

The Mountain Path

ARADHANA ISSUE
1992



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

"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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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

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



EDITORIAL:

NOT THERE, IT'S HERE!

WHY DO we go to listen to someone? Why do we read books? Is it because of the hope that the speaker or writer will convey something new to us? Novelty is a trap!

"*Navo navo bhavati*", say the Vedas of Reality, "It is new, ever new". Maharshi, while extolling this statement, pointed out that the conception of 'new' presumes the concept of 'old'. Thus, Maharshi explained that *navo-navo* means "fresh, ever fresh". Reality is always fresh, like a rose in bloom. Freshness is the essence of Reality. "Behold I make all things new", says the biblical God.

Sri Bhagavan says the Supreme Sage is ever-born and daily renewed. Association (*Satsang*) with such beings helps us not to acquire something new but to rediscover this eternal freshness. This is the importance and liveliness of *satsang*. We visit saints, not necessarily for new teachings. In their presence, we feel this freshness, we perceive the living embodiments of the saying, "*Navo navo bhavati*".

Every saint and (why not?) each one of us lives this life of freshness. Only, we are not aware of it. When one lives life in the freshness of every moment, this is the spiritual life. Not following a technique or a pattern, not stopping or arriving at a conclusion; endless, conscious, moment-to-moment living.

The one striking quality one observes in saints and sages is that they are always fresh. One may go to them with a problem and when one leaves them the problem may or may not have been solved. But

one leaves inspired with a sense of renewal and freshness.

"Ye are the light of the world," says Jesus. He also says: "Be a light unto yourselves". One is told that 'light', which means radiance, also means 'not heavy'. So, be light and be a light. Comparisons and contrasts, agreements and contradictions, all heat and no light? Is this the *Vidya* or Knowledge which leads to *Vimukti* or Freedom?

Bhagavan Ramana says: "Know that in the minds of the learned there are not one but many families consisting of books and these form obstacles to their spiritual progress." To a close disciple who wanted to leave the Ashram, acquire Vedantic learning and return, He said: "There is no end to this; but if you abide in your Self, the answer to any question will rebound like an echo from within your heart."

Abide in the Self. Be yourself. To be oneself is to know oneself.

Bhagavan Ramana repeatedly asks us to cast away, sweep away rather than add, acquire and accumulate. Not to become anybody but to BE yourself. He is indeed the Supreme Prophet of Being.

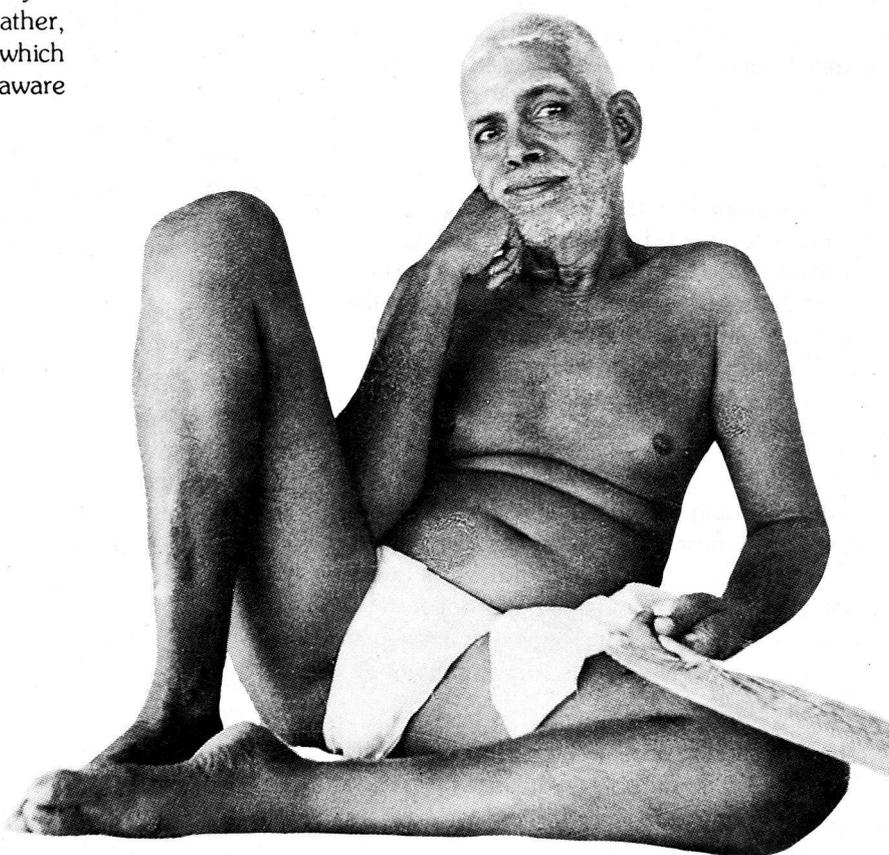
So to be oneself is to be ever fresh, to be ever reborn. To be still in the repose of one's heart is the acme of creativity. Sri Maharshi says: "Don't make any effort to give up imperfections or unreality. If you affirm the positive, the negatives will drop off by themselves."

What is the negative? Maharshi, in another place, said, "If there is no God within you, be

assured, there is no God outside you. If there is no Truth within you, there is no Truth outside you." That is, the negative is your concept of the truth as outside you. The truth that is within you, nobody can take away from you. That is the positive. We are always dealing with names and forms, and from accumulated knowledge the mind projects a concept of truth. As Maharshi said, "Names and forms are like the film projected on a white screen." You are the white screen. You are not a concept. This editorial that you are reading is immaterial. What is an editorial? The living principle, the one who is reading it, is the Truth.

Look at Maharshi's final statement before dropping the body. "They're all saying that I am going away. Where can I go? I am here." It is difficult for us to understand because we are accustomed to concepts. It is also very simple. Nisargadatta Maharaj was in such a state. Now I know one or two saints with whom I talk and also take my friends to. They are in that state. They put you into that state too! Or rather, they only remove the veil which prevents us from being aware of the truth. As Maharshi said, "There is no realisation of something. There is only the unrealisation of you are not That."

Somebody asked Maharshi, "Is it not hypnotism that you are talking about?" He laughed and replied, 'You are already hypnotised that you are the body, that you must make an effort to reach somewhere. By all this you have already hypnotised yourself. What I am telling you is to de-hypnotise yourself from all these concepts.'



Are we prepared to de-hypnotise ourselves? Somebody remarked, looking at Maharshi seated on a comfortable couch, stretching Himself on it with ease, "Nothing is difficult for you! You are so comfortably seated there, and enjoying your life!" Maharshi smiled and said, "Come on, sit down for a few minutes, without any thought, without any movement." Not even for a few seconds could the devotee do so!

We make so much effort to improve, to change our lives, to live happily. Have we paid any attention to life itself. Maharshi said, "Just pay a little attention to that living principle, life, the principle of life." Pay a little attention to that which sees all. Instead of paying attention to what is being done, pay attention to the doer. Instead of emphasising what you see, what you hear, shift your emphasis to the seer, the hearer. "The kingdom of heaven is within you."

We are prepared to accept the theses of scientists. Are we prepared to accept the statements of sages who are verily the supreme masters of the Science of Reality? Of course, they do not want us to accept their teaching without any question. Instead, they give us a number of questions to ask ourselves: "Are you watchful when you talk? Do you know? You are just using words. Do you mean anything except only involving yourself totally in words?"

We gather words, words which yield merely a verbal clarity. Maharshi portrayed this predicament with a telling illustration. A thief, to catch a thief, turns himself into a policeman to catch the thief who is himself. Will the mind pave the way for its own destruction?

Paul Brunton asked Maharshi, "Maharshi, you are in a jungle ashram. It is alright. There are no problems here, no crowds, nothing. But I have to go back to London, the thick of London, the thick of New York. What can I do?" Maharshi smiled and replied, "Who says this? That the jungle Ashram is free from problems, and the thick of London or the thick of New York is full of problems, who says?" It's Brunton's mind. So where is the problem?

Though the first glimpse of Maharshi put Brunton into that state of no-thought, his mind returned in

full force. He was saying, "I have to work. How can I work if I practise this?" Maharshi said, "There is no contradiction between work and wisdom."

Who works? Who meditates? It is myself. I am working, I am meditating, I am in that state. Remove work, meditation, contemplation, and what remains? I AM. Why pay so much attention to work, meditation, and so on? Why not abide as I AM? Simply be *aware*.

A great master is not one who struggles with his disciples all his life and then gives them up as bad jobs. Sadguru Ramana let people 'Be'. Still and silent like Arunachala. His few jewelled words only enriching His silence, He taught us by living the Truth. Today we see that many of His devotees, both old and new, are effortlessly aware.

Someone asked Maharshi, "If we remain in that state, how can we attend to worldly activity?" Maharshi replied, "With an imperfect, diluted mind, you claim to have accomplished so much. But that very mind gets its light from the Self only. Just as all living beings get energy from the sun, this thinking process gets its energy from the Self. If borrowed glory can achieve so much, is it difficult to conceive that with the Source Energy you would be better equipped?"

Yes, even the most brilliant scientific discoveries are only borrowed glory! The mind is like the moon shining with the light from the sun. I AM is the sun itself.

Maharshi said, "Whatever draws the mind outward is unspiritual and whatever draws the mind inward is spiritual." That which we acquire, or long to acquire, will also have to be given up. Remain light, simple, straightforward, honest. Sages come and live in our midst. They live such pure, perfect, ever-fresh, ever-fragrant lives.

Let us learn from them.

Let us enquire.

Let us inquire within "here".

Not out there, but in here!



Sri Ramanasramam

LIVING WATER: Impressions of Sri Ramanasramam

By OM

(Translated from the Russian by Nadhia Sutara)

I

In Russia tales are told
Of a certain living water that revives the dead:
Sprinkle some, and dismembered limbs rejoin,
The breath revives, and again the hero lives
And radiates the bloom of life.
This living water vanquishes dread death.

