate might do me good, and soon I was transported to Mahabaleshwar.

On reaching the holiday resort, I started a routine of morning and evening walks. Mahabaleshwar at that time looked splendid in its natural virgin forest beauty and its dozens of rivers flowing down the mountain to the plains.

One day, during one of my early morning walks, I found myself on a narrow foot-path. I kept happily walking on till, feeling tired, I sat down on a rock and gave myself up to a reverie encouraged by the murmur of the river. I woke up from that reverie to find that I had slept through the day and it was evening. Puzzled, and feeling slightly disoriented, I tried to walk back the way I had come, but soon found myself hopelessly lost in the forest. Then, suddenly, I saw at a distance a man sitting on a big rock. I went towards him intending to ask him the way but he rose and walked away. Confused as to what to do, I simply followed him.

A half an hour's walk brought us to a thatched hut with two dogs tied outside. When,

seeing me, the dogs started barking, a well-built person who seemed European came out of the hut. In his left hand was a lantern and in his right a book with the title 'Great Bliss' (*Maha Yoga*).

The stranger seemed astonished to see me and stood still for a moment. As for my reaction, I was pleasantly surprised to find that many emotions assailed me, each simultaneously fading and fusing into another. With folded hands I walked forward and offered my respects to the gentleman. He smiled a very sweet, encouraging and reassuring smile and embraced me and took me into the hut. "I shall make a bed for you," he said. "You must rest."

He rolled out a mattress on one of the two cots in the room, arranged the pillow and sent the old man away with some instructions. I lay down thankfully. My host then lighted the stove and heated some water. Soon the old man returned with two others, one of them holding a *kamandalu* (pot made of dried gourd) and, the other, a fruit-laden mango branch. My European host boiled the milk, washed my hands and feet with the hot water and offered me the mangoes. The fruits, ripened on the tree itself, were small but delicious. After giving me a large cup of hot milk, he advised

¹This is a free translation of an article in Hindi which appeared in the June 1980 issue of *Kadambini*, Vol. 20, No. 8. The writer of the article, Sri Ratanlal Joshi is a noted Hindi scholar. In his quest to know the meaning of life he came in contact with thinkers, philosophers like Schweitzer, Einstein, Sartre, Aurobindo, The Mother, Camus and others. But in Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi he found, as he says, "the end of my quest, the fulfilment of my life."

me to go to sleep. I just went on doing whatever was told me like an automaton.

But, as I slowly sank into a deep and peaceful sleep, I noticed that my benefactor was wearing the Saivite symbol of the three thick horizontal lines drawn in ash on his forehead and that he himself was gradually going into meditation.

It was already bright morning when I awoke to the sounds of low-pitched prayer. It was my friend, the European gentleman, still sitting at the head of my bed and still worriedly watching over me. I tried to sit up but was gently pushed down again and told in an anxious voice: "You have high fever. You were delirious last night. Please do not get up yet. Continuous prayers are being offered at the shrine of Bhagavan. He will soon make you alright." Settling me comfortably back in bed, he resumed his chanting. I listened carefully to the sounds and syllables. He was chanting *Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya*...

As my eyelids again drooped heavily, I suddenly perceived Bhagavan Ramana's benevolent figure clearly in the bright rays of the sun entering the hut. Soon the hut seemed to be filled with effulgent images of Bhagavan. It was as if each time *Om Namō* was chanted the words created another image of Bhagavan. It was an unforgettable supernatural experience.

I looked at my host. Tears were pouring from his eyes. I looked at his tears and felt them washing my troubles, doubts and sins away. I felt clean, liberated. And, without any volition on my part, the story of my life poured out of me. My host sat listening quietly. At the end of the narrative, he said calmly: "Now you will be alright. Your treatment is in the able hands of an expert doctor. You took the correct decision when you made up your mind to come here."

Then, in his courteous and graceful manner, he told me his story. He was Arnold Sedderling, a Polish citizen. On May 21, 1935, he had left home when his doctor told him that

he was suffering from a malignant growth in the intestines and that he had only another eight months to live. Sedderling had discontinued all treatment and decided to die in peace and solitude.

"One of my greatest wishes was to meet Sri Ramana Maharshi before the end came and learn from Him all about birth and death," said Sedderling.

He had disembarked at Bombay and come to Mahabaleshwar. His health, in the meanwhile, had deteriorated further. One day, feeling extremely weak and tired he had come out of his hotel and entered the Mahabaleshwar temple. He had stood in a corner leaning against a pillar watching the Shiva *linga* being bathed continuously by the waters of the sacred rivers.

"Suddenly," said Sedderling, "I saw Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi himself standing in the place of the Shiva *linga*. Was it a hallucination, I wondered. Rubbing my eyes again and again, I looked intently at the spot. It was true, it was indeed Ramana Maharshi for whose *darshan* I had come all the way from Poland in my helpless physical condition. I also saw his extended hand of protection and heard him say to me: "Stay here. I shall come here for your sake."

That was his experience.

For another two days I stayed with Sedderling. Then, as soon as my fever subsided, I returned to my hotel in Mahabaleshwar. In the next three weeks I regained my old vigour and felt fit and happy. I went to see Sedderling once again but missed him as he had gone out to distribute medicines to the tribals, a service he had dedicated himself to. Coincidentally enough, that day was May 21 which was his 75th birthday as well as the day he had left home—the great 'out-going—day' in his life. With all his other activities however, he had promised himself that he would visit Sri Ramanasramam every year to have darsan of

Bhagavan, "And I return everytime," he had said to me, "with a fresh understanding of life."

Afterwards, when I went in search of Sedderling in 1975, I could not find him. Six or seven months later he visited my house *en route* Poland to get his books published. Two of his books were on Maharshi Ramana written in German. I did not know when he returned to India. Letters to his sister simply elicited the reply that Sedderling had returned to India to spend his days *incognito*.

My desire to see him again brought Sedderling to my home one day but, strangely, I was away at Ramana Maharshi's Ashram that day. By the time I returned he had already gone back to the Ashram. We could not meet each other. But I have no doubt we will certainly meet again one day, somewhere, somehow, because our association is part of a triangular integrality, the third side holding us together being none other than He who had brought us together — *Bhagavan Ramana*,

Raushan'i Nama, the Poem on Self-Knowledge

By

Nasir-e-Khusrau

Nasir-e-Khusrau, an acknowledged poet, philosopher and mystic, was associated with the Ghaznavid dynasty, the *Islamic* dynasty which first invaded India to spread the message of the Prophet. This poem was discovered many years ago by *Dr. Hafiz Syed*, who was himself a Muslim as well as being a senior devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi. It is a rare *Islamic* exposition on the merits of self-enquiry.

Know yourself; for if you know yourself
 you will also know the difference between good and evil.
 First become intimate with your own inner being,
 then become the commander of the whole company.
 When you know yourself, you know everything;
 when you know that, you have escaped from all evil.
 You do not know your own worth, because you are like this;
 you see God Himself if you see yourself.
 The nine spheres and the seven stars are your slaves,
 yet you are your body's servant; that's a pity.
 Do not be fettered to bestial pleasures
 if you are a seeker of that supreme blessedness.
 Be a real man and abandon sleep and fasting;
 pilgrim-like, make a journey into yourself.
 What are sleep and fasting? The business of brute beasts;
 it is by knowledge that your soul subsists.
 Be wakeful for once; how long have you been sleeping?
 Look at yourself, you are something wonderful enough.
 Reflect now; look at the place where you have come from
 and why you are now in this prison.
 Break the cage and depart to your own celestial station.

REINTEGRATION¹

By
We Wu Wei

PART III ABSENTEE

*My world is my consciousness of it,
And I am 'being-Aware of being conscious.'*

Relatively regarded,

'Consciousness' is positive and present

'Awareness' is negative and absent.

Awareness, then, is absence of Consciousness,
And Consciousness absence of Awareness.

How can this be?

Is not 'Consciousness' split 'Awareness'?

Does not 'Awareness' denote integrality?

'Consciousness' is relative;

'Awareness' is Absolute.

Does not 'Consciousness' imply all that we
could be in Relativity?

Does not 'Awareness' imply all that we
could be Absolutely?

This means that our everyday consciousness
is split-Awareness of what we are, or integral
'Mind'.

It also implies that, ceasing to be split, con-
sciousness is healed (made whole).

For, Absolutely, 'Consciousness' and
'Awareness' as such cannot be different,
since Absolutely, 'difference' cannot be.

Therefore 'Consciousness' must be what
'relativity' is.

And 'Awareness' must be what 'Absolute'
is.

Relatively, 'Consciousness,' then, represents
'Awareness' for awareness relatively split into
subject-and-object, is what 'Awareness' is,
whole and entire.

Absolutely, 'Awareness' re-integrated, is
what split-consciousness is relatively.

So that 'Consciousness' being split-'Aware-
ness' i.e. awareness divided into subject-and-

object, Huang Po could state that 'apperceiving
subject-and-object as not-different is awakening
to the truth of Ch'an.'

NOTE: *Conscious*, conceptualised, I am
represented by a 'me' apparently
'present' in temporal Relativity.

Aware, conceptually absent, I am
Presence eternally Absolute.

N.B.:—I could not be conscious if I were not,
potentially, Aware — for 'conscious-
ness' being split-Awareness, could not
have independent existence. Which is
to say that, being conscious, I am
always Aware. I only have to notice it.
There is no consciousness without
Awareness, and Awareness is not con-
scious, for consciousness is relative and
Awareness is Absolute.

Otherwise expressed: Absolutely they
are 'not-different'; since 'being-
Aware' is being aware of conscious-
ness; relatively, 'consciousness' is the
object of 'being-aware,' which, as its
subject, is the Absolute Subject of all
relativity.

"The consciousness 'I' is the subject
of the various acts. Enquiring into the
true nature of that consciousness, and
remaining as oneself, is the way to
understand, through Enquiry, one's
true nature." — Ramana Maharshi
(*Ramana Jyothi*, p. 56).

It is interesting to note that in these few
words the perfected sage of our time confirms
what is here being discussed. His phrase
'remaining as oneself' (remaining as *what
one is*) is herein referred-to as 'Awareness.'

¹ Continued from April 1980 issue.

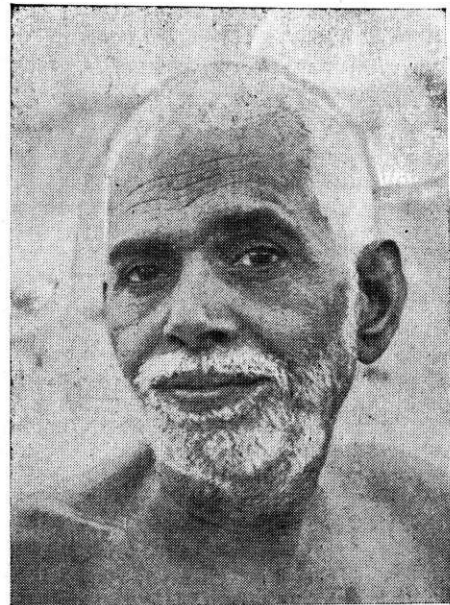
Sri Bhagavan and Universal Religion

By
Dr. K. Subrahmanyam

ADHERENTS of many different faiths and practitioners of many different disciplines came and sat at the feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and went away replete with the various satisfactions they sought. They came there out of no urge to change the paths they were treading, and, in his presence, they experienced no desire to do so. They went back, externally the same as when they came, but with their visions cleared and their inner energy replenished. Some of them were on the metaphysical quest and sought to vivify and realise their philosophical conclusions in the form of experience. Yet others were engaged in strenuous activities for the well-being of the community and went back to their work with increased devotion. In Bhagavan was the truth wherein each of the questants found the satisfaction of his individual need and the culmination of his special aspiration and efforts. Yet the difference between them — differences of dogma and discipline — were real and not to be explained away. Obviously, Bhagavan gave to each of the seekers who came to him that 'one thing which being known, all other things are known'

But there should be a difference between the knowledge of this 'one thing' and the attitude of patronising benignity towards all religions which many of us indulge in. It adds to the comfort of a relaxed state of intellect and soul to feel a glow of approval for all religions and all 'good' pursuits.

It makes us feel exalted without subjecting us to the strenuous test of the intellect, conduct or of spiritual practices. Earnest preachers of many religions have complained about this attitude as being unhealthy indifferentism and



they have been rendering a real service and doing a necessary duty in this respect. What is the difference then between the unity which Bhagavan symbolised and that religious universality which comes so easy to us and which we find so comfortable? The answer takes us into the core of religion and is of inestimable practical value.