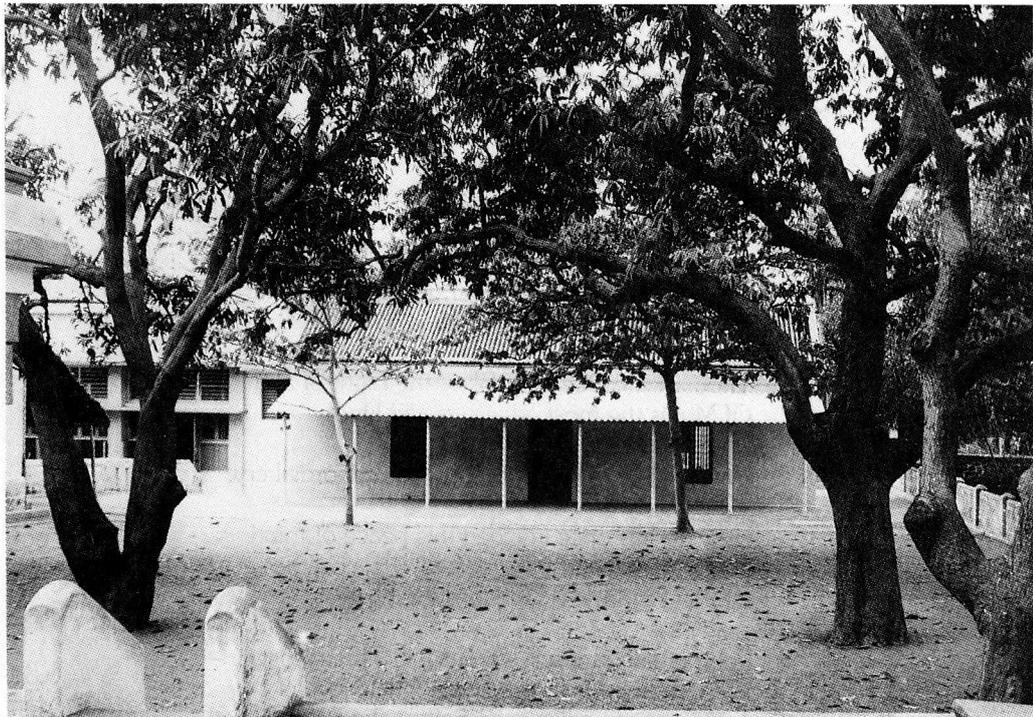
Sri Ramanasramam is for me
The Source of Living Water:
Here *avidya* is dissolved
In the stream of Silence issuing so forcefully
From Arunachala towering over it.

No wonder!
 Since here it was that Siva manifested
 As the Unmoving, Illimitable One — Arunachala.
 Giripradakshina of It is miraculous:
 You forget yourself, your past, your home,
 When, with steady gaze and mind
 Full concentrated in the Heart,
 You abandon yourself completely
 To the Power of the Self — Arunachala.

Sri Ramana's samadhi and Old Hall are magic:
 From out them wells the Silent Teaching,
 The mind is automatically directed to its Source,
 The question "Who am I?" resounds
 Like a sword that cuts through thoughts,
 And the sadhaka perceives himself as witness
 Of all efforts and activities:
 In the centre of his being is unveiled Eternity —
 The inexhaustible spring of Living Water.

II

*I salute thee, O deserted little nook,
 Refuge of tranquility, creativity, inspiration!*
 — A.S. Pushkin



Sri Bhagavan's Old Hall

I salute Thee, O Ashram of Being
 Refuge of Tranquility, Creativity, Inspiration!
 Whose Light pours out as the ever-joyous I,
 Knowing neither grief nor agitation?

Who is this subtle Light? And who is it who drinks it?
 This rapturous nectar of invisible Bliss.
 The answer does not come. Here all is One,
 And the One reigns over all — Brahman, the Absolute.

Who performs the pujas, melodious, mysterious?
 And whom do they invoke, and whom thus worship?
 And who is it who reverently tastes prasada,
 The sign of Love, in voiceless veneration?

The answer does not come. The pujari, it is I —
 Radiating in the stream of incense and of warmth;
 And God is also I, and bhakta too is I:
 I shines as I, and there is no other Temple.

What practice will uncover Thee for us?
 Who is the sadhak here, in the rays of eternal rapture?
 Who is the Guru? ... Silence ... All is only "I am I" —
 The endless Breath of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

I salute my Self: "O Ashram of Being,
 Refuge of Tranquility, Creativity, Inspiration" ...
 Everywhere is only Thou, like a song eternal: "I am I".
 And these are all its words when in the Heart
 all doubts are quelled.

III

Guru's Grace is the Milk,
 And as the infant seeks its mother's breast
 Unconsciously in its hunger unrelenting,
 So the sadhak thirsts for Peace, O Lord.

Thou art the Ocean of Bliss, the Light of all!
 Of Munis the most generous and kind!
 Sri Ramana! ... Silence ...
 Unwearying call to Stillness, His primordial cry.

He who has once imbibed this peace of mind
 Has already been transformed — he catches every ray
 Of that Lightness, Freedom, Being

Let me bathe myself, O Guru, in Thine Answer —
 Living Water — so that untiringly I strive
 To realise my Self — the Self — the Self of All.

THE PATH TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

By Ing Jiri Vacek

THE Path to Self-knowledge requires the withdrawal of our attention from all objects -- the world, our body, our mind with its thoughts, images, feelings -- and fixing it on the witness of all objects, the Self, and realising the Self to be all there is. This is not a creative process, but rather the recollection of our true nature. The Self is there all the time, but we are not aware of it. Instead, we limit it to the body or mind, thus creating the illusion of the ego with its attendant superimpositions. When, with practice and grace, we break free of this illusion, the Self shines resplendent and unimpeded as Pure Consciousness, and we know ourselves as we really are.

There is only one consciousness, and that is the Self. It is only the mind that limits it to the body and calls it individual consciousness. Consciousness limited to the mind and body and identified with them is the ego; consciousness detached from and unidentifed with the mind and body is the Self, and permanent establishment in this state is called Realisation or Liberation. When this pure Consciousness is experienced in all forms, within and without, subtle and gross, it is called *sahaja samadhi*, the natural state of our being.

Consciousness combined with dream, we call dream-consciousness; consciousness of the material world, we call waking-consciousness. The mind

disappears entirely in *samadhi*, but when it revives again, it calls the same consciousness experienced in *samadhi*, *Atman* or *Brahman*. But this is all only one and the same consciousness -- the Self, *Atman*, *Brahman*, God -- the unchanging witness of all states.

It is the mind which creates the continuous flow of changes in manifestation and veils the one consciousness by its creations, and then says that there are different consciousnesses: ego, God, *Brahman*, empirical and so on. But consciousness itself never says, "I belong to this body or brain", "I am *Brahman* or *Atman*", nor "I am the waking consciousness". These are statements of the mind, and until we realise this truth we can never be free.

Preparation

The first and most indispensable requisite in the quest for the Self is the ability to control the mind. This means that we must be able, at will, to concentrate our mind on a deliberately chosen object or keep it in a state of quiescence without any movement or thoughts. There is no magic in this. Every type of learning requires mental concentration; we cannot learn so much as a nursery rhyme without a certain degree of concentration. Since every process of learning is a process of concentration, the more we concentrate, the better and

sooner we will learn. It is therefore perfectly natural that in order to learn how to experience the Self we must learn how to concentrate properly.

The second requisite for the realisation of the Self is an intelligent approach to our quest. We must fully understand that we are not creating anything new, but only discovering the basic principle of our own being. We are seeking ourselves — the Subject — and not any thing or object outside us. For the Subject, there is no within or without.

Further, we must understand that we are *THAT* even now, at this very moment. We must fully accept this truth even if we do not experience it yet. Ultimate success presupposes right understanding: that the body, mind, reason are not our Self. Nevertheless, this intellectual conviction, which is essential to begin with, must not be confused with the real experience of the Self. Ultimately all thoughts, ideas, notions will have to be given up so that the experience of the Self may shine unimpeded by the prism of our mind.

The third component of our quest, though not indispensable, is nonetheless extremely helpful: it is to love the Self. Man loves so many things, but to love his own Self, rather than his body and possessions, is surprisingly difficult for him. Love is the power of attraction that joins us to the object of its longing. We know from experience that everything done for love is easy and agreeable, while actions initiated from reason are, more often than not, tedious and difficult. So also, our quest will be easier if we approach our Self with sincere love, for we shall be protected on our path from many confusions and mistakes that spring from mere reliance on the intellect. Nevertheless, if we do not initially feel love for the Self, there is no cause for worry. In the course of our sincere quest, this love will arise automatically.

It is not our purpose here to discuss the various methods for controlling the mind. Let it be said that all of them are only the means and not the goal of our quest.

It is everyone's experience that it is easier to learn something in a quiet atmosphere, in the solitude of a separate room, for instance, than in the havoc of the marketplace. For the same reason it is helpful in the beginning to pursue our quest in quiet

solitude. It follows that it is useful to avoid and, if possible, exclude anything that might disturb us. Our task is difficult enough without adding unnecessary hindrances. On the contrary, we should make use of anything that can help us in our quest: a comfortable *asana*, proper food, regularity in practice, solitude. The more of such aids we utilise, the easier our start will be.

There are three degrees of practice on our path:

1. Seeking the Self,
2. Concentration on the Self,
3. Abiding as the Self.

First Stage: Seeking the Self

"Anything of which we are unaware does not exist for us."

In this stage we have not yet experienced the Self, and we do not know what it is. To be aware or conscious of something means to turn our attention towards it. From birth we are taught to place all our importance — and that is equivalent to attention — on the not-Self, on objects, be they internal or external, physical or mental, active or passive, but never on the *Subject*, who is the witness of all these objects. The result of this continuous flow of outward-going attention is our oblivion of the existence of the witness of all these objects, the Self, quite in accordance with the above-quoted psychological law.

A few examples will make this more clear. My friend may stand in front of me, but if I am deeply engrossed in some problem I will not notice him in spite of my eyes being open and his standing before me. This is due to the fact that my full attention is fixed on solving my problem.

Another example: I have a toothache and suffer great pain. A friend comes along and starts an interesting conversation during which I totally forget the pain and laugh happily with him. As soon as he departs, the pain is there again. In fact, it was there all the time, but during the visit I was not aware of it — did not *realise* it — because all of my attention was concentrated on the conversation with my friend.

It is the same in the case of the Self. It is always there, but due to our lack of attention we are totally

unaware of it. And it is this habit of *inattentiveness* that is the reason why it is so difficult for us to become aware of it. We have spent our entire life falsely identifying with our body, senses, mind, reason, etc., so that this habit now, even in our quest, intrudes itself, and we find ourselves seeking the Self outside us, as some sort of object of consciousness.

Paradoxically, there is nothing to be sought. There is no real quest for the Self. No mind activity or reasoning can bring us realisation. Rather, we must turn our attention back to its source and, by becoming aware of the pure consciousness at our centre and experiencing it, realise ourselves as that pure consciousness. The question "*Who am I?*" does not indicate the quest for any object, but directs us towards the clear recognition that "I am That which is aware not only of itself, but of all objects external and internal, and even the void in the mind." This understanding will not come as an intellectual answer to the question (i.e., as a thought), but rather as a living experience of our inherent being.

The process can take place in this way: we succeed in stilling the mind and recognise a void within. We now shift our attention from this void to the consciousness that experiences this void — and this is the long-sought Self.

Another modification of this method is to ask ourselves "*Who am I?*". When one holds on to the question with full vigilance, without trying to find a mental answer to the question, the "I" disappears, the mind becomes quiet, and that which remains — pure consciousness or awareness of our being — is the Self.

It is the mind that prevents both the perception of this reality and the experiencing of the Self. The quest "*Who am I?*" ends in the experience "I am that I am". This requires tremendous courage. The mind is not disposed to believe in this truth because our preconceived ideas foster very concrete notions about who and what we really are, and who and what God/the Self really is. By creating this sense of fundamental separation between ourselves and the Supreme, the mind plays the thief, mentioned by King Janaka, who had been robbing him all these years. The mind must ultimately be put aside in order for the reality of the Self to be experienced.

Silent Oration

By Kavita Erica Byrd

Every flower, every tree
Every passing glance I meet
Caresses my senses
And this caress
Is me

No word is spoken
That has not passed
Through a thousand voices
And none; the song that sings
My body
Is borne on the wings
Of every bird
In existence,
And flying beyond
Existence itself
Has never been born
Nor dies —

Melting my eyes
Into the seen,
Seeing dissolves
In the unseen —

Eye
That sees through all —

And I
Am That,
All-being....

We must, in the end, cast away all notions about the Self — the Subject — the world — the objects — and our relation to them, or they will constitute obstacles on our path.

The Self, the substratum, is so simple that the mind, which is accustomed to the pursuit of the various superimpositions on that substratum, is entirely oblivious of it. One's first experience of the Self will most probably go unrecognized as it often does not tally with our expectations or the descriptions we have heard or read of; for example, that it gives bliss, and so on. This is because at this stage the mind is not yet completely calm so that the experience of the Self, due to imperfect concentration and the presence of residual *vasanas*, is not yet clear.

Second Stage: Concentration on the Self

"As a man thinketh in his mind, so is he."

Even when we realise that this pure consciousness, the witness, is our Self, the ego — that is, the idea "I am the body, mind, etc." — persists. Although we are having experiences of the Self, still the illusion of our separation from it continues. This is due to the fact that the main flow of our attention is still drawn by the outward-going mind. We must become aware of another important psychological law: that we are what we think ourselves to be. Slightly modified, we become that on which we concentrate or think.

One incident illustrates this point well. A rich and famous man of Rome committed suicide after he learned that he had lost one tenth of his assets even though he still had over \$10,000,000 left. He could not imagine living with so little a money. This thought, not any fact, made him a pauper and, unable to bear it, he died.

We must stop experiencing ourselves as the mind and become aware of ourselves as the Self. This is done by shifting the centre of gravity of our attention from the mind to the Self. The preliminary intellectual conviction that we are the Self must be replaced by the living experience of the Self.

In one sentence: we must *be the Self*: In the same way as we formerly believed the mind-body complex to be ourselves, the subject, and the Self to be its object, with continued practice a reversal

takes place in which the Self absorbs all — subject and object — into Itself as Absolute Subject. This shift comes suddenly, and in this state we are the Self quite naturally and spontaneously just as previously we were identified with the mind. Once this experience is pure and sustained, all our doubts are cleared. We are certain that "I am THAT", and nothing can shake us from this certainty.

The purity of our experience depends upon the purity of our mind. To understand this better, let us imagine a man standing in front of a mirror who mistakes his reflection in it for himself. The moment he realises that he is not the reflection but the seer of it corresponds with the change in the feeling of identity with the unreal subject — the mind — to the real one, the Self. When this is reached, we enter the third stage.

Third Stage: Abiding as the Self

The Self-experience comes to us in more or less brief intervals, and its intensity also differs. Our task now is to abide as the Self as long as possible. This means that as soon as we notice that we have slipped from our Self-abidance and become identified with the mind or body, we must again shift our attention Selfwards and merge in the Self. With continuous practice we learn to live in the Self and, whenever we forget and slip into outward identifications, the remembrance brings us immediately back to Self-abidance.

Another approach to the three stages of formal meditation outlined above is from the point of view of the individual and his state of consciousness while actively engaged in the affairs of life.

1. The Stage of the Unconcerned Witness

We perform our duties as well as we can, but from the standpoint of an unconcerned witness, neither desiring the fruits of our actions nor identifying with them. We merely watch without reaction. When we do find ourselves reacting, we maintain the attitude of the detached witness and impartially watch the reactions. We neither judge things as good or bad, nor classify them as pleasant or painful.

This is the logical outcome of the conviction that we are not the body or the mind, and we must learn

to live it. Nothing should move us from the standpoint of the witness. This attitude has two results. It eliminates all attachments and so produces peace of mind, which is necessary for our quest. Also, it enables us to *realise* the unmoved witness, which is, in fact, our Self.

If, in the course of our activities, we lose the attitude of witness, it is easily regained by asking the question: "To whom does all this relate?". The ultimate answer is always: "These things affect not me, the witness, but the body, the mind, etc.". And peace is again restored.

2. The Stage of Self-Awareness

In the stage of the unconcerned witness, more importance is placed on detached witnessing of the world than on being aware of the Self. In this next stage we must strive to maintain our awareness of the Self as witness throughout our daily activities. This is a deepening of the previous stage. It is a normal human condition to become distracted by the environment or submerged in our actions, in both of which cases we lose our Self-awareness. This means that all our attention is fixed on the event, thought, feeling, activity, so that we become oblivious of everything else, not to mention the Self. Through this kind of identification and consequent absorption we inevitably fall under the sway of the pairs of opposites and suffer pleasure and pain as a result. Carried to the extreme we become enslaved by them. We must strive to maintain our Self-awareness from moment to moment. This, of course, requires repeated practice in the beginning; for example, with automatic movements which do not require much attention, such as walking and eating. Gradually we will learn to maintain our "I am"-consciousness even in the most difficult situations or while solving the most complicated intellectual problems. We must strive to become so established in Self-awareness that the moment we find ourselves slipping from it we remember it again immediately and regain our lost equipoise.

3. Abiding as the Self

This stage corresponds to the third stage of formal meditation practice outlined above, but with one exception. In formal meditation we can concentrate exclusively on the Self, but we are not at the same time required to act in the world. But

Shaper Shaped¹

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

In days gone by I used to be
A potter who would feel
His fingers mould the yielding clay
To patterns on his wheel;
But now, through wisdom
lately won,
That pride has died away.
I have ceased to be the potter
And have learned to be the clay.

In other days I used to be
A poet through whose pen
Innumerable songs would come
To win the hearts of men;
But now, through new-got
knowledge
Which I hadn't had so long,
I have ceased to be the poet
And have learned to be the song.

I was a fashioner of swords,
In days that now are gone,
Which on a hundred battle-fields
Glittered and gleamed and shone;
But now that I am brimming with
The silence of the Lord
I have ceased to be a sword-maker
And learned to be the sword.

In by-gone days I used to be
A dreamer who would hurl
On every side an insolence
Of emerald and pearl.
But now that I am kneeling
At the feet of the Supreme
I have ceased to be the dreamer
And have learned to be the dream.

¹ Recited by the author before Sri Bhagavan in 1945, vide *Day by Day with Bhagavan* by A. Devaraja Mudaliar - pp. 9-10 (1989 Edn.)

when we are firmly established in the Self, even amidst the greatest havoc in worldly life we can abide as the Self. Our awareness of the Self does not exclude awareness of the world. The difference is that being now firmly fixed in the Self, no amount of thinking or worldly activity can dim the experience of the Self. Self-abidance is now permanent, whether the mind experiences thoughts or is free from them. We know and experience this consciousness to be the base of our being on which all the phenomena take place, like the screen which is the basis of the cinema-show.

Only in the beginning are the various practices for stilling the mind required, as explained above. Once fixed in the Self, the mind no longer moves with currents of thoughts or emotions, but remains at rest in its source. Thus we attain permanent abidance in the Self, and no activity can deprive us of this. To reach this stage, effort is necessary. We must try to abide in the Self while at the same time performing our actions and duties.

Even permanent abidance in pure Consciousness is not the end of our path. If it is clear it gives us happiness, but there is still the duality of consciousness and the world, which includes our mind, body and environment. Only when the not-Self is known to be not other than the Self, and the Self is permanently seen and experienced everywhere and in all things, can we say that there is nothing more for us to reach. At first we realise that we are not in the world, but that the world is in us: the world, our mind and body, only exist within our consciousness, which is the Self. When this experience is sustained, then the difference between the world and our Self, between the world and our consciousness, vanishes, and all is seen as the Self. The world is perceived normally, but it is no longer seen as separate from the Self.

This is the direct path. We should move firmly towards this goal without clinging to any experience or intellectual conception along the way, as these can be traps placed on our path by the ego to prevent its destruction.

We may experience wonderful and blissful states in which we are totally oblivious of both the world and the body, in which the mind is totally still and we remain as the pure "I am". Or we may remain with all our mental faculties intact, but at the same

The Blaze
By Dr. M.C. Mehrotra

**Like the monkey-god of yore
Entering Lanka in a miniscule form,
Thou entered my mansion
As a small spark
Becoming a blazing conflagration,
Reducing it to ashes.**

time experience ourselves as quite distinctly separate from them in much the same way as a driver perceives his automobile. We may be overwhelmed by supreme love for everybody and everything. But the essential thing in all these experiences is unwavering abidance in the Self. We must not let the mind, with its endless classifications, deceive us. Let it be still, and allow the perfect consciousness of the Self as pure awareness, blissful being, to reign supreme. The final realisation is difficult only so long as we allow our mind to mislead us and draw us from our path through its endless perambulations.

Firmly catch hold of the mind through concentration, perseverance and practice, and fix it on the Self, so that the Self alone will remain and nothing else. In doubt and distress, have firm faith in the Self and the path of enquiry and continue your practices unwaveringly. This will help us where no amount of reasoning can. The Self is not an unintelligent principle but the very essence of all intelligence itself, of which our reason is only a shadow and limited reflection. Be convinced of this and you will never be without guidance, never forsaken on your path. Never rely only on your little human will and strength. You may wait without success until you realise the helplessness of the ego and the omnipotence of the Self. Our personal effort is, of course, necessary, but it is the grace of the Self that grants success.

Now go and practice. This is the way, not barren and endless intellectual reasoning. Only direct experience can help us, not mere intellectual knowledge, which, without practice, is utterly worthless.



The Temple of Guhai Namasivaya on the Holy Hill

GURU NAMASIVAYA

By Eduardo Linder

IN THE *Jayanthi* 1990 issue of *The Mountain Path* there was an article on Guhai Namasivaya, a famous saint who lived at Arunachala several centuries ago. It was mentioned there that in the period of his life when he was living in a cave on the hill he began to attract disciples and teach them. The most eminent and well known of these disciples was a man who later became known as Guru Namasivaya.

There are no details available of the early part of their relationship, for even the most detailed accounts of his life begin at a point where Guru Namasivaya is manifesting *siddhis* and nearing the day of his spiritual liberation. When the story

begins both Namasivayas are living together on the hill. Guhai Namasivaya is lying in his hammock, his favourite resting place, absorbed in the Self. Guru Namasivaya is nearby, doing service to him. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, Guru Namasivaya bursts out laughing.

'Namasivaya,' asked his Guru, 'what wonder did you see that made you laugh?'

The disciple first responded by reminding his Guru of their relationship. 'When I offered my body, my possessions and my soul, you, my Lord, accepted them all, having a wish to take over this slave!' Then he went on to explain what had caused

him such amusement. 'At Tiruvarur [a temple town located a long way from Tiruvannamalai] Tyagaraja Swami [a local deity] was being taken in procession through the streets. Many women dancers, so skilled that they cannot be equalled by *apsaras* [dancers from the heavenly realms], were accompanying it and dancing. One of these women stumbled and fell. All those who were standing there laughed. I too laughed. That is all, there was nothing else.'

This same ability manifested some time later when Guhai Namasivaya noticed that his disciple had just rubbed the cloth he wore around his shoulders in a strange way.

'For what reason did you rub it?' he asked.