High Level Synthesis

The familiar 'synthesis of religions' is not truly on the religious plane at all. It implies either of two processes, neither of which really takes us any higher than our unregenerate selves. It may imply the attempt to evolve a synthetic product. It is at the level of an invention, a creation of our own, conforming to the specifications which our ego lays down. New religions — with their own rituals, hier-

archies and such other paraphernalia — have been produced by active, inventive and, in a measure, earnest minds. But whereas even the Buddha claimed only to lay bare again an ancient flourishing city now lying buried and overgrown, these ingenious men have subordinated religion to the particular stage of development they have arrived at. They have imposed their own personal standards on what ought to be, by very definition, eternal, ultimate. What is the competence of the synthesizer? Even in the realm of synthetic products such as synthetic rubber or petrol, the competence of the inventor is subjected to a test, that of indubitable utility for the community. A synthetic religion is free of all tests. It is irresponsible indulgence of the creator's whim in a realm where personal whims should have no place.

There is a synthesis which is not at the level of invention, but higher; it is at the level of discovery. It is the revealing of a truth which exists independently of ourselves. We make our efforts to *reach* it, not to *make* it. We subordinate ourselves to truth, but insist that the truth arrived at should be comprehensive. This obviously is true synthesis. All available parts should cohere. All known religions should fit into the scheme we shall work out. It is like piecing together the fragments of an exquisite vase, now lying shattered. The shape is in nowise to be designed by us. Ours is the humbler task of re-embodiment of the original shape now lying invisible. The discipline of humility and the satisfaction of a love of harmony are equally met by this method. A philosophy of religion seeks truth utilising all known religions. Should it not then be made to supersede all religions?

But, again, what is the test of the rightness of the result achieved? The vase is an analogy that fails beyond a stage. A vase is an object of a recognised pattern. It is easily judged whether the process of piecing together has succeeded or has produced only a travesty and a freak, an obvious failure in spite of all the

patience and deftness it has cost. Is the philosophy that aspires to comprehend all religions subject to any salutary test of verification? The philosopher's mind, we admit, sets out not to invent, but to know the truth. But in the last resort it is the judge of its own success. Earnestly religious people, it is no wonder, put by this philosophy as a well-meant but by no means a satisfying product.

The process of 'piecing together' is entirely inapplicable in the sphere of religion. In reconstructing the vase, the workman's judgement operates at all stages on inert matter; it detects the fragments, it relates them and finally approves of the product which is still an object. The workman always stands outside the vase, whether it is in fragments or integrated. His mind at all stages comprehends and masters what he deals with. But the essence of the religious consciousness is that it grows to be increasingly aware of a Personality, an Awareness or a Power and finally submits totally to what was only the object of his quest to begin with. It is as if when this vase has been completed, the workman has been absorbed into it. Thereafter, his life is a part of a bigger Life. This is spirituality, holiness. This is the vinegar of stories, into which all pearls melt. The truly religious synthesis, subjectively, is the process of being absorbed ourselves, with our intellect and its dogmas, our rituals and our ethics. Holiness dissolves these into itself and shines through them all. Out of this state issues the true synthesis which we can effect between various faiths and disciplines and which is worth communicating to others. In all other attempts at synthesis the only element laudable is the urge to unify; there can be no real, achieved unity.

Can we define the Eternal?

But, final unity is possible. Because our dogmas and disciplines have sharp edges which logically repel one another, because each of our churches has a corporate egotism that stridently proclaims its separate and indissoluble existence, it does not follow that all

notions of ultimate oneness are delusions. The question arises whether there is a final validity in dogmas and disciplines, whether as their custodian, any particular church is to be the eternal sentinel of truth. On looking back from the state of holiness which God-seekers of all faiths have arrived at, what is the place they have assigned to any formulation of the Eternal? A Christian saint and mystic, after having written voluminously on God and thereafter having been vouchsafed the Direct Vision, cried: "I have blasphemed! I have blasphemed!" The Hindu seer Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, refuses to condemn even the formulations as blasphemy. Though it is true that formulations distort the Truth and in that sense falsify, the Truth is powerful enough to pierce through any formulation and shine. After all, it is the latent Divine Grace in him that turns even an individual sinner to pray for Grace. Shall not the 'doctrine of penitence' apply to faiths as they apply to individuals? The intellect, with all its formulations and prescriptions at its very clearest, has to be absorbed and annulled. The difference between one faith and another is only a difference in degree of capacity. But one of the densest forms of opacity is the idolatry of the medium which suits our vision best. This is to identify the Light Beyond with the degree of transparency which our individual eye finds most comfortable for its own structure and energy.

All faiths are true — none of them is false — to those who concede the Mystic Vision as the supreme experience and the final truth. A seer is singled out by the term 'Mystic' when we observe in him a pronounced disparity between the triviality of the stimulus and the tremendousness of the response. Sri Ramakrishna observed the flight of a line of white cranes against the darkness of the heaped-up monsoon clouds and fell into a trance. But is there not an undeniable essential disparity between the

ABODE

By
S. M. Kaul

Leaving a trail of vacancy,
Where Wonder itself fears to peep,
Thought after thought doth arise,
Confusing, conflicting—then subside.

There Day and Night cease to be,
And Light and Darkness flee,
Beyond the stillness, deep and vast,
Where bright throb of 'I' is seen,
In all splendour, full and free
I reside; I reside.

most intellectually satisfactory formulation (it can only be for oneself) of the Truth and the absorption into it or the total surrender to it, however we may choose to phrase it? This absorption or surrender is really to get launched into a new dimension altogether. All religious experience, as distinguished from theological rightness, is a mystic experience. That is, in it there is an essential incommensurability between the stimulus — any experience other than the ultimate — and the response, the awareness of the Ultimate itself. What will finally save us is our insight, the power of piercing *into* the Real through all things or any one thing. The range of our *vision* over many religions or our exclusive fidelity to some one of them is of subsidiary importance. If the former is dilettantism, is not the latter a form of prudery? As there is a universality that is too facile, there is a religiosity that is a bar to spiritual progress. The true universality which we can learn from Bhagavan is of the utmost practical value to all who aspire to advance from the position, whatever it is, which at present they happen to occupy.

Ramana Maharshi and The Nature of The Physical World

By
Douglas Harding

*Nothing seen can be real
The object is false: the Subject is the sole Reality.
Wonder of wonders! They take what is not to be what is.
They see phenomena as apart from the Self
The world does not exist in reality*

ON the face of it, these quotations from the *Talks* of Maharshi make little sense. What can they mean for the ordinary man in the street, or even the ordinary scientist? The world is convinced that things are real, often only too real. The man in the street is sure of the reality of that on-coming bus — or else!

This article attempts to show why, in the writer's experience, Maharshi's teaching on this subject nevertheless does make excellent sense, and stands up to rigorous testing, and works out in day-to-day living. Why, in fact, it is indispensable for our peace and happiness.

Science (or rather, science misunderstood) has come up with a great deal of unscientific nonsense in its time. And the most prevalent, most specious, most irrational piece of pseudo-scientific nonsense is the dogma that consciousness is a by-product of matter — a kind of incidental and accidental effluvium or subtle radiation which matter gives off when it gets sufficiently complex, as in human brains. The one thing led to the other, as if brains happened to grow a 'bump of consciousness' in addition to the other bumps. In the beginning was matter, and in the course of evolution it just got around to noticing itself! Wonder of wonders: object produces subject! Are we startled at such a miracle? Not at all! The primacy of matter over spirit is simply taken for granted, and is among the least challenged of the myths our world lives by.

That things should produce *awareness* of things (and by chance, at that!) is, once you start questioning it, a very strange notion. It's rather like imagining that the cine-projector is operated by the actor on the screen. Equally strange is the notion that the subject can be examined from outside as if it were some kind of object. How can the subject be discovered except from within, by itself? In any case there's not a particle of evidence of material objects giving rise to consciousness. No-one has ever observed it happen, or explained what to look for. In fact the very idea is nonsensical.

What *is* a material object, according to science itself? It is a collection of phenomena (from Greek *phainein*, to show), a set of regional appearance/pictures/readings which the scientist picks up and pieces together as he hovers around a 'thing' surveying it from various angles, at various distances, with the help of various instruments. What these regional appearances are appearances of, what lies at the centre of this nest of appearances, is hidden from him. However close the physical scientist gets to that 'thing,' he is too far off to say what it really is, intrinsically. The scientist, as such, is an outsider.

But he does have two clues to what's inside.

(1) The first clue is that the nearer he gets to the 'thing' the emptier it becomes. Progressively stripping it of assets, he comes to regions where all that remains of that seemingly

solid 'thing' is space haunted by twists of energy—so to speak. Beauty, ugliness, utility, opacity, colour, life, shape, even precise location—all are left behind by the approaching observer. There's not a quality or function that will stand up to his close inspection. It is distance that lends these enchantments. Go up to anything and you lose it.

But just a minute! *Who* goes up to that 'thing' and loses it? *Who* registers the dismantling and disappearance of the object and its reduction to virtual emptiness? Why, the observer, of course. The scientist himself, as consciousness. He leaves all behind except awareness; this he takes with him wherever he goes, because this is what he *is*. It's impossible for him to explore the 'physical' world of molecules, or atoms, or particles, and leave it *merely* physical; his active presence there infects it through and through with '*spirit*.' As for the space that he finds underlying all things, how could his awareness of it be separated from it? Just as there's no way of entering an *empty* house, so there's no way of contemplating *mindless* space. No wonder sub-atomic physics is increasingly forced by the facts to bring the observer into the picture. Indeed, while the picture fades on ever closer inspection, the consciousness that illuminates it shines all the more brightly. Matter dissolves in favour of spirit.

(2) There exist two distinct kinds of thing available for the scientist's inspection—the observed thing, and the observing thing. That is to say: other bodies, and his own body. We have just seen to what conclusions his lamination of *other* bodies leads. Are they confirmed by his examination of *this* body, the one he carries around with him?

Here is his second clue to what things really are, as distinct from what they look like at a distance. Here is his very own sample lump of matter, always handy, requiring no laboratory or instruments for its most searching examination, constantly reporting on its true nature, transparent through and through to his direct inspection. If and when he takes

seriously this unique and precious sample, if and when he dares to look *at* what he's looking *out of*, inspecting from inside that one thing on which he is the final authority, he finds it to be quite empty, and in fact not a thing at all. And *aware* of itself as just that. Such is the view of himself at zero millimetres from himself, if he is honest and attentive enough—which is to say, truly scientific.

Notice how beautifully these two clues confirm and support each other. Whether looked at from outside or inside, bodies dissolve, matter vanishes, spirit remains—once we go into the matter. "Spirit is the living body seen from within, and the body is the outer manifestation of the living spirit." Extend this statement of Carl Jung's to all bodies—from electron to galaxy and beyond—and you have the ultimate physics.

To *understand* the primary of spirit is good. To realise it, to see it, worldlessly to experience it, to be it without thought—this is incomparably better. And for some it's also easier. The rest of this article, therefore, is a heart-felt invitation to the reader to carry out one or two little experiments which can lead to this direct realisation of what would otherwise remain more-or-less theoretical.

Observe this thing you are now holding. What in reality is this object called THE MOUNTAIN PATH—I mean this actual wad of paper with printing? There it is, a solid enough lump of stuff, about 9 inches by 7 inches by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, weighing a few ounces, covered with (hopefully) meaningful marks on a white surface. Now *where* are the meaningful patterns that you are now taking in? Are they where the page is over there, or are they where you are, some 12 inches in front of that page?

Well, let's put the matter to the test. Go right up to the page and see. Apply your eye to this printing, as if you were putting on a contact lens. Yes please, all the way! If you feel a bit ridiculous, remember that what's at stake is Reality itself, not to mention your peace and happiness. Go on...!

What did you see? I venture to say that what you found there was not meaningful sentences, not loose words, not a meaningless string of letters, not even fuzzy black marks on a white ground, but an illegible blur. And, on contact, nothing at all. You lost everything, but *you didn't lose consciousness*. You didn't pass out. The Nothing you found wasn't just nothing at all — whatever that monster could be! — it was **NOTHING BUT AWARENESS**. Sri Ramana puts it so well: "There is a Light by which things are seen. . . . If divested of things the Light alone remains"

So this Light is what **THE MOUNTAIN PATH** really is, what **THE MOUNTAIN PATH** really comes from, what **THE MOUNTAIN PATH** is really about — the Light of Awareness, alias the Self, alias the Godhead, alias Atman-Brahman, alias Buddha Nature, alias Spirit, free from everything. This is what's backing up these printed words you are now reading. This is their Source. This at once is their Author and his message. It may sound funny, but you won't read this magazine aright till you read it at two distances — 0 inches and 12 inches! As Maharshi observes: "The Real is what *is*. The rest is only appearance. . . . We read the printed characters, but ignore the paper which is the background."

So much for where these printed words are coming from. Where are they going to? Who is reading them now, in your own first-hand, memory-free experience at this very moment? What is taking them in — a solid, hairy thing with two peep-holes in it, and behind them one (or is it two) peepers? You are your own closest inspector. Again, isn't it true that what you go up to you lose, only this time it is yourself you lose? You certainly go right up to you, all the way: and it's no wonder you vanish, just as the page did, leaving only Awareness. Isn't the Reader the same as the Read — **NOTHING BUT AWARENESS**: Well, only you are in a position to say, and what's the point of pretending to yourself?

The truth is that this *Mountain Path* journal, and in particular this page of printing, is from

Godhead to the Godhead, a love-letter posted by You to You. It is enfolded by Spirit, has Spirit backing it and fronting it. Both side it's being held in position by **NOTHING BUT AWARENESS**, otherwise it would fall flat into non-being. You could call it a divine sandwich.

And of course what's true of this page is true of the other pages of this journal, and true of those hands that are now holding it, and true of all the objects (tables, chairs, windows, people, trees, buses, whatever) that come and go in your Space. They are views of You, messages from You, creations by You, displayed to You. All you perceive is Yourself, heavily disguised as something else, for your benefit and no-one else's.

It is impossible to over-state the practical importance — the consequences for living — of this momentous discovery. All separation, the many-sided threat of alien things and persons, vanishes instantly. All is You. And how could you fear Yourself? How could you despise Yourself? How could you not love Yourself?

All this and more than this! Everything you see and hear and handle is something you want to say to Yourself, something worth saying, something important — even if it's only about an on-coming bus! There can be no dreadful or alarming or garbled or meaningless or useless messages from You to You. News about You, read by You, is good news — however bad it may look to the reader who is blind to its Source and Destiny in himself *as Spirit*. To him Maharshi says: "The imperfection appears to you. God is perfection. His work also is perfection. But you see it as imperfect because of your wrong identification" "Find out if you are physical."

In conclusion, then, Spirit is the true nature of the physical world and all the bodies in it. "Nothing seen can be real." Things have no substance and no power at all. They are just pictures of God held up by God for God's own inspection, and in themselves less than paper-thin. To live from this realisation is — bliss.

How I Came to Bhagavan

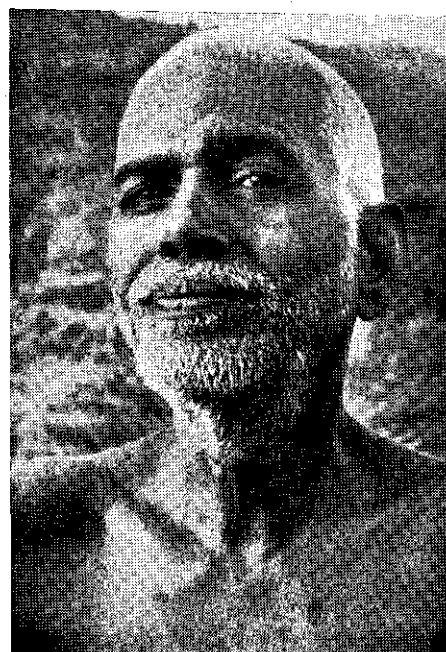
By
Ethel Merston¹

IT was in Paris in 1937-38. A small group of Ommentites meeting weekly to discuss J. Krishnamurti's and other teachings. All of us had read Paul Brunton's *In Search of Secret India*, so we all knew the Maharshi by name, and we had discussed his teaching too, but one of us, Pascalline Mallet, had actually visited him in his ashram and had been much impressed. One day, she received from a friend she had met there, a copy of his daily diary kept while at the Ashram, and this she brought to read to us. A little later, Pascalline asked me to help her to translate *Who Am I?* into French. All this made so deep an impression on me that, on returning to India, and being in the south touring with a friend equally curious to see the great man so eulogised by Paul Brunton, we decided to turn aside and visit Tiruvannamalai to see him for ourselves.

It was in 1939 that Bhagavan drew me to Tiruvannamalai and everything was new to me. I had known J. Krishnamurti, Ouspensky and Gurdjieff, but never any Hindu sage of the advaitic tradition. From the first moment in his presence he made me feel at home, and the peace of the little hall drew me as nothing had before. We had planned to stay for two days, and my friend left as arranged, but still having two more days free before returning to the north, I stayed on. When finally I had to leave, I knew that sometime I would return.



Miss Ethel Merston



The return visit came only two years later, and from then on, for five consecutive years, I visited the Ashram each summer to sit in Bhagavan's presence. Then, in 1944, my work in the north coming to an end, I came to live permanently near Bhagavan Ramana.

In the early days of my visits, the entrance door to the little hall where Bhagavan lived night and day, was opposite to his couch and diagonally to the exit doorway on the opposite side. Later it was moved down the hall and is now directly opposite the exit. In the early days, the women sat on either side of the entrance, facing the couch while the men sat on the other side at the foot of the couch.

¹ See page 172 of April 1967 of *The Mountain Path*, for an 'obituary' of Miss Ethel Merston. The present paper was given to us prior to April, 1967.

Every sort of caste, creed and nationality came for darshan. To each and everyone, Bhagavan was the same gentle, twinkling-eyed friend; no one from the tiniest child seemed awed by him. New comers including myself would begin by asking him questions, but soon found no necessity to voice them; in one way or another, without asking, the questions would be answered and the problems solved.

Once I had been mulling over a problem for three days without finding the solution. The fourth day, while sitting opposite Bhagavan still harassed by the problem, Bhagavan suddenly turned his eyes on me. After a moment, he asked one of the attendants to find him a certain book of Puranic stories. He turned over the pages until, finding the passage he wanted, he handed the book to one of the men who knew English and told him to read the story aloud. That story gave me the answer to my problem.

At other times one's questions would be answered by the questioner simply gazing at his eyes. Only on rare occasions would he give advice audibly, and even then, it was usually indirect. This can be illustrated by the experience of a young devotee from Bombay, during another visit I paid the Ashram.

This young devotee was in the habit of sitting day after day in Bhagavan's presence, contorting himself, twisting and turning and groaning aloud, obviously using yogic practices in his endeavour to attain *moksha*. This had been going on for some weeks, the young man was getting thin and his health was so clearly in danger that, meeting him one day outside the hall, I asked him why he took to that path, that it was not Bhagavan's way, and that without a Guru it was very dangerous. The young man replied that he did not care even if he died doing the practices so long as he got liberation in the end.

We then entered the hall, prostrated before Bhagavan, and sat down on our respective sides of the gang way. The doorway of the hall had by then been altered and we women

sat on the exit side at Bhagavan's feet. I sat down just beside Mrs. Taleyarkhan while Bhagavan was reading his mail. The young man had started on his contortions as usual, oblivious to everything around him. Presently Bhagavan began to read aloud from a letter from Paris in which the writer asked the value of *asanas* and yogic practices. Addressing himself to Mrs. Taleyarkhan, Bhagavan said with a smile: "She asks the value of such practices" he said, and nodding towards the young man contorting, he added: "Those sort of practices have absolutely no value. At very best, the only thing that might happen is that perhaps, after twenty-five years of going on and on with them, you might wake sufficiently to realise the valuelessness of what you are doing." The young man did not even hear the advice thus given, and although Bhagavan's words were repeated to him later by several people, he paid no attention but continued with his practices. As a result, he soon fell very ill and had to leave Tiruvannamalai.

Sometimes one could feel Bhagavan communicating voicelessly with someone in the hall; it was as though there was a strong current or pulsation flowing from him to the person in the hall. I had felt the same with Gurdjieff. But one other special occasion when the current was reciprocated stands out in my memory.

It was in the days when the door was still opposite Bhagavan's couch, and I was sitting to the right of the door opposite to him. Suddenly, a shadow fell across the doorway, and a fair, elderly *sannyasi* stepped over the threshold. Bhagavan, who was reading, dropped his book immediately and looked straight up at the man who took two strides forward to stand near Bhagavan's feet. In Bhagavan's gaze was such love and joy that one could almost hear him say: "So you have come at last, my beloved brother!" The two went on gazing at each other, with not a word spoken aloud, but I could literally feel them speaking to each other, the flow of current going back and forth

between them. They talked voicelessly for some ten or fifteen minutes, then suddenly the *sannyasi* dropped to the floor and passed into *samadhi* for the next two hours. Bhagavan quietly took up his book again and carried on reading as though nothing had happened as, doubtless for him, nothing had. But for us all it was an unforgettable experience.

During the last years of Bhagavan's physical life, many were the lessons we learned from him, but the chief one which he never ceased to hammer into us, was that *he was not* the body; the body might go, but he would not go, for where should he go? He always and

always would be there with us as he was now.

So true did he make this for us that even on the day of the *Mahasamadhi*, we felt Bhagavan Himself was still there with us as before and all the rites and ceremonies had nothing to do with him. He was still dynamically present, ready to be questioned and talked with as before. And so well had he prepared us to realise this, that in all the crowd of some 1,500 present, many of them devotees, I only saw three people weep loudly as we spent the night in vigil. We knew that Bhagavan had not gone, so what need to cry for Him who was still with us?

The Moon of Mind

By
Margaret Dupert

For a time the moon of mind shines,
Delighting in reflection
On the adorable qualities of the Master, and
The refreshing, liberating rays of His teachings.
Then, by His Grace,
The moon pales and becomes quite invisible
As our replendent, all-illuminating Sun
Ramana-Arunachala

Dawns directly in the Lotus-Heart!
Oh most compassionate Guru,
Pray absorb forever in Your boundless Light
This small moon of mind,
Which already, by Your infinite Grace,
Circles devotedly in the Heaven of Self!

Garland of Guru's Sayings

By SRI MURUGANAR

Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

850

The mighty hero who has renounced
Possessiveness, the sense of "mine",
The painful path of greed, proceeds
Through self-enquiry to destroy
Utterly the 'I', the 'ego'
And thus at one stroke gains the fruit
Of every noble *dharmā*.

851

Instead of proudly rising up
And trying to mar God's true perfection,
To shrink within is the sole penance
And discipline needed to attain
The heaven of *jnana*,
Shiva's home.

852

Because the ego would reduce
The full perfection of the Self
Supreme, the wise say, its destruction
Shines as the most true and flawless
Worship of the Lord.

853

Mad people who instead of being
Food for God think that they can feed
On God will through their ego be
Devoused as prey by Death.

(Devotion for selfish ends, trying to
"use" God, leads only to death.)

854

Unless the world appearance seen
By the senses and the villainous ego
Rising with it die and get
Absorbed in Shiva whose being shines
As pure Awareness, none can attain
The state supreme, the Self.

855

Can the poor restless mind behold
The still bright being of the Self?
Unless the ego-sense, the knot
Binding awareness and matter, snaps
The Truth is unattainable.

856

The ego rising in between
Awareness and matter has blotted out
The Self of Peace. *Kaiwalya*, bliss
Absolute, is unattainable
Unless this monster is first slain.

857

Which is the auspicious New Moon day?
That day when the borrowed light
Of the *jiva*'s mind-moon dies and gets
Merged in the true, bright, original
Sunlight of the Self.

858

Through death alone and by no other
Means can *moksha* be attained.
But what is death? It is not killing
The body (poor fool) but killing
The sense of 'I' and 'mine'.

859

Those who have utterly destroyed
Desire for this illusive, vast
Panorama of the world,
Only they can live like Shiva.
True bliss proceeds from the clear, pure
Experience of the soul re-born,
And from no other source.

860

If you ask me, "What is that
Grand Death that has nothing to do
With birth, but puts an end to death
Which leads to endless births?" I say
Death of the dark shades 'I' and 'mine'.

861

The true quest "Who am I?" alone
Destroys the body-bound ego's life.

862

Losing the false ego in awareness
And abiding firmly as awareness
Is true clarity.

863

There's no experience of true Being
Without the body-bound ego's death.

864

He whose false ego has been merged
In Being-Awareness, he alone
Ceasing from all initiative
Abides within the heart in peace
Serene and natural bliss.

865

In the wonder-world created
By scheming Maya's power imperious
The ego false arises. Only
When this ego dies is born
Experience of the Self supreme.

866

When the sense that "I am the body" dies,
All the illusions and confusions
That trouble us vanish for ever.
Within the heart explored appears
As "I, I" the non-dual Self
Of pure awareness.