His disciple answered, 'The Golden Dancing Hall at Chidambaram was screened with a black screen. The wick of a ghee lamp was burning nearby. A mouse took the burning wick, dragged it along and caused the curtain to catch fire. Those who were present vigorously smothered the burning curtain. Swami, I too rubbed my cloth so that the curtain would not burn any more.'

Guhai Namasivaya knew from these incidents and from his own direct knowledge that his disciple had reached an advanced stage of his *sadhana*, but he also knew that *siddhis* like those just described were no real indication of spiritual progress. He therefore decided to test his disciple's level of devotion. He vomited, caught the vomit in his begging bowl and then ordered his disciple to dispose of it in a place where it would not come into contact with human feet. The disciple's love for his Guru was so great that he took the vomit to be *prasad* and secretly ate it.

Guhai Namasivaya affected not to know what his disciple had done. He later asked him ingenuously, 'Appa Namasivaya, did you leave it in a place where feet could not touch it?'

The disciple bowed his head and confirmed that he had taken it to be *prasad*. 'I have kept it in the place where it ought to be kept,' he answered.

Seeing the powers his disciple was developing, and noting the extent of his devotion, Guhai Namasivaya thought to himself: 'Day by day my disciple's knowledge is increasing. He should not be kept here any more. Let me test him one more time and then I can send him to a place which will be appropriate for him.'

Guhai Namasivaya, an accomplished extempore poet, then composed the first two lines of a *venba* verse and chanted them to his disciple:

The fruiting banyan tree provides fruit for the birds,
The bamboo when it matures is not without its uses...

Then, addressing his disciple, he said, 'Appa Namasivaya, you can complete the remainder of this *venba* for me'.

The disciple immediately realised that he was being tested. He examined the words of his Guru and decided that the banyan tree signified Guhai Namasivaya and that the bamboo was a reference to himself. The fruit of the banyan was therefore the grace of the Guru which was made available to all devotees who came to him. Extending the analogy, the disciple found that the second line contained what were for him, ominous words. It seemed to be saying, 'Since you have attained spiritual maturity, you too can be useful to devotees who seek the grace of the Guru'. Namasivaya was very much attached to the physical form of his Guru and wanted only to stay with him and serve him. The idea of abandoning this simple and satisfying relationship did not appeal to him. However, being a fully-surrendered devotee, he felt no inclination to dispute the words and the decision of his Guru. So, when Guhai Namasivaya asked him to complete the verse he merely replied, 'Swami, the disciple should not bandy words with the Guru. This is not proper conduct for the disciple.'

Guhai Namasivaya gave him the freedom to express his own views by saying, 'Son, since you are knowledge itself, you may speak'.

The disciple then expressed his fear of being sent away by completing the verse in the following way:

My Lord Namasivaya, would you consent to keep company
with one who refrains from performing great and wondrous deeds?

The disciple realised that his display of *siddhis* and his extreme devotion in swallowing the vomit had triggered Guhai Namasivaya's decision. His answer therefore took the form of a simple plea: 'If I stop manifesting *siddhis* and refrain from exag-

gerated acts of devotion, will you permit me to continue staying with you?’

Guhai Namasivaya was delighted with the way that his disciple had handled the test. He climbed down from his hammock and exclaimed, ‘Appa, pupil of my two eyes! Only today did you attain true knowledge! What a wonder! How wonderful! Who will ever get a disciple like you? From today on you may use the title “Guru Namasivayamurti”.’

His pleasure, though, did not cause him to change his decision. Embracing his disciple he continued, ‘Two elephants should not be tied to the same post. This is a *bhoga kshetra* [see the explanation given below]. There is a divine *kshetra* [holy place] called Chidambaram where Ambalanavar, who removes ignorance and grants true knowledge, has graciously manifested. You have to do some renovation and endowment work at that place. So, go and live there.’

Bhoga means enjoyment or pleasure and is generally associated with physical or sensory indulgence. A *kshetra* is a holy place. So, a *bhoga kshetra* can be literally translated as a ‘holy place for the enjoyment of physical pleasure’. Since this is a strange and inappropriate designation for a sacred site such as Arunachala, one should look for alternative translations and explanations.

One possibility is that Guhai Namasivaya is referring to one of the three *avattai*, which are modes of being of the deity:

- 1) *ilayam*, in which only the divine knowledge is manifest.
- 2) *bhogam*, in which knowledge and action are equally balanced.
- 3) *adigaram*, in which action predominates.

If one follows this explanation one can interpret Guhai Namasivaya’s comments to mean that Arunachala is one of the places where Siva became involved with the world, performing *lilas* as well as bestowing grace and liberation, whereas Chidambaram is a *kshetra* where Siva’s energy is concentrated solely on the granting of divine knowledge. This interpretation would not imply that one place is superior to the other; it merely notes that Siva chose to manifest in a different way in Chidambaram. At first glance this explanation

looks plausible, particularly since Guhai Namasivaya specifically contrasts the *bhoga kshetra* of Arunachala with the ‘divine *kshetra*’ of Chidambaram. However, closer scrutiny reveals a major problem: Siva has repeatedly manifested at Chidambaram for the benefit of his devotees there, so that would make it, like Arunachala, a *bhoga kshetra*.

An alternative explanation can be found in *Day by Day with Bhagavan* (6.12.45). Devaraja Mudaliar asked Bhagavan about one of the verses from *Arunachala Mahatmyam* which Bhagavan had translated into Tamil. At the end of the verse Arunachala-Siva, speaking of Himself, says, ‘Know that within me caves shine, surging with many enjoyments [*bhoga*]’. The following explanation ensued:

I asked Bhagavan whether the cave mentioned in it is inside God or inside the mountain (which of course is also said to be God). Bhagavan replied, ‘Of course, in the context, it means the cave is inside the hill and that there in the cave are all enjoyments’. Bhagavan added, ‘The stanza says you are to believe that inside this hill there is a cave and that all enjoyments are to be found there’. I also asked Bhagavan, ‘I have read somewhere that this place is called *bhoga kshetra*. I wonder what is meant thereby?’ Bhagavan replied, ‘Yes it is so. But what does it mean? If thinking of this *kshetra* can itself give *mukti*, what wonder if this place can give all other enjoyments one may desire.’

Going back to the story, it will be remembered that Guhai Namasivaya had instructed his disciple to go and live in Chidambaram. Guru Namasivaya still felt that, if he pleaded his case, he would be allowed to stay. He told his Guru, ‘This slave will remain here, having the Guru’s *darshan*. He will not go to another place but will remain with the feet of the Guru. Moreover, this slave cannot go on living without having daily *darshan* of the Guru.’

Guhai Namasivaya was unmoved. He replied: ‘Go to Chidambaram and have *darshan* of the Golden Dancing Hall [the main shrine in which Lord Nataraja resides]. If the Lord there gives you *darshan* even as I do myself, stay there. If not, come back here.’



Guru Namasivaya seen seated at the feet of
Guhai Namasivaya

The disciple finally accepted defeat. After saying, 'This is good advice,' he composed the following song in praise of his Guru:

O Namasivaya! You destroy the subtle bonds
of birth
through your words and through your
meditations,
through your glance and through your touch,
and through your compassion which gladdens
our hearts!
You attained liberation through [abiding in] the
fourth leg of the chair.

The cryptic last line is an allusion to *turiya*, the fourth state, which transcends and underlies the three other states of waking, dreaming and sleeping.

Guhai Namasivaya, feeling that delay would serve no useful purpose, responded by saying, 'You can start right now'.

Guru Namasivaya began to walk towards Chidambaram and by the time night fell he had covered about ten miles. Desiring a place to rest, he sat down under a tree and spent three hours absorbed in the Self. Then, feeling the pangs of hunger, he composed a *venba* verse which he addressed to Unnamulai, the consort of Siva in the Arunachaleswarar Temple:

You who are dearest to the heart of Lord
Annamalai!
Holy Mother Unnamulai!
Bring forth rice from every household to feed
your servant
Whose every thought is in praise of you!

At the moment when Guru Namasivaya was composing this verse, there was, in the temple, some sweet rice (*sarkarai pongal*) resting on a golden plate. It had been offered to Lord Annamalai as *naivedyam*, or food offering, and the priest who had officiated had inadvertently forgotten to take the plate home with him when he had locked up the temple for the night. When Unnamulai heard Guru Namasivaya's prayer, She took the plate of rice to him and then returned to the temple.

At daybreak the priests opened the temple and looked for the golden plate. After searching fruitlessly for some time the priests and the people of the town became convinced that the plate must have been stolen by a thief, although they could not understand how he had got into and out of the temple. No *pujas* were done for eight hours, for everyone was engaged in a search for the missing plate. At the end of that period, a brahmin boy went into a trance, got possessed by a spirit, and announced, 'Guru Namasivaya is under a banyan tree on his way to Chidambaram. Mother took food for him. The plate is lying there. Go and fetch it.' The plate was duly found there and returned to its rightful place in the temple.

Guru Namasivaya's walk to Chidambaram was filled with many other adventures, but there is insufficient space here to recount them all. Suffice to say he moved from town to town and at each place he stopped he was fed miraculously by a succession of female deities. When he finally had his first sight of the Chidambaram temple, at

Bhuvanagiri, he was so deeply moved he spontaneously composed and sang the following poem:

At the mere sight of these four *gopurams*
 [temple towers]
 all my sins have vanished
 like cotton drifting into a flame!
 What then will be the dessert,
 O Lord of Tillai's Hall,¹
 of those who cast their eyes
 upon the divine redness of your feet,
 girt with tinkling anklets?

On reaching Chidambaram he took a bath in the famous Siva Ganga tank and then walked into the main shrine to have Lord Nataraja's *darshan*. As he gazed at the deity, instead of seeing the usual dancing image, he saw in the inner shrine the form of his beloved Guru, Guhai Namasivaya. This manifestation of grace gave him the understanding that Siva Himself had manifested at Arunachala in the form of his Guru in order to teach him and grant him liberation. These sentiments welled up within him and burst out in the form of a song of praise and gratitude:

Lord of the Golden Hall! King of heaven!
 You who grant to those who praise and worship
 You
 whatever it is they most desire,
 be they spiritual adepts or mere children!
 How it was that You came to dwell on holy
 Annamalai
 in the form of my Guru [Guhai] Namasivaya
 to place Your twin feet upon the head
 of such a wretched devotee as I,
 is something that my understanding cannot
 compass.

One account of his life, written in verse, describes this manifestation of his Guru, Guhai Namasivaya, in the following way:

The Lord whose golden image resides in that
 place
 Appeared to him in the form of a loving
 Sadguru.
 Awakening from a swoon, he pondered deeply
 to himself,

'What ill can befall me if I remain here in this
 place?'

His realisation deepened until it encompassed
 all of creation.²

It will be remembered that Guhai Namasivaya had told Guru Namasivaya that if the latter did not have *darshan* of his, Guhai's, form at Chidambaram, he could return to Arunachala. The manifestation therefore meant that Guru Namasivaya had to stay at Chidambaram and attend to the renovation work that Guhai Namasivaya had given him. This he did with great success for Siva Himself manifested to him and enabled him to repair the temple and create endowment funds for the maintenance of the buildings and the worship of the deity.