867

The Lord that seems not to exist
He alone exists; we individuals
Who seem to exist do not exist
At all. The experience of this
Our complete non-being is
What is called the highest knowledge.

868

Sahaja samadhi, natural abidance
In *sattva* stillness is the beauty
Of *tattva jnana*, knowledge of truth.

869

'Tis ignorance folly to ascribe
The role of "witness" to the Self,
The luminous Sun, the mighty sky
Of pure awareness. In the Self
Immutable there is no room
For maya's darkness void. The Self
Is one sole whole without a second.

870

When I say "I see the world"
What do I really mean? I mean
"The world perceived and its perceiver
Both appear in that pure I
Whose being is the plenitude
Of true awareness, flawless, bright."

(Compare Verse 7 of *Forty Verses*.)

"The Self which neither rises nor sets is where
both the world and *jiva* rise and set."

871

The sense perception which persuades us
That the phenomenal world is real
Perverts the truth. The senses which
Perceive and the perceiver are,
Like the phenomena they perceive,
Mere appearance, no more.

872

He who has seen the Overseer
Will shine himself as Self supreme,
Ending the sense of difference
Between the seer and overseer
And regaining his own real being.

873

The Overseer is free from bondage.
He reigns supreme over the heaven
Of pure Awareness. What is seen
He sees as only forms of his
Own being. He has the power through grace
To govern all he sees, because
He sees all things as but himself.

874

Seen through the eye of our true being
Which is awareness pure, supreme,
What we call "birth" is but the folly
Of thinking that one is the body
Which forms a poor part of this wholly
False phenomenal world.

875

In ego-free integral vision
All things exist but as the Self,
The Being supreme. So in a dream
The various crowded forms appear
Many and different though they are
Nought but the dreamer's self alone.

(The *jiva* who perceives and the world perceived
by him or both appearances in the waking dream
of our phenomenal life.)

876

Until the snake-illusion goes
Its ground, the real rope, will not
Be recognised. Until the world
Of false phenomena disappears,
The Self, its ground, does not shine clear.

877

Only when the world illusion goes
Does the blissful light of Self arrive.
Life lived in this bright, blissful light
Is our true, natural life. Other ways
Of life are full of trouble and fear.

GURU

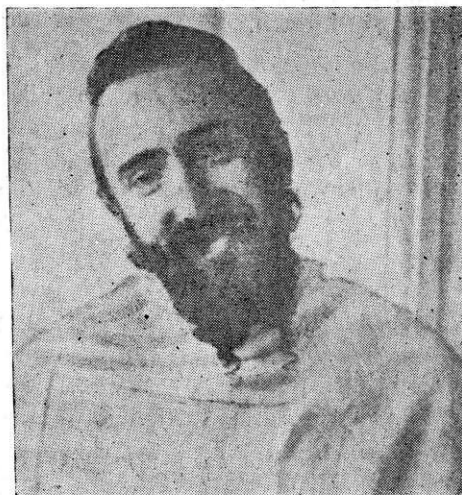
By
A Chela

SWAMI Ramanagiri whose life sketch appeared in the July, 1977 issue of this periodical is my Guru. How he attracted and accepted me as a *chela* is a strange story.

At the time Bhagavan Ramana's *nirvana* was approaching, Swamiji was staying in Almora in the Himalayas. About two weeks before the event Swamiji had a psychic message from Bhagavan, his Guru, about his impending *nirvana*. Swamiji made haste to reach Tiruvannamalai and the Ashram. After the *Maha-samadhi* of Bhagavan he wanted to go back to the Himalayas. En route he was persuaded by a friend, to spend a few days at Madras with him. One day as he was walking along the beach he had a vision of Bhagavan who, signalling with his hand, directed him to proceed further South and stay there. This led him to Tiruvanmiyur, a fishing village then, but a part of the fast-growing city of Madras now.

Here he sat on the beach immersed in *samadhi*. His host, not knowing where his revered guest had gone, grew anxious. A search was organised and Swamiji was at last located sitting on the beach under the scorching sun, deep in *samadhi*. When he came back to the physical plane he was requested to return to his host's residence. But Swamiji said that Bhagavan had directed him to stay there at the seaside, and so stay there he would. So his host decided to put up a hut with dried cocoanut palm leaves for him on the beach. Arrangements were made by his host for food to be sent to him daily.

Often the fisherfolk would swarm around Swamiji and he gave the food to them. On other occasions he would be in *samadhi* totally



Swami Ramanagiri

unaware of the needs of his body. It was this continued neglect which brought on the tuberculosis which ultimately consumed his body. At first he refused treatment but was persuaded by his host, whom he treated as his father, to go back to the city for treatment.

At this time in 1950, I was stationed in Delhi. One day in Sept.-Oct. my immediate superior paid a visit to Delhi and stayed with me as my guest. On the first morning of his visit, he finished his ablutions early and took out from his bag a photograph of Swamiji, placed it on the table, lighted a few incense sticks and sat down for meditation. One look at the photograph and my heart seemed to stand still. I was absolutely captivated by the radiant personality in the photograph and I wanted to know all about him.

My guest, after completing his meditation, told me the story of Swami Ramanagiri. I then asked him eagerly: "Will you take me

to him?" To this, he replied: "Yes, when you next come to Madras."

Most unexpectedly, and to my great good fortune, I was transferred to Madras in January, 1951. On reporting for duty there, almost the first thing I asked my superior was when he would take me to the Swamiji. He said he was going to him that very evening and that I could come with him.

Hardly able to contain my excitement I went through the work of the day and immediately rushed to the officer's chamber. Imagine my consternation when I found it empty: And imagine too my feelings when the watchman told me that my superior officer had left early. Feeling sullen and angry I waited around restlessly not knowing what to do in this predicament. And then, slowly, a question formed in my mind. Why should I not go and see the Swamiji by myself? After all, to meet a *sannyasi*, no formal introduction is necessary. Having convinced myself of the rightness of my proposed action, I started off. Fortunately, my destination was within walking distance.

I came to know later that when my superior reached the Swamiji, the latter who was observing the vow of silence at that time, wrote on a slate: "Someone wanted to come with you. Why did you not bring him?" My superior, also an ardent devotee of the Swamiji, then realised that in his eagerness to meet Swamiji he had forgotten all about poor me. He therefore offered to fetch me, but the Swamiji wrote on the slate: "Don't worry. He will come by himself."

A little later I walked in. When I saw Swamiji, I felt so thrilled that my head began to reel and I became confused. "My God, I am in the presence of Christ!" were the words that formed in my mind (Swamiji had a really remarkable resemblance to Jesus in all aspects). This lasted for some minutes.

I do not remember if I even made a *namaskar*. I saw Swamiji write on the slate: "This is the person" and show it to my boss. I didn't know what all this writing was about and,

frankly, I was not even interested. I just sat there in awe and reverence for some time and, after a time, I made a *pranam* and left.

It was only during the next few days that I realised I had said or done nothing during my first visit to the Swamiji. What had I achieved? Nothing. I had to speak to him and get accepted as a disciple. This was imperative. So, a few days later I went to see the Swamiji again. This time I found he was not observing silence and that I could talk to him. But there were already two other people there and he was talking to them. But, strangely, I found I was not feeling impatient, only indescribably happy to be in his presence.

But, as time passed and it grew dark, a sudden fear assailed me. Would this meeting also prove fruitless? I looked towards the Swamiji. He had suddenly become serious and was looking out of the window. Then I saw him close his eyes. I also closed my eyes. Everything became very still. I had not known such deep silence and calm before. Then, abruptly, I felt jolted by what I can only call a shock in my heart which shook me and, simultaneously, a tremendous pull from the Swamiji like that of a jet engine sucking air. My whole being seemed to go totally still but I felt no panic, only a great peace enveloping me. My Guru had pierced my heart and taken my mind in very deep into it. Mentally I asked Swamiji: "Will you please take me as your disciple?" The answer "Yes" was also an unspoken one. But it was a very firm and unhesitating "Yes."

After this experience, it seemed as if the Swamiji and I both opened our eyes simultaneously and looked at each other. The Swamiji bent towards me with a bewitching smile and peered into my eyes as if enquiring if I got his message and if I was happy and satisfied with it. What joy and relief that look gave me! I knew I had been accepted as a disciple. That was enough. I offered a *pranam* and left.

How he led me from then on is, of course, another story!

INTRODUCING....

The Ashram Priests

SRI K. Krishnamurthy and Sri M. Subrahmanyam, the Brahmin priests in charge of the religious ceremonies of the Sri Ramanasramam, are like unidentical twins. Though totally different in appearance they move as one during their brahminical duties which they perform with meticulous efficiency and obvious devotion. They follow a strict functional regimen inside the Ashram and live quiet, simple lives outside it with their families. There is between them both friendship and respect for privacy. Not at all the type to stand and stare or gossip, they are either busy doing something in the Ashram or simply not there at all.



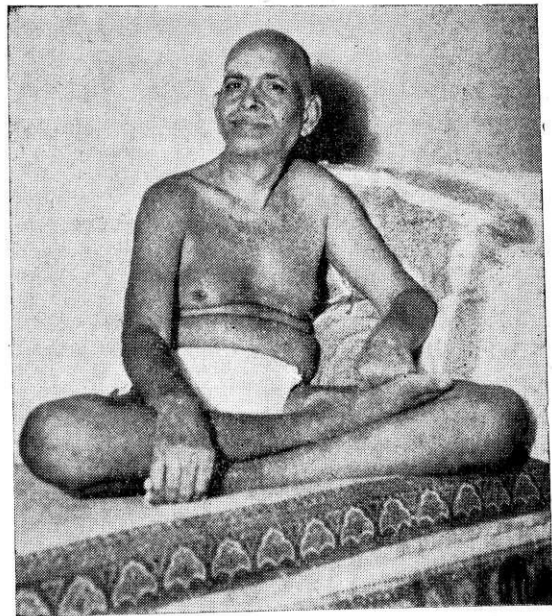
Sri K. Krishnamurthy

Being in charge of the formal ceremonial activities of the Ashram is no simple chore but a weighty responsibility. The Maharshi had forcefully believed that if one observed ceremonies one should observe them strictly and with the requisite correctness, dignity and faith.

One can see Sri Krishnamurthy and Sri Subrahmanyam during the forenoon or evening sitting in the inner quadrangle of the Mother's



Sri M. Subrahmanyam



shrine or at the farthest bracket of the outer verandah running around both the shrines, preparing the materials necessary not only for the next day's rites and rituals but for other approaching religious functions and celebrations. One has never heard raised voices between them. Their quiet, almost inaudible, clipped, pithy chats may be considered a study in Tamil conversational culture.

Their backgrounds are similar. Both come from middle-class families in and around Tirukkoilur. Sri Krishnamurthy stopped his education at the primary level for personal as well as family reasons and entered the Sri Ramanasramam Veda *patasala* in 1938. Even while doing his twelve-year study in it he began performing the daily devotions at the Mother's shrine. The Maharshi's Mahasamadhi and the subsequent changes in the administrative set-up and the closure of the *patasala* pro-

voked doubts in him about his future at the Ashram. In a gush of panic he sought admission in ESLC classes and attended them for two days, but gave them up and returned to his Ashram duties.

Sri M. Subrahmanyam joined the same *patasala* in 1942 but, while undergoing an 8-year training for a priestly life, he also studied privately and passed his ESLC examination. Just in case. After the Mahasamadhi when all Ashram activities were curtailed, he completed successfully a 2-year course in Teacher Training also. Sri Subrahmanyam has, in fact, worked as a teacher in two schools. One summer vacation he paid a visit to his old friend, Sri Krishnamurthy, at Sri Ramanasramam. The visit turned into a permanent stay—a decision he has never regretted—because the Ashram had started the Sri Chakra Puja and a second Brahmin *pujari* was urgently needed.

Both the priests have had the inestimable good fortune to have served Bhagavan personally. Besides performing their brahmanical duties they had also served food at mealtimes, a chore which could daunt anyone, for the Maharshi was a strict disciplinarian and set great store on the correct way and the proper mental attitude required for serving food to people. "Serving food with Maharshi sitting watching us was nerve-wracking work," says Sri Krishnamurthy. "Everything had to be done *exactly* right and there he would sit, child-like, but with his eyes moving everywhere in a quiet, unobtrusive way. Also he hated being given preference, so we had to watch ourselves to make sure that even inadvertently we did not show him any favour. He himself watched the cooks and servers with vigilance and the diners with solicitude."