During his stay at Chidambaram he composed hundreds of verses, many of which have survived. One of his biographers, writing about this period, noted: 'No poem did he write but it sang the praises of his Guru, and no lesser deity filled his thoughts, only Lord Siva.'³ This is certainly true of his most famous poem, *Annamalai Venba*,⁴ which extolls Siva in the form of Arunachala and repeatedly praises the greatness of his Guru whom he considered to be Arunachala-Siva in human form. Going through the verses, one can easily visualise him sitting in Chidambaram, dutifully carrying out his Guru's orders, but secretly dreaming of Arunachala-Siva, Guhai Namasivaya, his Guru, and the blessed period of his life when he had the constant company of both. The poem is more than a hundred verses long, so it is not possible to include it all here. The following verses, though,⁵ should be enough to convey the reverence, the esteem and the devotion which the author felt for the sacred mountain and its human manifestation, Guhai Namasivaya.

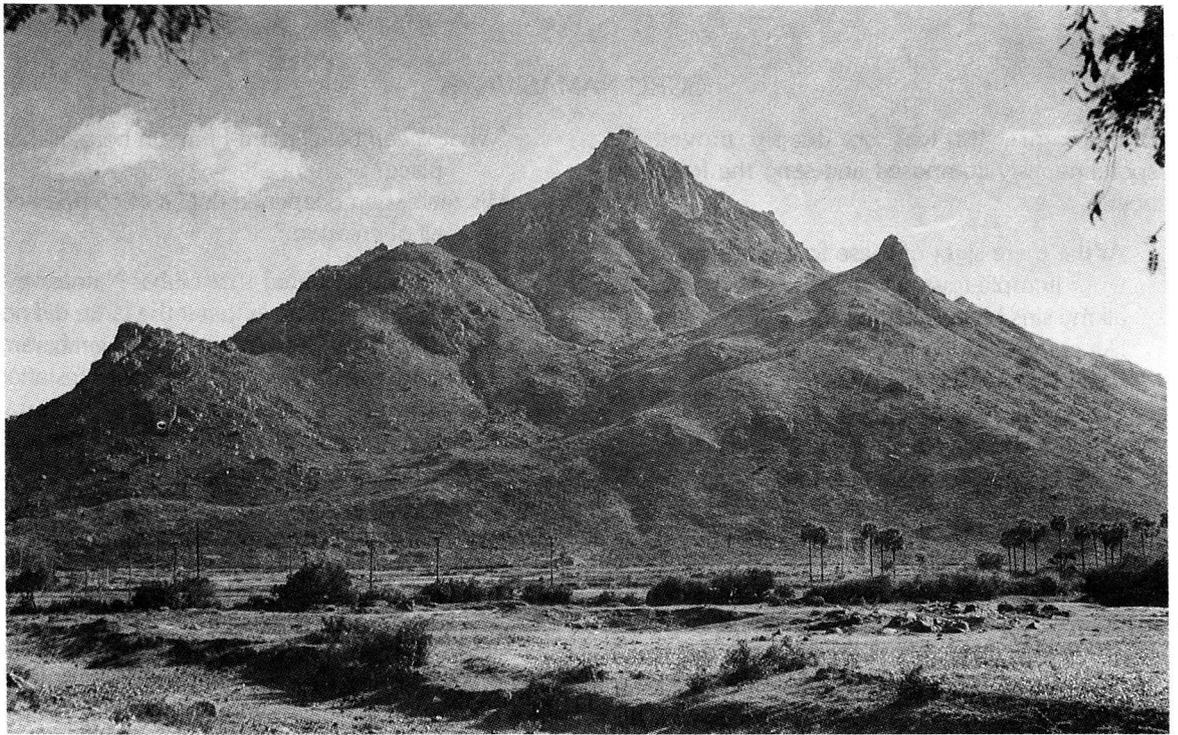
¹ Tillai is an old name for Chidambaram.

² *Pulavar Puranam*, ch.21, v.3. Most of the other facts (if they can be called facts) in this article have been taken from a Tamil prose biography of his life which can be found in *Arunachala Puranam*, 1934 ed., pp. 55-74

³ *Pulavar Puranam*, ch.21, v.2.

⁴ *Annamalai* is one of the many Tamil names for Arunachala. It means 'unreachable or unapproachable mountain'. A *venba* verse is a Tamil metrical form often used by Bhagavan. Each verse has four lines, three the same length and the fourth slightly shorter.

⁵ Taken from an unpublished translation by Robert Butler.



Annamalai Venba⁵

Invocation

You whose feet are luxuriant flowers!
 You, Supreme Lord [Ganesh], who lead the celestial retinue,
 Mounted on the rat!
 Guide me as I, a mere dog at your feet,
 Sing in delicate Tamil *venba*
 A song garland to holy everlasting Annamalai.

1. Mountain, dancer of the primal dance;
 Mountain sought on that day by the Two;
 Mountain adorned with the bright moon and the dancing serpent;
 Mountain where justice flourishes;
 Mountain who summons wise holy men, saying 'Come':
 Annamalai.
5. Blue-throated mountain, three-eyed mountain;
 Mountain impossible for the inhabitants of all the worlds to praise;
 Mountain who manifests to devotees;
 Mountain who dispels the arising births
 Of those who daily worship It:
 Annamalai.

⁵ Taken from an unpublished translation by **Robert Butler**

7. Mountain to whom Guhai Namasivaya, performer of great austerities,
Makes obeisance, daily adorning Him with a garland of one *venba* verse;
Mountain who abides in the blissful hearts
Of those who have transcended the waves of desire and all the rest:
Annamalai.
8. Mountain standing serene as a beautiful *chakra*;
Mountain who dispels the effects of His devotees' deceitful dark deeds;
Mountain, reformer of hearts;
Mountain of divine medicine,
Conferring the supreme attainment of true knowledge:
Annamalai.
9. Mountain whom the faithful walk round, keeping It to their right;
Mountain who steals away the entire burden
Of the past actions of those who circle It;
Mountain penetrating all the worlds;
Mountain where my father and Guru, Om Namasivaya, dwells:
Annamalai.
10. Mountain where gypsy maidens, slender as reeds,
Sport with the heaven-dwelling moon;
Mountain like red coral;
Mountain who, as Sadguru,
Placed His splendrous foot upon my head:
Annamalai.
11. Mountain who, taking the form of my spiritual Guru and Master,
Namasivayam, the compassionate heavenly Lord,
Held me in Its power;
Mountain whom the Gods themselves praise;
Mountain who dispels all my mental suffering,
Evildoer that I am:
Annamalai.
14. Mountain where ripens a harvest of verse
In the thoughts of His devotee Guhai Namasivaya;
Mountain fathomed by those strong in devotion;
Mountain who grew as a column of red flame
As the Two sought It:
Annamalai.
16. Mountain whom my Guru, Om Namasivaya, approached,
Praising Him daily from his treasure house of devotion
In verses of true Tamil;
Mountain who flashes light in all directions;
Mountain who, as silver Kailas, abides with His consort;
Mountain who abides as liberation:
Annamalai.

18. Mountain praised by my Guru, Om Namasivaya, in beautiful Tamil;
Mountain who affords a sweet sight
To those who, seeing, worship Him;
Mountain who, growing long, stretched from the root of the universe;
Mountain who prospers in the hearts of devotees
Who, praising, think on Him:
Annamalai.
22. Mountain who drives out the night of spiritual ignorance;
Mountain who is the lamp of true knowledge to devotees;
Mountain in the form of abundant knowledge;
Mountain who came to me, a mere dog,
As father, mother and Sadguru:
Annamalai.
26. Celestial Mountain who, coming into the world
As my Guru Om Namasivaya,
Dwells within the heart of this devotee;
Mountain who wipes out the fruits of former deeds;
Mountain who abolishes all the suffering
Of a long succession of births, too numerous to tell:
Annamalai.
27. Mountain who stands with His *Sakti*
To whom He gave half of Himself;
Mountain who sprouted forth as the seed of liberation;
Mountain praised in every quarter;
Mountain who removes the arising births
Of those who praise and extol Him:
Annamalai.
32. Pure Mountain who unites with the hearts
Of those servants, clothed in eminence,
Who, eschewing the five senses which arise from the world,
Embrace the happiness of true knowledge;
Mountain who deludes the wicked,
Concealing Himself from them:
Annamalai.
33. Majestic Mountain who, as my Guru,
Held me in His sway,
Keeping me from wandering through ever-increasing births,
Placing in my hand sweet, true knowledge,
And uniting His two feet together upon my head:
Annamalai.
39. Mountain who yields up to the devotees who sing His praises
All the things that they desire,
The foremost of which is liberation;
Mountain clad in lasting glory;

- Mountain who, as Sadguru, ruled over me,
Wicked wretch that I am:
Annamalai.
47. Mountain to whom it is seemly for love-filled devotees,
Contemplating Him in their thoughts, to perform *puja*.
Mountain who dwells in the hearts of true devotees,
In whom attachment to the wavering mind,
Which leads to desire, has been destroyed:
Annamalai.
59. Mountain who, seeing the great austerities, without limit,
Which She [Parvati] performed in solitude to save the whole world,
United with the Mountain's daughter as half of Himself
And gracefully stands, affording His protection:
Annamalai.
60. Mountain whose meaning blossoms forth abundantly
For those who, taming the treacherous unruly senses,
And bringing them under control,
Have purified their minds and attained serenity;
Mountain of celestial ambrosia,
Who, whatever may befall, deigns to appear:
Annamalai.
66. Supreme Mountain;
Mountain who is the first cause, without beginning;
Mountain, one half of whom is the Mother;
Mountain who chants and sings the *Vedas*;
Mountain who is justice;
Mountain who is *tantra* and *yantra*;
Mountain who is the five-syllable mantra [*Nama Sivaya*], proclaimed aloud:
Annamalai.
67. Mountain who imprints Himself upon the hearts of those
Who, mastering the five senses, have attained knowledge,
So that the births caused by their evil deeds vanish away;
Mountain whom devotees perpetually praise and worship:
Annamalai.
73. Mountain of true knowledge, unreachable to Brahma and Vishnu,
Who travelled His length, diligently seeking,
But were bewildered;
Mountain who upon the earth
Wears four different forms in the four *yugas*:
Annamalai.
81. Mountain whose throat is adorned with poison;
Mountain who came to cut off daily the evil deeds of His devotees;
Mountain who melts the heart;

Mountain who engenders the sweetness of supreme bliss
In those who love Him:
Annamalai.

85. Mountain who embraces the hearts of those
Whose conduct is all one, both inwardly and outwardly;
Mountain who purifies desire;
Mountain who sits astride the prancing bull;
Mountain who cures me of the suffering of births:
Annamalai.
86. Mountain who drives away suffering;
Mountain who removes the ancient burden of deeds;
Mountain who beckons His devotees to come to Him;
Mountain who bestows His holy foot;
Mountain who withers up the afflictions of the devotees
Who feel His presence in their hearts:
Annamalai.
87. Mountain who, spreading from the roots, along the trunk,
And up to the very tips of the branches,
Permeates the understanding of the true followers
Who have received His teaching;
Mountain resonant with the *pranava* [the sound of *Om*];
Mountain who calls out to devotees, great in austerities,
Bidding them come:
Annamalai.
88. Mountain who gracefully appears
Before those who, performing thrice-daily rituals,
Joyfully praise Him;
Mountain endowed with more than a mother's sweetness;
Mountain who, as Sadguru, prospers in my heart, dog that I am:
Annamalai.
99. Mountain who confers undying liberation;
Mountain who, destroying for His devotees
The indestructible residue of deeds,
Comforts them,
Decreeing that the impassable ocean of multifarious births
Shall henceforth be still:
Annamalai.