"In the early days," says Sri Krishnamurthy, "there was talk occasionally with Maharshi though we were all afraid of him. He would listen to our *parayana* with attention and correct mistakes, sometimes sharply."

Maharshi was also personally interested in the lives and welfare of all who worked in the Ashram. Once, Sri Krishnamurthy's brother who was in the Army, paid a visit to the Ashram and was introduced to the sage. Bhagavan looked the two brothers up and down and said to Sri Krishnamurthy: "Your brother is so thin, yet he is in the Army. You look more brawny and you are a priest. You should have joined the Army."

Sri Krishnamurthy has also, on occasion, taken some of his personal problems to Maharshi. One of them had to do with his marriage. From an early age it had been taken for granted that he would marry his uncle's daughter. But a technical point arose which had to be dealt with. According to custom, a girl had to be married before she attained age. This posed a problem for the couple were far too young to marry. The family took this problem to Sri Sankaracharya who sagaciously advised them to perform *kanyadaan*—the ceremony of giving away the bride in marriage—immediately, but to postpone the actual marriage ceremony till after Sri Krishnamurthy's elder brother had been married and young Krishnamurthy also came of age to marry. So, when, after the *kanyadaan*, Sri Krishnamurthy came back to the Ashram, the Maharshi, addressing the other devotees, smilingly pointed to the bashful young lad and said: "Look at this half-married bridegroom!"

Both Sri Krishnamurthy and Sri Subrahmanyam have been at the receiving end of Bhagavan's displeasure. One day while Sri Krishnamurthy was serving food he inadvertently served an excess of pickles to the Maharshi. "Mischievous! Mischievous!" said the Maharshi. Sri Krishnamurthy was so frightened by what he had done that he couldn't think straight till he had begged the Maharshi's pardon and had been forgiven. Caught in a similar predicament, Sri Subrahmanyam who once served Bhagavan sour buttermilk instead of the sweet which he

preferred, simply avoided Bhagavan for four days, slinking out of sight even when he appeared at a distance.

“Bhagavan was like a grandfather to us,” say both of them with genuine affection. “We were both afraid and happy to be with him.” They have fond memories of Sri Niranjananda Swamy the Sarvadhikari also.

The memory of Bhagavan's last days still brings a gush of moisture to the eyes of Sri Krishnamurthy. It became the habit for the *naivedyam* (food that has been offered to the deity) and the *theertham* (water laced with camphor, saffron and powdered cardamom) to be brought to the Maharshi in the Nirvana Room in which he stayed. One day, as the *naivedyam* was brought to the Maharshi, he smiled weakly and said: “As you make the offering to my Mother's shrine, do it to me also. She is unable to eat it. Now I am also unable to eat it.”

Below is a verse translation of the sloka as corrected and approved by Sri Bhagavan:

**In the Inmost core of the 'Heart'
Shineth Brahman all alone
As "I" "I", the Self aware;
Enter deep into the Heart
By search for Self, or diving deep,
Or with breath under check;
Thus 'nishtha be e'er in Atman.**

— 1954 Translation of Sri Ramana Gita by
PROF. G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

Later, desperately ill, Bhagavan asked for the *theertham* to be poured into his mouth as he was unable even to sit up. “And I used to pour the *theertham* into his mouth, as he directed, slowly,” said Sri Krishnamurthy, and pausing, brought out his right hand palm-up, “with this hand.”

Bengali editions of Sri Ramanasramam Books

	Rs.
1. UPADESH MANJARI (Spiritual Instructions)	1.50
2. SRI RAMANA VANI (Maharshi's Gospel, Books I and II)	4.00
3. RAMANA MAHARSHI O ATMA JHANER PATH (Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge by Arthur Osborne)	10.00
4. SRI RAMANASRAMER PATRABALI (Letters from Sri Ramanasramam)	<i>In Press</i>
5. SRI RAMANABACHANAMRTA (Talks with Ramana Maharshi)	<i>In Press</i>

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI: By Georg Feuerstein. Pub.: Dawson & Sons Ltd., Common House, Folkstone, Kent, England. Pp. 180. Price: £ 10.

Georg Feuerstein is a well known orientalist and a profound scholar who is known in Germany as 'The Father of Yoga'. He has taken pains to study Patanjali in the original and has compiled this luminous annotated commentary for his Yoga Research Center in Germany.

Although it is an English rendering of his German book which I happened to see during my stay in Germany, among the flood of translations of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, this book stands unchallenged. He subtly weaves into his work the Philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism, William James, Eckhart, Pascal, Jalaludin Rumi and Zen. He extols the reality of the cosmic entity Prakruti, lays stress on psychological contemplation and advocates an even balance between the spiritual and the pragmatic life.

Each sutra is given in the original Sanskrit and is followed by a word for word translation and a lucid illuminating commentary. The standard of commentary is uniformly high throughout.

YOGA, THE TECHNIQUE OF LIBERATION: By Virendra Shekhavat. Pub.: Sterling Publishers. New Delhi. Pp. 80. Price: Rs. 30.

The author has made a critical study of the eight-pointed techniques of Patanjali's Raja Yoga. Concepts such as *Chitta*, *Vritti* and *Samyam* are extensively analysed, particularly *chitta* (a picture of *vasanas* or desires) which he sees as being central to the scheme of Patanjali. Later in the book, the author compares Iswara Krishna's Samkhya Karika with Patanjali. He concludes that whereas Patanjali does not commit himself to any particular ontology and epistemology except the existence of the human person with his *vrittis*, Samkhya is concerned with the problem of sustenance and dissolution of the multiplicity in the Prakruti and total elimination of suffering.

The most interesting part of the book is the last chapter entitled "Western culture and the search for liberation". It concludes: "The rationality and objectivity of the scientific outlook with its aesthetic and emotional blooming and its technological elaborations has destroyed man's social and natural milieu. The Baconian scientific intellectualism and Calvinist teachings of freedom through work, the systematic

formulations attempted by Freud Adler and Jung, and the socialist revolutions of Voltaire and Lenin have not solved the perplexing psychological paradoxes still holding humanity on the horns of a dilemma. Yoga is the answer" says the author.

YOGI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI

THE HEALING BUDDHA: By Raoul Birnbaum. Pub.: Shambhala Publications, 1123 Spruce Street, Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A. Pp. 253. Price: \$ 8.95. (This review is condensed from John Blofeld's foreword and is reprinted with the publishers' permission. Copyright John Blofeld.)

This work is a valuable contribution to our understanding of an aspect of Buddhism hitherto little known in the West. In part one, Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan sources are drawn upon to provide a well documented account of traditional Buddhist remedies for physical maladies, and, much more importantly, for spiritual ills. There are sections dealing with healing rites performed by Chinese and Tibetans, including mantras, invocations, visualisations and the use of special mandalas, and of particular interest is the emphasis on the role of art and aesthetic experience in mental healing practice. Part two comprises translations from the Chinese of several complete sutras pertaining to the Healing Tathagatas that were not until now available in any western language. At present, only tiny fractions of the Chinese and Tibetan versions of the Tripitaka are to be found in English; therefore, every such addition is greatly prized in Buddhist circles.

To people eager to discover effective methods of spiritual as opposed to medical treatment of disease, the elaborately detailed rituals set forth in this book may seem too complicated, and unsuited to a modern environment, but the principle behind them should find many advocates, once it is properly understood.

The book is also welcome as a further example of the tendency for western scholars in the fields of Chinese and Tibetan studies to renounce the supercilious attitudes of many of their predecessors. Sinologists such as Dr. Birnbaum approach the ancient works they translate in a spirit of respect and spiritual understanding. There is now a readiness to concede that those works, besides adding to our scientific knowledge of the past, may indeed have much to contribute to the sum total of human wisdom. This new attitude is clearly discernible throughout the whole of Dr. Birnbaum's excellent book.

JOHN BLOFELD

I AM THAT: By Nisargadatta Maharaj. Pub.: Chetana Pvt. Ltd., Bombay. 2 Volumes, Pp. 325+312. Price: Rs. 100.

SRI NISARGADATTA PRESENTATION VOLUME: Pub.: Chetana Pvt. Ltd., Bombay. Price: Rs. 25.

During the last few years, a large number of Ramana Maharshi's devotees have made a pilgrimage to the back streets of Bombay to see Nisargadatta Maharaj, a living realised teacher of the Navnath Sampradaya, whose spiritual ancestry goes back to the legendary figure of Dattatreya. Few have come away unimpressed, and many have become staunch devotees of the man whose teachings are enshrined in this book. The editor, Maurice Frydman was a former inmate of Sri Ramana-ramam and a long-time devotee of J. Krishnamurti, and his careful editing indicates the strong affinity between the teachings of Krishnamurti, Ramana Maharshi and the Maharaj himself. The theoretical background to the Maharaj's ideas is pure advaita, but the ideas themselves are less important than the impact they have on their listeners. His words have a mind-penetrating directness, and in a receptive reader, every conversation has the power to stop the conceptualising mind dead in its tracks. It belongs to that rare category of spiritual books which can be read again and again, with each new reading producing new insights and new levels of understanding in the reader.

His advice to spiritual aspirants is simple and direct and will strike a familiar chord with all devotees of Ramana Maharshi.

"The sense of 'I am' is always with you, only you have attached all kinds of things to it; body feelings, thoughts, ideas, possessions. Because of them you take yourself to be what you are not. Go deep into the sense of 'I am'. . . . The sense of 'I am' is the first to emerge. Ask yourself whence it comes or just watch it quietly".

'I Am That', recently reprinted for the third time, is without doubt a classic of modern spiritual literature. There are many who feel that it is the most direct, the most useful and the most potent spiritual text they have ever read. The price may be intimidating to some, but after reading 'I Am That', most other spiritual books have a tendency to appear second-rate.

Earlier this year, a presentation volume was published by Chetana, the publishers of 'I Am That', to commemorate the birthday of Nisargadatta Maharaj. The souvenir is half in English and half in Marathi and it contains numerous testimonials and tributes to Maharaj, articles on his teachings, and several moving accounts of the profound influence that Maharaj has had on devotees' lives. There is no new material from Maharaj himself, and the book has neither the power of the concentrated wisdom of 'I Am That'. It is the

first new book on Maharaj to appear in English for four years, but it gives the impression of being hastily assembled and the producers of the book seem to be more interested in raising money than in disseminating Maharaj's teachings.

AN INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE TO BUDDHISM: By Bhadanta Ananda Kausalyayan. Pub.: Sterling Publishers, New Delhi. Pp. 176. Price: Rs. 50.

This book might have been more accurately titled: 'The Life and Teachings of the Buddha in the words of the Pali Canon'. The format is similar to Paul Carus' 19th century work *The Gospel of Buddha*, except that Dr. Kausalyayan has chosen to present the life and message of the Buddha in the form of a catechism. This arrangement of the material seems to add little to the clarity of the Buddha's message, but it provides the ideal vehicle for the author's dogmatic assertion of Theravadan orthodoxy. The book, originally written in Hindi, is an attempt to explain to literate Hindus the basic message of the Buddha, and to eradicate many of the popular misconceptions which have arisen in India about Buddhist beliefs and practices. The author's opinions are freely mixed with explanations of the teachings, and a reader unacquainted with Buddhism might have difficulty in separating the two.

All major aspects of the Buddha's life and teachings are dealt with, and the Theravadan standpoint is accurately explained. Unfortunately, a disproportionate amount of space is devoted to minor aspects of the teachings such as the monastic rules pertaining to Buddhist monks. The author devotes almost as much space to an explanation of whether monks should drink tea after mid-day as he does to explaining the doctrine of *anatta*. Some sections are excellent; I particularly liked his account of the appearance and the authenticity of Buddhist scriptures, but on the whole, the author's polemical style irritates more than it educates.

THE CITY WITHIN THE HEART: By Richard Zaehner. Pub.: Unwin, London. Pp. 153. Price: £ 2.50.

Richard Zaehner was one of the great modern scholars of comparative religion, and this posthumous collection of essays is a good reflection and summary of the ideas which interested and occasionally tormented him during the latter part of his career. During this period most of his literary energy was directed towards pointing out inconsistencies in accepted spiritual dogmas, and in these few essays, he astutely exposes some of the hypocrisy and double-thinking that exists in both eastern and western religions. The ideas flow freely and easily and are backed by a vast reservoir of erudition. The erudition never degenerates to scholastic pedantry, and the essays are elegantly expressed in a language that is easily accessible to a non-specialist reader.

The writing is occasionally very personal, for while he is writing for anyone who wants to probe the origins and reliability of their previously accepted beliefs, he is concurrently baring his own soul by elucidating the ideas and the illogicalities which temporarily had undermined his own belief in the Roman Catholic faith.