To achieve Liberation, "we need the silence of the cow, the simplicity of the child, the egoless state of the utterly exhausted man, the still more egoless state of deep sleep," remarked Sage Vidyananya.

TEST YOURSELF

By DOUGLAS E. HARDING

FOLLOWING the lead of the Buddha himself, it is often claimed for Buddhism that, in contrast to other religions, it is undogmatic, that its teachings are for testing and not merely taking on trust. A true Buddhist doesn't deal in second-hand goods. He is said to be open-minded, humble before the facts as they actually present themselves, and above all, mindful of what is given *now*, dropping imagination, hearsay, prejudice, and all preconceived views — no matter how sanctified by tradition.

What follows is, accordingly, an invitation to put this open-minded mindfulness into practice, and test some basic Buddhist teachings by finding out how they match up to first-hand experience.

First, a glance at these teachings:

Do not seek refuge in anyone but yourself.

You cannot by *going* reach that place wherein there is no birth, no ageing, no decaying, no falling away, no rising up elsewhere in rebirth...For, my friends, in this very body, six feet tall...are the world, and the ceasing of the world, and the way that leads to its ceasing.

— *Gautama Buddha*

Perceiving that this body is like froth, like a mirage, he [the disciple], breaking the flowery shafts of Mara, will go where the King of Death will not see him.

— *Dhammapada*

Here, O Satputra, form is void.

— *Heart Sutra*

I realised the Essential Nature of my body and mind, that it is like the fluidity of the oceans of fragrance surrounding the Isles of the Blest. I realised that I had all along been throwing the broken shards of my thoughts of personality into the pure limpidity of my Essential Nature.

— *Surangama Sutra*

This empty, visionary body is no less than the Dharmakaya.

— *Yung-chia Hsuan-chueh*

In the place where no man is, I will put my hand to my forehead and watch for you. I will wait and look out for you where no man speaks, that is, in Maitreya's land, where no mouth or lips are needed.

— *Pai-chang*

As long as you are not carried by external winds, your Nature will remain like water, forever still and clear.

Perception that there is nothing to perceive — this is *Nirvana*, also known as Deliverance.

— *Hui-hai*

Can you see for yourself, without the slightest difficulty or doubt, into your Void Nature? In other words, are the above-quoted passages obviously true right now, in your own immediate

experience? If so, don't bother to read the rest of this article.

If, again, you neither see what they are on about, nor want to see, there's no point in reading further.

But if, on the other hand, you don't see it, but are willing to try anything that might enable you to do so, then it is suggested that you devote the next twenty minutes to carrying out some simple experiments. Just reading about them is rather worse than useless. They have actually to be done. The following questions are for settling on *present evidence alone*, on what you can find at this moment, when you stop reading things into it:

1. Stand up, look ahead, keep still.

(It helps to get a friend to read the questions out to you, but you don't need to answer them out loud.)

How many feet do you now have so far as you can tell?

Of course you feel sensations, but what are they really like? Do they add up to feet? On present showing, couldn't you just as well have claws or hooves or fins?

How many legs can you find? How many trunks? How many heads?

Where are your boundaries? How big are you? How old? What sex?

Are you any thing at all, or are you more like the space in which a lot of other things — including various thoughts and feelings — are now happening?

2. Answer the same questions, this time with your eyes closed.
 3. Look at your hand. Are you in it, or is it in you? Have you any clue what it's like in there?
 4. Keep looking at your hand.
- How could you now see its colour, if you were coloured?

How could you receive its shape, if you had shape?

How could you register its movements now, except in your stillness?

How could you contain it if you weren't empty?

How could you take in all that detail, except by being absolutely plain and simple?

How could you feel the pain in it (as your thumbnail presses into your finger) if it were not felt against an on-going background of no pain?

How could you hear the noise it makes (as you snap your fingers) if the sound didn't plop into your boundless pool of silence?

5. How many eyes are you looking out of, now you really attend?

See what happens when you put your glasses on, slowly. Outline with your hands the extent of your 'eye'. What's behind it?

6. Point to your feet, legs, belly, chest, then to what's above that.

What, in all honesty, is your finger now pointing at? Go on pointing.

7. See if you can get face-to-face with anyone. Isn't it face-to-no-face?

8. Make sure where you keep your face. Is it where you *thought* it was?

Or is it over there in the mirror, and where your friend is in receipt of it (and therefore can tell you whether there's a smut on your nose), and where he holds his camera (which can therefore record it, smut and all)?

9. By stroking and pinching and pummelling, try to build up on your shoulders a coloured, opaque, all-together-in-one-piece, bounded *thing*, such as you find on your friend's shoulders. Try to get inside and describe its contents, as now revealed. Aren't you still at large, spaced out, immense?
10. Look at the sky above you. Is your earth-body now voided, just as your man's body

and face and eyes were voided? Isn't it true that 'the whole great Earth is nothing but you' (Hseuh-feng) and that 'the great Earth doesn't contain a speck of dust' (Zen saying)? Isn't what you are looking out of always splendidly capacious for what you are looking at?

11. You are the sole authority on how it is where you are. But if you don't trust your own findings, get your friend to check, so far as he can, your central emptiness (at 0 feet) by coming right up to you with his camera (a 'viewfinder-hole' in a sheet of paper will do).

Doesn't he start at a place (say six feet away) where he finds you to be a human being, then come to a place where (at, say, three feet) he finds half a human being, then a

hand or a head, then a patch of skin, then a mere blur?

(Supposing he had good microscopes, etc., wouldn't the blur read as cells, then as one cell, then as particles of descending order, and in the end as practically empty space — featureless, transparent, colourless, unbounded?)

Isn't it true that the closer he gets to you, the closer he gets your own view of yourself as No-thing whatever?

Can you now see for yourself, beyond all doubt, into your Void Nature? If so, what prevents your going on doing so, whenever and wherever you like, till the seeing becomes your normal way of life? This may not take as long as you fear. In any case, you have got off to a good start.





EHYEH ASER EHYEH, "I AM THAT I AM" in the original Hebrew script

I AM – THE FIRST NAME OF GOD

By David Godman

IN THE *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* there is a verse which describes how, at the beginning of the universe, the Self became aware of itself as 'I':

In the beginning this [universe] was the Self alone... He [the Self] reflected and saw nothing but the Self. He first said, 'I am He'. Therefore He came to be known by the name *aham* ['I'].¹

'I' thus became the first name of God. Bhagavan corroborated the sentiments expressed in this verse when he told a devotee, 'The one, infinite, unbroken whole (*plenum*) became aware of itself as 'I'. This is its original name. All other names, for example *Om*, are later growths.'²

On another occasion Bhagavan, commenting on this famous verse from the *Upanishads*, ex-

plained how, due to a felicitous combination of letters, the name *aham* not only denoted the subjective nature of God but also implied that it encompassed and constituted all of the manifest universe:

The talk then turned to the name of God and Bhagavan said, 'Talking of all *mantras*, the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* says '*aham*' is the first name of God. The first letter in Sanskrit is

¹ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, tr. Swami Nikhilananda: from *The Upanishads*, vol. 3, 1975 ed., p. 113.

² *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, no. 92. See also talk no. 518 where Bhagavan says, 'The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says *Aham nama abhavat* (He became 'I' named). That is the original name of reality.'

'A', 'अ', and the last letter 'Ha', 'ह', and 'aha' thus includes everything from beginning to end. The word *ayam* means 'that which exists', Self-shining and Self-evident. *Ayam*, *atma* and *aham* (अहं) all refer to the same thing.³

The name *aham* merely indicates that God experiences Himself subjectively as 'I'. When one adds the word 'am' to the name there is the further implication that *God is*, that God is being itself. Bhagavan expounded on this idea in *Guru Vachaka Kovai* and then went on to say that 'I am' is not merely the first name of God, it is also the most appropriate:

Since along with 'I', the aforementioned first name [mentioned in the previous verse], 'am' always shines as the light of reality, 'I am' is also the name. Among the many thousands of names of God, no name suits God, who abides in the Heart, devoid of thought, so aptly as 'I' or 'I am'. Of all the known names of God, 'I', 'I' alone will resound triumphantly when the ego is destroyed, rising as the silent supreme word (*mauna para vak*) in the Heart-space of those whose attention is Selfward-facing.⁴

The word 'Heart', which appears twice in this passage, was often used by Bhagavan as a synonym for the Self. In Tamil the identity between the terms 'Heart' and 'I am' is clearly evident since the single word *ullam* can mean either 'am' or 'the Heart'. In *Arunachala Pancharatnam*, for example, Bhagavan wrote, 'Since you shine as "I" in the Heart, your name itself is Heart'. This can be expanded to mean, 'Since you shine as "I" in the "I am", which is the Heart, your name itself (I am) is the Heart.'

Bhagavan often cited the Bible, and in particular the statement 'I am that I am', to support his contention that God's real nature was 'I am'. Since this quotation and other similar biblical texts are regarded as a divine revelation of truth by both the Jewish and Christian religions, I intend in this article to examine them in some detail in order to point out what the Jewish and Christian religions made of these statements and to show how their interpretations differed from those put forward by Bhagavan.



³ *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, 22.11.45.

⁴ *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, vv. 713-5.

The following extract from *Talks* is a good place to start:

'I am' is the name of God. Of all the definitions of God, none is so well put as the biblical statement 'I am that I am' in Exodus chapter three. There are other statements such as *brahmavaiham* [*Brahman* am I], *aham brahmasmi* [I am *Brahman*] and *soham* [I am He]. But none is so direct as Jehovah [which means] 'I am'.⁵

The biblical quote comes from an Old Testament story which tells of an encounter between God and Moses. God, manifesting Himself as a voice, introduces Himself by saying, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' (Exodus 3:6).⁶ God appointed Moses to represent the Israelites, who were then living as slaves in Egypt, in the court of the Egyptian Pharaoh. He wanted Moses to plead their case with the Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, and to lead them out of captivity. Moses then asked for more information:

3.13. Then Moses said to God: 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?'

3.14. God said to Moses, 'I am that I am'. And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you'.

3.15.... this is my name for ever and ever and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

This revelation of the divine name 'I am' was an immensely significant moment in the history of Judaism, but to understand why one needs to look closely at the Jewish attitude towards names and the naming of objects.