The topics of the essays, such as the problem of evil or the nature of the Absolute in Greek and Upanishadic philosophy, interesting though they may be, are somehow peripheral. The centre of the stage is firmly held by the mind of R. C. Zaehner and the subjects he chooses are rarely more than vehicles for his own ideas.

Zaehner never resolved his own doubts, and it is sad to think that such a great contributor to comparative religious studies should have ended his life adrift in a sea of doubts created by his own fertile intellect. These last essays might be challenging and stimulating to read, but they are also a pertinent warning of the dangers of intellectualisation on the spiritual path.

THE SUPREME MASTER: By E. Bharadwaja. Pub.: Shirdi Sai Publications, Vidyannagar, A.P. Pp. 88. Price: Rs. 8.

Sri Swami Samartha, the 19th century saint and teacher, is little known today outside Maharashtra, but he is one of the outstanding spiritual teachers that modern India has produced. Like Shirdi Sai Baba he had limitless psychic powers which he openly displayed, often in a most eccentric manner, but behind the odd behaviour there was a realised Guru whose primary concern was the spiritual growth of his disciples.

It is difficult to write an account of a man who had neither a known personal history nor a well-defined set of teachings, and if the book at times seems to be an unending catalogue of miraculous stories, it is hardly the author's fault, for that was the nature of the phenomenon he is describing.

The author has a tendency to jump backwards and forwards in time, and this takes away some of the coherence that the book might otherwise have had. As a result, there is no sequential narrative to provide a background and a context to the isolated accounts of his devotees. Despite this deficiency, the accounts which are assembled here are quite sufficient to construct an accurate composite picture of the Swami, and they are presented in such a way that his idiosyncratic antics are always seen in the context of the immense radiant spiritual power which transformed the lives of so many people.

SREE NARAYANA GURU AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION: By C. R. Mitra. Pub.: Mitraji Publications, Shertallai, Kerala. Pp. 294. Price: Rs. 35.

Many good biographies of Sree Narayana Guru have been written in Malayalam, but no outstanding book on him has so far appeared in English. This latest attempt,

though well-intentioned, fails on several counts. On the credit side it includes an exhaustive account of the Guru's life and activities, and draws a detailed picture of the repressive social structure of Kerala which Narayana Guru opposed with great success throughout his career. However, the pages are littered with printing errors, the material is badly assembled and presented and the overall effect is reminiscent of a sub-standard high school essay. About a third of the material is superfluous, and the whole book needs to be thoroughly revised by a competent English-speaking editor. A teacher and reformer of Sree Narayana Guru's calibre deserves better treatment than this.

GATEWAY TO WISDOM: By John Blofeld. Pub.: George Allen and Unwin, London. P. 214. Price: £ 6.95.

John Blofeld's latest book is aimed primarily at westerners whose interest in Chinese and Tibetan religions has been stimulated enough for them to want to move from theoretical study to practice. The author has had a lifetime's experience in practising Buddhist and Taoist techniques, and much of his knowledge has come firsthand from qualified Chinese and Tibetan masters. Those who have read his previous books, 'Taoism', 'Mantras' and 'Compassion Yoga' will be familiar with much of the theoretical background, but in this book, he gives, for the first time, a step by step practical approach to the meditations, yogas and rituals of Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism.

It is refreshing to find a populariser of oriental beliefs who still puts emphasis on the quaintly old-fashioned notions of morality and self-discipline, and who supports so vehemently the importance of religious ceremonies and rituals. Although he excludes all practices which cannot be done either without the supervision of a teacher or without prior initiation, he still manages to include a surprisingly large array of methods, many of which will be unfamiliar to those who are not in the habit of studying more scholarly books. The techniques he describes are usually simplifications of traditional techniques, and while they can be practised by the complete beginner, if pursued diligently, they will take the student to the highest levels of spiritual practice.

The author's usual tendency to romanticise China is kept well under control and the style is strictly functional. It may lack some of the magic and charm of some of his previous books, but it will be a useful manual for all those who have an interest in practising Buddhist or Taoist techniques.

MYSTICISM CHRISTIAN AND BUDDHIST: By D. T. Suzuki. Pub.: Unwin, London. Pp. 152. Price: £ 2.25.

First published in 1957, 'Mysticism Christian and Buddhist' is an attempt by the Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki

to relate the teachings of Meister Eckhart to the teachings of Mahayana Buddhist, particularly Zen and Shin. Eckhart's statements, like those of the Zen masters, are full of illogicalities and inconsistencies, and the author's intellectual powers are stretched to their limits in his attempts to correlate the two. Eckhart and the Buddhists are obviously describing the same experience, but Suzuki's comparisons, surprisingly, are often laboured and forced. There are, of course, major differences between Christianity and Buddhism, and some of them are discussed in the chapters on transmigration and the crucifixion, but the similarities between Eckhart's Christianity and Buddhism are hard to ignore.

The book is partially redeemed by an extensive section on Shin or Pure Land Buddhism. The teachings of Saicho a famous Shin author, are used to illustrate the Karuna, or compassion aspect of Reality. This not only provides a link to both Eckhart and the more traditional exponents of Christianity, it also adds some much needed depth and perspective to what otherwise is a rather disappointing study.

MASTERS AND MEN: By Virginia Hanson. Pub.: The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 417. Price: Rs. 32.50.

Virginia Hanson's intense interest in "The Mahatma: Letters to A. P. Sinnet", a basic text on the Himalayan masters who guided the Theosophical Society in its early days, has led her to produce a third book on the subject, a dramatised account of the human story behind the transmission of the letters. Drawing on all the available sources, she has assembled what may be called a 'documentary-novel' of the five tumultuous years in the 1880s when Theosophy was fighting its early battle for recognition, and A. P. Sinnet, a British editor, was in regular communication with Master K.H. and Master Morya, two of the guiding lights of the society. Mrs. Hanson ably presents the overwhelming evidence which documents the authenticity of the letters and she paints a vivid picture of the lives and the inter-relationships of the main characters in the drama. Some of the characterisations are tainted with the ill-will she feels towards the early opponents of the Theosophical Society, but the depth of research far outweighs what is, occasionally, a very clumsily engineered narrative.

It is nearly a hundred years since the letters were transmitted and there is nothing really new that can be said either about the letters or the people who received them, but by putting the focus on A. P. Sinnet, an interesting new perspective has been achieved.

GURU GOBIND SINGH: By Harbans Singh. Pub.: Sterling Publications, New Delhi. Pp. 117. Price: Rs. 35.

Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Sikh Gurus, is chiefly remembered as the man who transformed the

Sikh community into a militia capable of withstanding the might of an openly aggressive Moghul Emperor. He led the Sikhs during the period when it was the official government policy "to destroy with a willing hand the schools and temples of the infidels, (non-muslims) and to put an entire stop to their religious practices and teachings." Harbans Singh shows how the Sikhs under Gobind Singh's inspired leadership resisted all armed attempts to destroy them, and he chronicles in great detail the battles and campaigns which eventually won for them a begrudging measure of tolerance from the Islamic rulers. There is an excessively pious account of his childhood and training, but there is little or no mention of his spiritual or religious dimensions. Even his poetry is martial as its main theme is the righteousness of the Sikh's cause and the necessity of upholding it by force.

Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, the elite force of Sikh 'samurai', he instigated the five emblems by which the Sikhs are commonly identified today and he terminated the Sikh Guru's line by passing his authority to the Sikh scriptures. All these events are retold in detail, but from a spiritual point of view, there is little in this book to indicate that Gobind Singh was anything more than a great soldier and a charismatic leader of men.

BEYOND THE MIND: By Dada. Pub.: Dada Center, 13665 Foothill Avenue, San Martin, Ca. 95046, U.S.A. Pp. 134. Price: \$ 3.95.

Many eastern spiritual teachers have taken up residence in the United States, but few have compiled a book as direct and as relevant as Dada, the author of this work. In a series of eight long conversations, he answers the questions of selected American seekers in an uncompromising fashion, invariably pointing out that all problems arise in the mind, and that a permanent solution to a spiritual problem is only possible by by-passing the mental processes. He sees all sadhanas which concentrate or cultivate the mind as counter-productive, and instead, he advocates simple witnessing or self attention.

"Watch every idea and desire that comes into the mind. . . . Usually the mind immediately starts to name, describe, moralize and compare whatever it sees. But through unmotivated and unbiased looking within, you can step outside the field of thought."

A key theme is energy; the vibrant radiance of Reality either dissipated by mental entanglements or glowingly revealed by inner silence. Dada maintains that by self attention.

"The sensitive and humble energy becomes free from all ideas, desires and rigid mechanical drives born out of the past. The cumulative effect of the whole past is the image of 'I', the mind which seeks the spirit,

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D. G.

WORLD WITHIN THE MIND: By H. P. Shastri.
Pub.: Shanti Sadan, 29 Chepstow Villas, London, W.11. Pp. 142. Price: not indicated.

This is the fifth edition of Shastriji's popular condensation of the celebrated, voluminous spiritual-occult treatise, *Yoga-Vasishtha*. Close to the original, chaste in expression, the rendering is satisfying and communicates the essential teaching of this advaitic classic which purports to be a dialogue between sage Valmiki and prince Sri Ramachandra.

The first part of the volume contains seventeen discourses covering the practice of the yoga of discrimination and the philosophy underlying it. The first requirement is a strenuous preparation: "To be prepared and purified through meditation, devotion and the service of the Yoga, and by the daily practice of tranquillity and self-control, and slowly initiated into the conviction of *kham brahman* (All is God)." "Is it better to retire to a forest or to live in the society?" is a natural query. The answer is clear: "Both of these are happy souls, as long as they enjoy calmness within themselves. He who views the properties and qualities of things as quite distinct from the Spirit, enjoys a calm tranquillity within himself which is called *samadhi*."

Seven are the steps of Yoga that the seeker is enjoined to practise. Not to waste time in fleeting amusements and negative movements, but to occupy oneself in useful, productive activities, with hurt to none, with conduct suited to the place and time, to seek the company of the good, is the first step. To enquire into the nature of good conduct, manner of meditation and yoga practice from the learned is the second. To eliminate egoism and greed, to purify the mind and serve the holy from whom the mystic wisdom is imbibed is the third. To devote the mind exclusively to Yoga and "see all the things in an even light" is the fourth.

To emerge from the error of duality and acquire knowledge of inner unity leads to the fifth step which is one of great joy of the vision of God in all. One serves one's own Self in others. To be liberated while living is the sixth. The final and the seventh stage is indescribable in words; it compares with the state of Shiva and Brahma.

There is pointed mention of occult powers like flying in the air which tempt the yogi. The wise practitioner pays no attention to these. (P. 50). His mind is ever

intent on the effort to liberate himself from ignorance and falsehood. And that effort is an all-time occupation. "It is not possible to realise the knowable Spirit all at once, unless you continually keep It in your consciousness. If you will strive to renounce your earthly appetites, you will be free from disease and danger. As long as you do not subdue the mind, you cannot get rid of your desires; and unless you suppress your desires, you cannot control your restless mind. Knowledge of Truth, subjection of the mind and abandonment of desires are the joint causes of spiritual bliss, which is unattainable by the practice of any one of them singly."

The sage is fortnight in his observations: "The pupil himself has to do . . . The Guru can neither think nor practise for the pupil. The Guru and the scriptures give the spiritual Truth to the pupil, but the pupil himself has to apply reflection and meditation and realise what they have taught him."

The last section of the book gives a summarised version of the famous story of Queen Chudala. The central doctrine of this work is summed up adequately in these words: "Know that your Atman is the support of all. Even the past, present and future find their support in you. As the waves are supported by the sea, so everything is supported by Atman. It is the connection of Atman with the mind that creates suffering. How can Atman which is Consciousness, and the mind which is inert, be friends of each other? This is the knot of the conscious and the unconscious, and its unravelling is called Knowledge. As the tree is contained in the tiny seed, so the world is contained in the mind. When the seed is burnt, the tree in it is also destroyed; when the mind is destroyed through desirelessness, the world of ignorance also ends."

This book, though small in size, is a key book for the understanding of the philosophy that finds expression in *Yoga Vasishtha* whose length runs into thirty-two thousand verses. It is ascribed to Valmiki but evidently it is the work of a later mind with a deep, intimate knowledge of the hidden side of life and human psychology.

DEATH, INTERMEDIATE STATE AND REBIRTH:

By Lati Rinbochay & Jeffrey Hopkins. Pub.: Rider & Co., London. Pp. 86. Price: £ 2.95.