According to the Jews of the biblical period, to have no name meant to have no existence in reality, for when one's name is taken away from one, one ceases, quite literally, to exist. The giving of a name, therefore, is not merely an act of identification; it actually brings into existence the object named and summarises verbally its inherent properties. In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, God gives reality to His creation by naming its components: He names the day 'day', the night 'night', the sea

'sea' and so on (Genesis 1:3-10). Only by doing so can He bring them into a real and permanent existence. For the same reason He commanded Adam to give a name to each of the animals (Genesis 2:20). As for the name of God Himself, He had been called by several names prior to His famous declaration 'I am that I am': 'El' and 'Elohim', meaning 'God', and 'Shaddai', meaning 'Almighty'. But these names were not revealed by God Himself, they were merely convenient designations attributed to Him by a people who were as yet ignorant of His true name. When God finally revealed His name to be 'I am', He became more of a living reality to the Jews, and more accessible to them. A Roman Catholic biblical scholar explains why:

Israelite thought in the biblical era lacked the discursive reasoning developed by Greek philosophy and was incapable of general and abstract speculation. In Hebrew 'to know God' is to encounter a personal reality; and a person is not known unless his name is known.... To know the name is to know the reality named. Hence, knowledge of God is disclosed in His name.⁷

This intimate relationship between a name and the person who owns it can be clearly seen in many biblical stories, for the names in the Old Testament are not given out accidentally: the name of each character reveals and signifies the essence, the chief personality trait or the most memorable action done by the person so named. If a person in the Old Testament transformed his character or was inspired or motivated by God to begin a new way of life, God Himself sometimes changed the person's name so that the new name accurately reflected the changed situation. Jacob, for example, tricked his blind father into giving him a blessing that should have rightly gone to his brother (Genesis 27:6). The word Jacob literally means 'a cheat'. Later he wrestled with an angel of God and fought so tenaciously, not giving up even after dislocating a hip, that he forced the angel to give him a blessing

⁵ *Talks*, no. 106. The name Jehovah is derived from the verb 'to be', but since it is a third person form, it actually means 'He is' rather than 'I am'.

⁶ Abraham entered into a covenant with God and by doing so became the founder of the Jewish religion. Isaac and Jacob are, respectively, his son and grandson. All Jews are descended from this lineage.

(Genesis 32:28). The blessing was a change of name and consequently a change of character and essence. No longer would he be called Jacob, meaning 'cheat'. He was transformed into Israel, meaning 'God strove' or 'one who strove with God'. One could cite numerous other examples but two will suffice. When Abram, meaning 'High Father', made his covenant with God and God then promised him that he would found the Jewish race, He Himself ordered Abram to change his name to Abraham, which means 'Father of a multitude'. Abraham's wife, Sarah, was originally called Sarai which means 'mockery'. She was the one who had laughed at God when He had promised that she would conceive a son, even though she was ninety years old. When the son arrived and God promised Abraham that among his descendants would be several kings, He ordered Abraham to change his wife's name to Sarah, meaning princess, since she would be the co-founder of this royal line.

Set against this background one can now easily imagine the significance of God revealing for the first time what His real name was. He had been asked before but prior to this moment He had declined to give an answer. In the eyes of the Jews, by declaring Himself to be 'I am' God was not merely giving Himself a convenient designation or title, He was revealing to humanity for the first time His real nature, His real essence and His real identity.

The phrase 'I am that I am', in which God first reveals Himself to be 'I am', is one of the most famous statements in the Bible and it has consequently attracted a lot of critical attention. It is clear that God is making a very important and fundamental statement about Himself, but there has been wide disagreement among biblical scholars about its true significance. Bhagavan put his own interpretation on the phrase, as can be seen from the following quotation, but it is not one which would appeal to many biblical scholars:

The essence of mind is only awareness or consciousness. When the ego, however, dominates it, it functions as the reasoning, thinking or sensing faculty. The cosmic mind, being not limited by the ego, has nothing separate from itself and is therefore only aware. That is what the Bible means by 'I am that I am'.⁸

The differing opinions among theologians on the meaning and significance of 'I am that I am' have primarily arisen because no one can be really sure what the original Hebrew meant. Everyone agrees that the original phrase '*ehyeh aser ehyeh*' is derived from an archaic Hebrew form of the verb 'to be'. But there the agreement ends. One school of thought maintains that since in Hebrew the present and future tenses are identical, *ehyeh* might mean either 'I am' or 'I will be'. One variation of this theory has God say 'I am what I will be', meaning, 'What I am now is what I will always be'. Others have postulated that *ehyeh* is not 'I am' but 'I cause to be'. Thus, instead of saying, 'I am that I am' God is saying, in effect, 'I cause to be whatever comes into being', or something similar. This explanation has found much favour among Christian theologians who prefer to see God as a creator rather than as pure being.

There is yet another theory which does not depend on grammatical niceties. In the ancient semitic world — we are here talking about more than 3,000 years ago — it was widely believed that anyone who knew a name had power over the being so titled. So, according to this theory, when Moses asked God for His name, God declined by giving the evasive answer 'I am what I am'. Proponents of this theory maintain that if He had revealed His true name, whatever it might be, it would have given Moses some power or hold over Him, and that would have been unacceptable because it would have diminished His transcendental omnipotence.

In modern times such a theory sounds amusing rather than plausible, but it cannot be denied that in the Old Testament era names were zealously guarded for precisely the reasons given in the preceding paragraph. After Jacob had wrestled with the angel in the story I have already told, he asked the angel for his name, but the angel refused to disclose it, possibly fearing that Jacob might use it to gain some power over him (Genesis 32:29). In another interesting story, Manoah, the father of Samson, asked another angel of God:

⁷ *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 737. This is generally regarded as being the most authoritative Catholic commentary on the Bible.

⁸ *Talks*, no. 188.

'What is your name, for we shall want to know it when your words come true?' The angel of the Lord said to him, 'How can you ask my name? It is a name of wonder.' (Judges 13:16-19)

Those who believe that God was merely being evasive when He said 'I am that I am' are in a minority for most authorities concede that the significance of the name is contained in the meaning of the word *ehyeh*, usually translated as 'I am'.

Though God clearly refers to Himself as 'I am' in Exodus 3:14, and though He specifically stated in the next verse that this was the name by which He wanted to be remembered, this was not the name which the Jews subsequently used. They preferred the name Yahweh, which is the third person singular of the present tense of the same archaic form of the verb 'to be'. So, instead of referring to Him as 'I am' the ancient Jews and the compilers of the Old Testament always called him Yahweh, meaning 'He is' or 'He who is'.⁹ 'I am' was too holy a name for the Jews to use, and even the euphemism 'He who is' was so sacred and holy to them that it was never spoken by ordinary people. Only the high priest of the temple was permitted to say it out loud, and even he was only permitted to utter it once a year on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year.

So how did the Jews get round saying the name of Yahweh when they read the scriptures or spoke of Him? They used two further euphemisms: 'Adonai', meaning 'Lord' or merely 'Shem' which means 'the name'. In the ancient Hebrew script there were no vowels, only consonants, and so Yahweh was written YHWH. Whenever the Jews came across this sacred combination of letters, they ignored the correct pronunciation and instead said

'Adonai' or 'Shem'. This habit eventually caused, inadvertently, the name Jehovah to come into existence. On some manuscripts written about a thousand years ago, when vowel sounds had begun to be added to the consonants, the vowels of the word *Adonai* were interspersed between the consonants of YHWH to remind readers to say 'Adonai' rather than Yahweh. When these manuscripts were translated into English the translators, ignorant of this convention, coined the word Jehovah, which they thought was a correct rendering of the word. This is still the most common rendering of Yahweh

in English, even though it is now known to be incorrect. So far as the Jews are concerned, Jehovah is a meaningless non-word; the real name for them remains Yahweh, 'He who is'.

Most English translations of the Bible have opted for the euphemism rather than the real name itself, even though there is no prohibition in Christianity against pronouncing the divine name as 'Yahweh'. The name YHWH occurs about 6,800 times in the Old Testament and is most commonly rendered in English as LORD, usually printed in capital

letters. Thus, for example, when God speaks in the preamble to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2), He says, in English, 'I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt...'

Though the divine name Yahweh appears thousands of times in the Bible, there is no evidence that the Jews conceived their God to be immanent being. Theological speculation of any kind was

⁹ The *Septuagint*, the earliest Greek translation of the Old Testament, translates Yahweh with a phrase which means 'He who is'. This is widely regarded, among those who think *ehyeh* denotes God-as-being rather than God-as-creator, as being the best translation of the name.



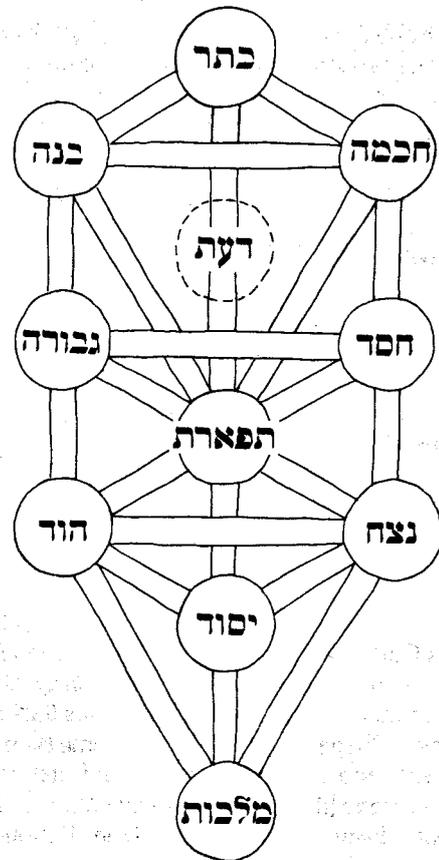
YHWH, Tetragrammaton, the four-letter Name of God, is the most often-used symbol for Divinity by the Hebrews

alien to the ancient Jews and there is no indication in the Old Testament that they thought of God as a formless abstraction. Rather, they conceived of Him anthropomorphically, attributing all kinds of human traits to Him. Nor is there any evidence that the Jews of the biblical period thought that the aim of life was to attain union with Him, or partake of His being in any way. YHWH, for the Jews, was a transcendent being who had to be worshipped, placated, served, and, above all, obeyed. He was separate from His creation, rather than immanent in it, and so far above and beyond the creatures He had created that none of them could ever dream of uniting with Him or even approaching Him. For the Jews, 'knowing God' meant having a personal relationship with Him in a totally dualistic way.

The only Jews who used God's revelation of Himself as 'I am' to develop both a theology of God and a spiritual practice through which He might be directly experienced were groups of mystics who followed a tradition known as Kabbala.¹⁰ They evolved intricate cosmologies, deriving them from a mystical exegesis of Old Testament texts, and broke with traditional Judaic thought by proclaiming that man could approach YHWH and in His presence commune with His beingness.