A concise account of the beliefs regarding the process of death, the stage of after-death and the phenomenon of rebirth, in the Tibetan tradition. The Dalai Lama points out, in his lucid foreword, how the state of mind at the time of death goes a long way in determining the post-death condition and even the choice of karma in the succeeding incarnation. The Sutra that forms the subject-matter of this book viz. Lamp Thoroughly Illuminating the Presentation of the Three basic Bodies — Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth — describes

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

In connection with the Birth Centenary of Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Ashram is engaged in bringing out a publication : "SRI BHAGAVAN'S BIOGRAPHY IN PICTURES".

We appeal to devotees who might have some rare photos of Sri Bhagavan, and the Ashram, to kindly share them with us.

Photos may be sent by registered post. Please enclose full name and address so that we can promptly return them to you.

MATTHEW GREENBLATT
For President
Sri Ramanasramam
Tiruvannamalai-606 603

in detail the constitution of the human body-life-mind-complex in terms of wind, phlegm, bile and derivatives, and the process by which the being leaves the physical body and embodies itself in the subtle sheath and thereafter its several 'births' in the intermediate planes of consciousness till it reaches a pure state of awareness. The Highest Yoga in this tradition aims to simulate these processes of death, without actually dying, and realising the subtle and subtler states of consciousness.

The reader finds much in common between this presentation and some of the perceptions of the Indian Ayurveda and also the conception of Nadis and Chakras in the Tantras. How much of this Doctrine answers to occult fact and how much is traditional belief is a matter for scrutiny.

INTEGRAL YOGA: By Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda. Yoga Research Foundation, 6111 S.W. 74th Ave. Miami, Florida 33143. Pp. 106.

Whatever may be the connotation of *Integral Yoga* as defined by Sri Aurobindo who first used the expression, there are many brands of yoga under that label in the United States today. The author of this treatise defines it as an all-aspected union with the Universal Self or God, at the level of Reason (*Jnana Yoga*), of Emotion (*Bhakti*), of Will (*Raja*) and of Action (*Karma*). Each brief chapter gives the essentials of each of these lines of Yoga, underlining their relevance

to the needs of the modern man in his life of tension and suffering.

The best section of the book, however, is on the Tantra and Kundalini Yoga. Written with exceptional clarity, it makes several concepts unambiguously clear:

Three stages of the manifestation of the Devi: Maha Kali, destroying the gross impurities of the heart; Maha Lakshmi, destroying the subtle impurities in the form of subtle desires; Maha Sarasvati, destroying ignorance and bestowing knowledge.

Three and a half coils of the Kundalini: each coil represents one of the three *gunas* and the half 'the effect of these, the entire universe.'

"The *Pranas*, along with the *Nadis* and *Chakras*, are not located in the physical body as such, but to some extent correspond to structures within the physical body — the spinal column and the major plexuses of nerves."

The three *knots*: If the Kundalini rises beyond the three lower centres, the knot of *karma* is surrendered; beyond the heart centre, it is the knot of *kama* that is cut; beyond the *Ajna Chakra* the knot of ignorance is destroyed and one becomes established in the Self. (P. 84).

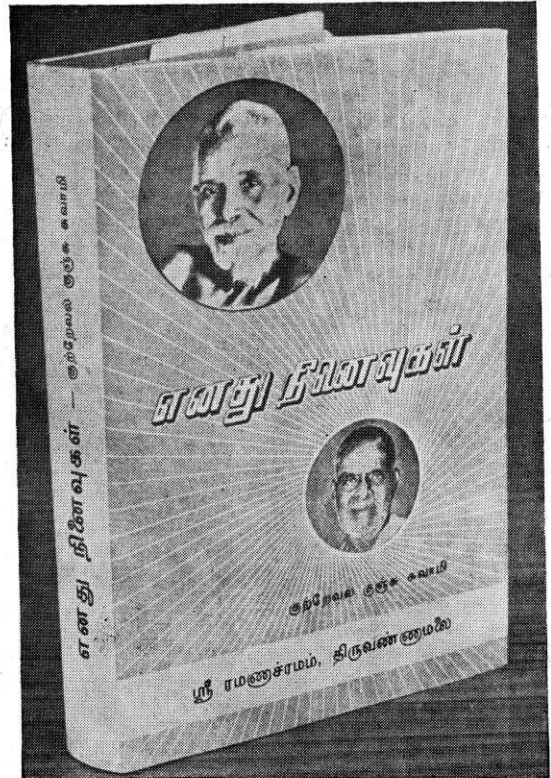
Chapters on *Hatha, Mantra, Kriya* and *Nada Yogas* follow. A neat introduction to the subject.

M. P. PANDIT

ASHRAM BULLETIN

SRI KUNJU SWAMI'S
BOOK IN TAMIL
RELEASED

"It is a Spiritual Treasure"
acclaims
Sri Sadhu Natanananda



On September 5 — the holy day of *Punarvasu* star — devotees, old and new, joyously assembled at the shrine of Grace of Sri Bhagavan. At 3 in the afternoon, at a most solemn moment, copies of Sri Kunju Swami's "*Yenadu Ninaivugal*" in Tamil ("Reminiscences"), were placed on the Samadhi shrine of Sri Bhagavan. A simple *aarti*, waving of camphored light, was performed to Sri Bhagavan.

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, requested Sri Sadhu Natanananda, the senior-most scholar-devotee of Sri Bhagavan, to release the book. After its release, the Ashram President handed over the first copy to Sri Kunju Swami, followed by distribution to Sri G. Ramaswamy Pillai, Sri Sadhu Om, Sri K. Natesan and Smt. Pankajakshi.

The assembled devotees eagerly listened to Sri K. Natesan's reading of the Preface, Introduction and other preliminary pages of the book. He also read out Sri Sadhu Natanananda's speech in Tamil.

"This book is really a spiritual treasure bringing out the many-faceted aspects of Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings. Among the thousands of devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Sri Kunju Swami is unique in that on the very first day of his arrival at Skandashram, when one,

Annamalai Swami attending on Sri Bhagavan's mother had passed away, Sri Bhagavan remarked: 'Look! In the place of Annamalai Swami, he has come', pointing at Sri Kunju Swami. This verbal acceptance by Sri Bhagavan is not found in any other devotee's life", said Sri Sadhu Natanananda.

Sri Ramaswamy Pillai referred to Sri Kunju Swami's special place among those who served Sri Bhagavan as personal attendants and praised his one-pointed devotion to the Master. "Sri Kunju Swami", he said, "is respected by all for his erudition, simplicity and his willingness to share his emotional devotion to the Master with others."

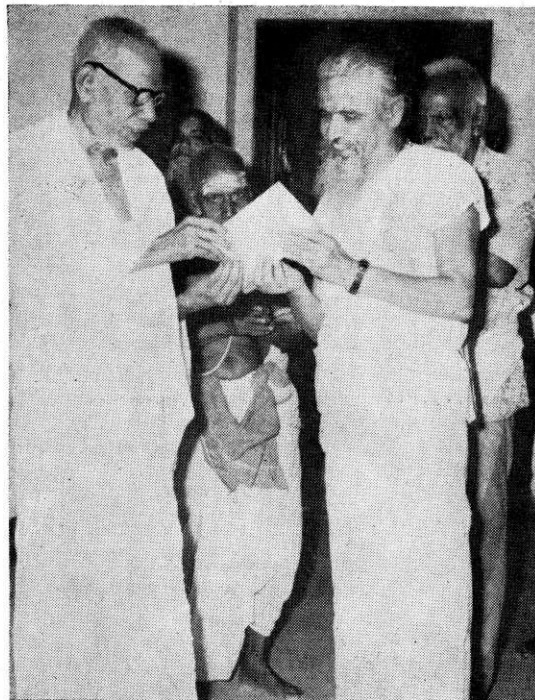
"In 1972, a staunch devotee from America, Mrs. Barbara Rose drew my attention to the fact that, that year was the golden jubilee year for Sri Ramanas-

ramam as it was founded in 1922. She conveyed her deepest *pranams* to Sri Ramaswami Pillai and Sri Kunju Swami 'who are there now and who were there then' (viz., at Skandashram)," thus V. Ganesan began his tribute to Sri Kunju Swami, and continued: "these two gems of devotees are happily seated amidst us here new!" He paid glowing tributes to the childlike nature, availability and electronic memory of Sri Kunju Swami in narrating incidents that took place around Sri Bhagavan. "Though quite aged, Sri Kunju Swami" he added, "is ever willing to help any young devotee even by taking them round, himself showing them Skandashram, Virupaksha Cave, etc. His knowledge of scriptural lore, particularly in Tamil, is remarkable."

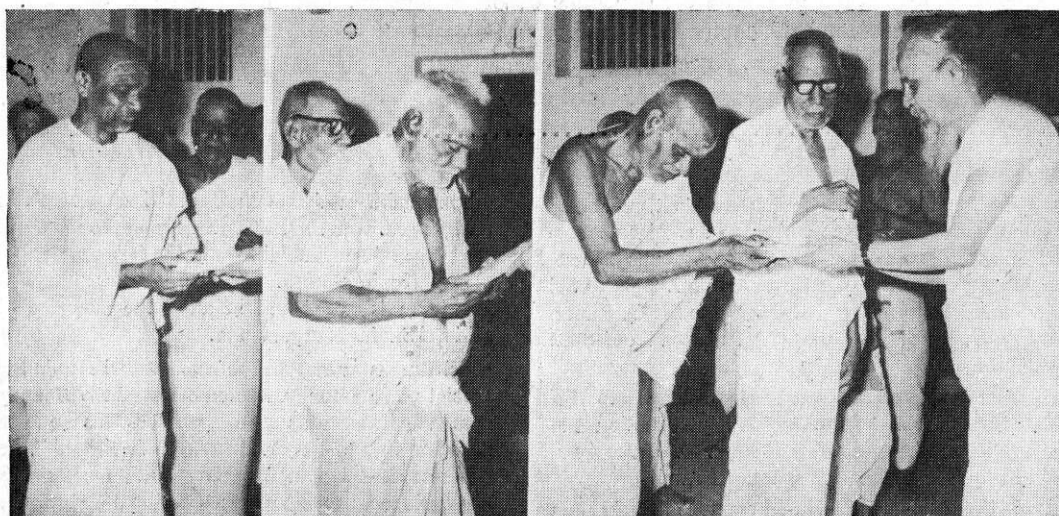
Sri Sadhu Om, who spoke next, paid handsome tribute to Swami, stating that long back he had himself taken notes of his utterances with a view to compile them into a book. He added that by bringing out this notable book, the Ashram has rendered a yeoman service to spiritual seekers.

Sri Kunju Swami, although refusing to speak on the occasion more due to humility than from reluctance, however, later wrote in a piece of paper that his silence was the best way of conveying his gratitude to the Ashram and to the reputed speakers. A fitting example of a disciple to the Master, who was and is the personification of Eternal Silence!

We are happy to announce that this book: "*Yenadu Ninaivugal*" by Sri Kunju Swami in Tamil, is being translated into English by Dr. K. Subrahmanian, member of the Editorial Board of *The Mountain Path*.



Sri Sadhu Natanananda and Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, admiring Sri Kunju Swami's book after releasing it.



RELEASE OF SRI KUNJU SWAMI'S BOOK: (l to r) Sri Sadhu Om, Sri G. Ramaswami Pillai and Sri Kunju Swami receiving the book from Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President (in between Sri Kunju Swami and the President stands Sri Sadhu Natanananda).

'RAMANA VANI' KANNADA L.P. RELEASED AT BANGALORE

The Chief Minister of Karnataka, SRI GUNDU RAO, released the 'Ramana Vani', a Long Playing Record in Kannada, containing the compositions of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and on Him, rendered by the *Ramananjali* group led by Smt. SULOCHANA NATARAJAN at an impressive function held on September 14, at Bangalore.

Sri Gundu Rao referred to the Maharshi as the *Kamadhenu of Peace* giving *santhi* to all genuine seekers of truth. He said that the Maharshi was a *Jivanmukta* who was not only a *Jnani*, but also an inspired poet. The Maharshi had taught by his life that there is no conflict between *Jnana* and *Karma*, between Wisdom and Work, and his teachings were of great contemporary relevance. He complimented the *Ramananjali* group for the pleasing and melodious rendering of the compositions recorded in the *Ramana Vani* which he was releasing.

The Finance Minister, SRI VEERAPPA MOILY, who presided, said that the spiritual ministrations of the Maharshi was comparable to that of Gautama Buddha in so far as he was accessible to all for a span of 50 years after Realization. He complimented the *Ramananjali* group for spreading the Message of Sri Ramana not only in India but also abroad, through heart-warming 'Ramana Music'.

Earlier, welcoming the Chief Guest and invitees, SRI A. R. NATARAJAN, President, *Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning*, Bangalore, said that for the public the Maharshi's *Upadesa Saram* would be as invaluable as the Kautilya's *Artha Sastra* since it gives them the necessary equimindedness and equipoise to deal with the conflicting demands of present-day society. He thanked the Chief Minister, and the Finance Minister, Government of Karnataka, for having readily agreed to allot a suitable land to the Centre.

SRI S. KRISHNASWAMY, Secretary of the Centre, proposed a vote of thanks.

One of the highlights of the programme was an half-an-hour music programme by the *Ramananjali* group, led by Smt. SULOCHANA NATARAJAN, which rendered Kannada songs from *Ramana Vani* and also in other languages to the delight of the audience.



SRI GUNDU RAO, Chief Minister of Karnataka, paying homage to Sri Bhagavan. Seated to his left is SRI VEERAPPA MOILY, the Finance Minister. To the right of him is SRI A. R. NATARAJAN.



A section of the audience seen absorbed in Ramana-smarana.



The Ramananjali group of singers, led by Smt. SULOCHANA NATARAJAN rendering 'Ramana Music'.

**'RAMANA MUSIC'
AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA,
BANGALORE.**

The Vivekananda Centenary Auditorium, at Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, was not only packed to its capacity, but overflowing, on the occasion of the special programme of 'RAMANA MUSIC' by the *Ramananjali* group on September, 25.

Smt. SULOCHANA NATARAJAN'S deep devotional fervour, Sri. H. K. NARAYANA'S fine voice, and the enthusiasm and skill of the core singers, Sri KESHAVA KUMAR, KUMARI SARADA and KUMARI AMBIKA made this performance a memorable one. The group-singers and the instrumentalists also gave a big hand in adding to the enchanting quality of the music. It was as if *Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*, had inspired the group to give its best.

The Centenary Committee is thankful to Sri SWAMI ADIDEVANANDA, the ever-active President of *Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama*, Bangalore for having kindly invited the *Ramananjali* group to give this performance and for the encouragement given to them. The Committee also wishes to thank Swami Somanathananda, Swami Srinathananda, Swami Chidananda, and Swami Purushothamananda, who added greatly to the atmosphere by their presence throughout the performance.

RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS

In addition to conducting Sat Sanghs on all Sundays at Ramana Kendra, (11, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer Road, Madras-600 018), puja on *Punarvasu* days are also performed regularly to the large portrait of Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje gave a series of talks on Sri Bhagavan. Her reminiscences of the Master were scintillating and elevating. Devotees attended in large numbers to listen to her emotional speeches.

Sri S. Sankaranarayanan is giving discourses on 'Sri Ramana Gita'. The Kendra has drawn up an elaborate programme to celebrate Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary from 2nd to 5th October, 1980. There will be speeches by eminent scholars, musical concerts and bhajans. The venue is:

The Asthika Samajam Hall,
Venus Colony,
Alwarpet, MADRAS-600 018.

Devotees are requested to attend and thereby benefit from this important function.

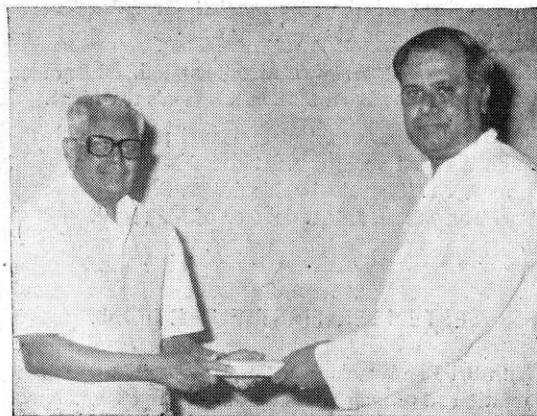
**VIJNANA RAMANEEYA ASHRAM,
PALGHAT**

The annual poor-feeding *yajna* was conducted at Vijnana Ramaneeya Ashram, Koppam, Palghat, under the auspices of the Ramana Kendra, Palghat. The *yajna* lasted for the whole month of Kartika, which is a period of scarcity for the poor. Nearly 6,000 poor people were given mid-day meal. The *yajna* came to a close on August 16.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Sri Sadhu Om's Tamil book "Paramartha Deepam" (*Guruvachaka Kovai-Urai*), was released formally by Shri R. Venkataraman, Union Finance Minister, at a simple but impressive ceremony on July, 13. The book is a commentary on the late Poet Muruganar's compilation in verse of Guru Ramana's sayings and forms a valuable addition to the philosophical literature in Tamil. Ramana Kendra, New Delhi is very much indebted to Sri Sadhu Om and the Government of India, Department of Education for their assistance in the publication of this book.

2. On August 31, *Aruna Vijaya Day* (Anniversary of Sri Ramana's coming to Tiruvannamalai) was celebrated. It was also the anniversary of the inauguration of *Ramanachala*, the Delhi Kendra's building. To mark the occasion, a number of poor and deserving school children were given gifts of study material. Smt. Prabhavati Bhagwati, the Chief guest, gave away the gifts.



Sri R. VENKATARAMAN, Union Finance Minister, releases *Guru Vachakakovai-Urai* and Sri S. RAMAKRISHNAN receives the first copy

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON SRI BHAGAVAN IN NEW DELHI

We reported in our issue of April, 1980, p. 117, the grand way in which an International Seminar on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings, was held for three days in Bangalore.

Now, we are happy to announce that the Second International Seminar on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings will be held on the 8th, 9th and 10th November, 1980 at Vignan Bhavan, New Delhi. Reputed scholars and eminent speakers belonging to all climes, classes and religions are taking part in it.

There will be Cultural Programmes on all the three evenings, notable among them being the 'Ramana Music' by the 'Ramananjali' group, led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan.

Devotees who want to participate in this Seminar as 'Delegates' may please send a token fee of Rs. 15/- per person, together with their full addresses and register their names with:

The President,
Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary Celebrations
Committee,
SRI RAMANASRAMAM,
Tiruvannamalai-606 603,
South India.

Or, at the respective 'Ramana Kendra' centres.¹

Accommodation and food at Delhi will be arranged by and under the auspices of the Ramana Kendra, Delhi.

Delegates should register their names at the respective centres before October 15th, so as to facilitate organisers make necessary arrangements.

Devotees are requested not to miss this unique opportunity!

¹ *Ramana Kendra*, No. 8, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, NEW DELHI-110 003.

Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 40/41, First Floor, Second Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, BANGALORE-560 003.

Ramana Maharshi Centre, 10/155, Adarsh Nagar, Nariman Road, Worli, BOMBAY-400 025.

Ramana Kendra, 11, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer Road, MADRAS-600 018.

Ramana Kendra, C-2, Government Flats, Near Gujarat College, AHMEDABAD-380 006.

Ramana Kendra, 16, Jatindas Road, CALCUTTA-700 029.

Ramana Kendra, C/o, Sri B. A. Mande, Opp.: Patwardhan High School, Sitabuldi, NAGPUR-440 012.

Ramana Kendra, 57, Athithotta Agraharam, NELLORE-524 001.

3. On July 27, Sri A. R. Natarajan recounted the thrilling story of the *Ramananjali* Group's visit to Europe, U.S.A. and Canada.

4. On August 17, Shri Ananthaswami, of Ramana Kendra, Madras gave a talk on Ramana's teachings.

5. Shri Tribhuvan Shankar Tiwari presented to the Kendra a Hindi verse translation of Maharshi's work, "Who Am I?" made by his father, Shri Ram Sevak Tiwari who was an ardent devotee of Maharshi.

* * *

SEPTEMBER FIRST FUNCTION

With Sri Bhagavan's ever-flowing Grace, the annual celebration at *Arunachala Ashrama*, Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, Canada, on September 1, in honour of Sri Bhagavan's *Advent* at Arunachala drew many enthusiastic devotees. Over a hundred devotees, most of whom travelled from far, filled the Temple — *Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram* — with chantings, *bhajans* and talks on Sri Bhagavan, with great devotion.

Sri Yashwant Rai kindly agreed to act as master of ceremonies. The programme began with *Gayiy Ganapati*. Miss Darlene Delisi welcomed the guests and read the cable of good wishes received from Sri Ramanasramam. Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagwata sang a Hindi poem from *Petition to Rama* and Dennis Hartel read its English translation.

Miss Doris Williamson then spoke about life at Sri Ramanasramam and the mystery of Arunachala. She also said that the first time she walked into the Temple she was greeted with the same powerful Presence of Sri Bhagavan. Singing of the Lord's Name, sweetly led by Smt. Hajela, continued. Sri Robin Lagemann held all spellbound with a reading of *Sri Arunachala Mahatmya* from *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*.

The *bhajans* and talks continued to be sung or led by many people too numerous to mention specifically, but forming a giant wave of praise to the Lord of All. After *aarti*, *prasad* was served. Even afterwards, singing music and prayers resounded from *Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram*, filling everyone's heart.



The Shrine at 'Arunachala Ramana Mandiram' in Bridgetown, Canada. In addition to pictures of Arunachala and Ramana, SRI CHAKRA, sent from the Ashram, is seen at the bottom.

வெளிவந்து விட்டது!

ஸ்ரீ குஞ்சு சுவாமிகள்
பகவான் ஸ்ரீ ரமண மஹரிஷிகள் அவர்களையே
குறித்து எழுதிய

“எனது நினைவுகள்”

“இவ்வரிய அனுபூதிநூல் ஸ்ரீ பகவானது அருள் வாழ்க்கையை
விளக்கும் ஸ்ரீ ரமண காவியமாகும்”. —ஸ்ரீ சாது நடனனந்தர்

பக்கங்கள் 378

விலை: ரூ. 10-50 (தபால் செலவு தனி)

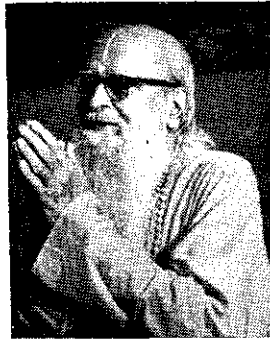
ஸ்ரீ ரமணஸ்ரமம் புக் டெப்போ

ஸ்ரீ ரமணஸ்ரமம் P.O. திருவண்ணாமலை - 606 603.

OBITUARY

SRI DILIP KUMAR ROY

Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, reverentially addressed as *Dadaji*, by his disciples and whose devotion to Sri Bhagavan is well-known among devotees, passed away peacefully on January 6, 1980. Influenced by the spiritual emanance of Sri Aurobindo, Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Bhagavan he was a *bhakta* of the highest order. He always remained devoted to Sri Bhagavan and has written many an inspired verse on Sri Bhagavan's Grace and Blessings.



Sri Dilip Kumar Roy

Sri Dadaji was drawn to Sri Bhagavan, in whose presence and teachings he found great strength and joy. On one occasion Sri Dadaji asked Sri Bhagavan if it was true that he only advocated *Jnana* and disparaged *Bhakti*. Bhagavan replied, “*Bhakti* is *Jnanamata* (the mother of *Jnana*)!” He recorded his feeling after hearing this: “When I heard this I was thrilled and understood at once why I had felt in him not merely a great guru, come with his kindly light to lead us back home, but a human friend and divine helper rolled into one.”

A true *bhakta*, poet/visionary and teacher to many in Hari Krishna Mandir, an Ashram started by him, he has left behind scores of devotional poems written in the ecstasy of his love for the Divine. Thus he shall live on in these inspired outpourings, enveloping others in the Divine fervour which he was immersed and was dissolved into.

His last poem written in Bengali on 23rd November, echoes his life-long quest, giving an indication of what was to come, it was called ‘The Last Prayer’. His chosen disciple, *Mother Indira Devi*, as a labour of love translated the following poem into English:

Not this way, Lord! nor that way, now
Your way alone, Love! I shall walk.
Not these words, Lord! nor those words, now
Of you alone, Love! I shall talk.
Come, clasp my hand, I call to you
“Light of my life, lead on, lead on
I ask for naught, I give my all
My heart's aflame, all shadows gone.”

In Sri Dadaji's passing away spiritual aspirants all the world over have lost a friend, philosopher and guide.

May his soul rest in Peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

SRI G. C. SAWARA

Ramana Kendra, Delhi has suffered a great loss in the passing away of Shri G. C. Sawara, who was a long-standing devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi and a Life Member of the Delhi Kendra.



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