Kabbalistic practices are many and varied, but two are of particular interest if one is looking for points of contact between mystical Judaism and the teachings of Bhagavan. For the Kabbalists, God, the Supreme Being, is *Ehyeh*, 'I am', and one can approach Him directly by invoking the divine name of Yahweh. In the *Book of Zohar*, one of the most important Kabbalistic texts, it is written, 'Blessed is the person who utterly surrenders his soul to the name of YHWH, to dwell therein and establish therein its throne of glory'.¹¹

In one interesting practice, which parallels Hindu *sadhanas*, Kabbalists split the name Yahweh into two components and invoke 'Yah' with the incoming breath and 'weh' with the outgoing breath in an attempt to be continuously mindful of the reality that the name signifies. There is also a Kabbalistic walking meditation in which one invokes 'Yahweh' when the right foot touches the ground and 'Elohim' on the alternating left steps. Yahweh is 'He who is', God as being, whereas Elohim is the biblical name of God the creator. Simultaneously one must retain a continuous awareness of 'Ehyeh', the 'I am' from



"The Tree of Life" of the Kabbalah — Ehyeh, I AM

Each sphere indicates a level of manifestation of the Divine in the universe. "The first [sphere], at the edge of the Void, is called in Hebrew Keter, the Crown. This manifestation contains all that was, is and will be; it is the place of first emanation and ultimate return. Its nature as a Divine Attribute is expressed by the Name of God which is traditionally attached to it: I AM THAT I AM." (Kabbalah, by Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, pg. 6)

¹⁰ Its origins are obscure and disputed. Its main texts are not more than a thousand years old, but it claims an oral tradition going back to at least the dawn of the Christian era.

¹¹ *Tikkune Zohar*, Second Lecture, n.137.

which, in the Kabbalistic tradition, all creation emanates and manifests. Teachers of Kabbala claim that if this practice is properly pursued, one enters into a state of communion with God.

The Kabbalists speak of a state called '*shekinah*', which means 'being in the presence of the Lord', and they say that this *shekinah* comes to all who can abide in continuous remembrance of 'I am', the ultimate name of God.

Kabbalistic ideas on creation are also derived from their conception of God as 'I am'. In the Jewish tradition creation occurs by the utterance of a single word. The word is the first of all sounds to be heard in manifest existence, and thus parallels the Hindu conception of *Om*. For the Kabbalists this word is none other than the supreme name of God, '*Eyheh*', 'I am'. According to one of their traditions, every creature utters the divine name 'I am' on being created and at the time of its dissolution it repeats the same 'I am' as it is reabsorbed into its maker. This utterance of the divine word 'I am', according to the Kabbala, gives reality to the created world and sustains and upholds it. The uttered 'I am' is an emanation of the unutterable 'I am'; it is God Himself moving from the unmanifest to the realm of manifest being. An interesting parallel to this idea can be found in *Talks* (talk no. 518) where Bhagavan says, 'The Supreme Being is unmanifest, and the first sign of manifestation is *aham sphurana* [the radiation or emanation of 'I']'. Bhagavan always maintained that the 'I'-thought rises from the Self and then, quite literally, creates the world it sees and gives it its apparent reality. And, paralleling the Kabbalistic notion, he taught that the world ceases to exist when the 'I' is reabsorbed back into the Self.

One should not push parallels between Judaism and Bhagavan's teachings too far, for orthodox Judaism maintains that God is wholly and eternally separate from the world, whereas Bhagavan taught that the Self is the sole reality, and that the world is an appearance *in* it, rather than a creation *of* it. For Bhagavan, the world is being in the same way that God Himself is being, for the two cannot be separated: 'Being absorbed in the reality, the world is also real. There is only being in Self-realisation, and nothing but being.'¹²

Christian theologians have also taken God's revelation of Himself as 'I am' to indicate that His

fundamental nature is being, but they will not concede that creation is in any way a manifestation of God's essence. Take, for example, the following statement by a Catholic theologian:

God is the fulness of being, that is subsistent existence and subsistent reality, not merely as existing being, a real object, but existence itself, reality itself.¹³

This statement, which I am sure Bhagavan would endorse, is not by some maverick interpreter. It comes from a respected theologian and fits comfortably into the mainstream of Catholic thought on the subject of God as being. However, it cannot be interpreted to mean that the world partakes of God's reality because virtually all Christian sects believe that God created the world *ex nihilo*, that is to say 'out of nothing'. Matter, say the Christian theologians, is not a part of Him, nor is it an emanation from or of Him. It is, according to them, quite literally conjured up out of nothing. Although the world is brought into existence by Him, Christians will not accept that it partakes in any way of His essential nature. Views to the contrary are known as pantheism and are condemned by Christian theologians as being erroneous or even heretical. So, while Christians are fully prepared to accept that God's revelation of Himself as 'I am' means that His fundamental nature is being, they are not prepared to concede that the world partakes of his beingness in any way. In the words of a Vatican Council: 'As being, one sole absolutely simple immutable substance, God is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world'.

There is another crucial area in which Bhagavan's teachings differ fundamentally from those of both Judaism and Christianity. Bhagavan taught that the 'I am' was not merely the real name of God, it was also the real name and identity of each supposedly individual person. Extending the notion to its logical conclusion, Bhagavan maintained that if one could become aware of one's real identity, 'I am', then one simultaneously experienced the 'I am' that is

¹² *Talks*, No. 33.

¹³ *God* (an anthology of essays on God). Ch.4, 'God, the fulness of being, spirit and reason', by the Rev. L.W. Geddes, 1930 ed., p.119.



God and the 'I am' that is the substratum of the world appearance. The following quotes are typical and summarise his views on the subject:

It ['I am'] is the substratum running through all the three states. Wakefulness passes off, I am; the dream state passes off, I am; the sleep state passes off, I am. They repeat themselves and yet I am.¹⁴

The egoless 'I am' is not a thought. It is realisation. The meaning or significance of 'I' is God.¹⁵

'I exist' is the only permanent self-evident experience of everyone. Nothing else is so self-evident (*pratyaksha*) as 'I am'. What people call self-evident, viz., the experience they get through the senses, is far from self-evident. The Self alone is *that*. *Pratyaksha* is another name for Self. So to do self-analysis and be 'I am' is the only thing to do. 'I am' is reality. 'I am this or that' is unreal. 'I am' is truth, another name for Self.¹⁶

Perhaps the clearest statement in Ramanasramam literature on the identity of the divine name 'I' and the manifest world comes not from Bhagavan himself, but from Namdev, the 14th century Marathi saint. In his *The Philosophy of the Divine Name*, a work which Bhagavan frequently cited and read out with approval, Namdev explains how the 'I' manifests as the world and how its real nature can be discovered:

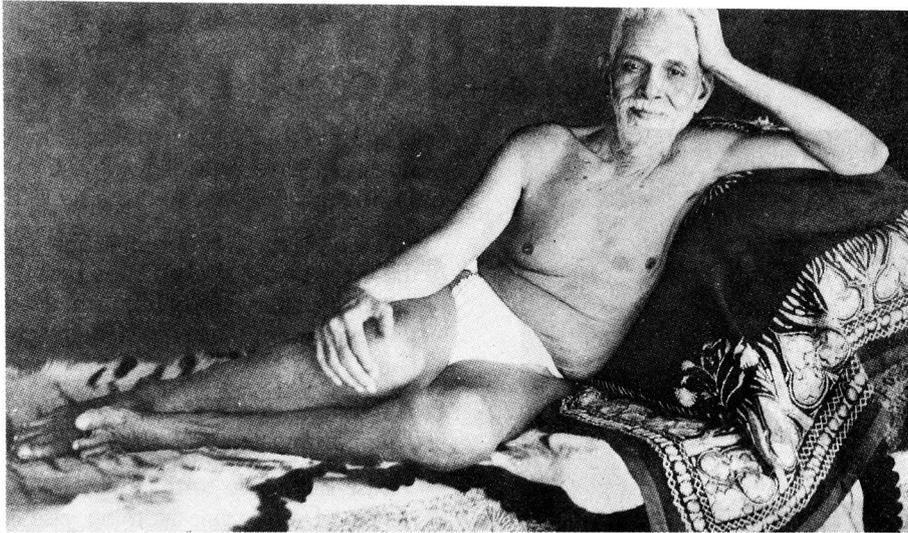
The Name permeates densely the sky and the lowest regions and the entire universe... The Name itself is form. There is no distinction between Name and form. God became manifest and assumed Name and form ... there is no mantra beyond the Name. The Name is Keshava [God] Himself... The all-pervading nature of the Name can only be understood when one recognises one's 'I'. When one's own name is not recognised, it is impossible to get the all-

¹⁴ *Talks*, no. 244.

¹⁵ *Talks*, no. 226.

¹⁶ *Day by Day*, 22.3.46.

← **YHWH:** The Hebrew letters *Yod, He, Vau, He*, comprising the special name of God, are shown in a dynamic vertical calligraphy composed of black and white fire, suggesting the figure of a man to indicate the non-differentiation of God and man.



pervading Name. When one knows oneself, then one finds the Name everywhere. To see the Name as separate from the named creates illusion... Surrender yourself at the feet of the Guru and learn to know that 'I' myself is that Name. After finding the source of that 'I', merge your individuality in that oneness which is Self-existent and devoid of all duality.¹⁷

In most religions of the world, devotees are encouraged to repeat the name of God in order to experience His grace, His presence or even His real nature. The religions of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam have conflicting and irreconcilable metaphysics but there is a surprising degree of agreement among them on the theory and practice of uttering the divine name. The following explanation gives a Muslim point of view, but adherents of all the religions just cited could produce similar expositions from their own traditions:

The Divine Name, revealed by God Himself, implies a Divine Presence which becomes operative to the extent that the Name takes possession of the mind of the person invoking. Man cannot concentrate directly on the Infinite, but by concentrating on the symbol of the Infinite, he attains the Infinite Himself: for when the individual subject becomes identified with the Name to the point where all mental projection is absorbed by the form of the Name, then the Divine Essence manifests spontaneously, since this sacred form tends to nothing outside of Itself. It has a positive affinity with Its essence wherein Its limits finally dissolve. Thus it is that union with the Divine Name becomes union with God Himself.¹⁸

For Bhagavan the divine name was 'I' or 'I am'. Although, like Namdev, he generally encouraged his devotees to do self-enquiry and reach God by finding the source of the 'I', he was prepared to concede that repetition of the divine name 'I' would lead to the same goal. However, he generally recommended this path only to those who found self-enquiry too hard:

If you find the *vichara marga* too hard, you can go on repeating 'I', 'I', and that will lead you to the same goal. There is no harm in using 'I' as a *mantra*. It is the first name of God.¹⁹

A housewife who complained that self-enquiry was too hard and that she had no time for meditation received a similar answer:

If you can do nothing more, at least continue saying 'I', 'I' to yourself all the time, as advised in *Who Am I?*, whatever you may be doing, and whether you are sitting, standing or walking. 'I' is the name of God. It is the first and greatest of all *mantras*.²⁰

¹⁷ *Talks*, no. 448.

¹⁸ *Introductions aux Doctrines ésotérique de l'islam*, T. Burckhardt, p. 101. I think Bhagavan would agree with this, even the remark about the Name merely being 'the symbol of the absolute'. In *Talks* (no. 112) he says, 'Reality is that which transcends all concepts, including that of God. Inasmuch as the name of God is used, it cannot be true.' However, he qualified this by adding, 'The Hebrew word Jehovah, meaning 'I am' expresses God correctly. Absolute Be-ing is beyond expression.'

¹⁹ *Day by Day*, 8.5.46.

²⁰ *Day by Day*, 28.6.46. In *Who Am I?* Bhagavan wrote, 'Even if one constantly thinks 'I', 'I', one will be led to that place [the Heart]'

In another answer Bhagavan explained why this method was so successful:

Q : How does the name ['I'] help realisation?

A : The original name is always going on, spontaneously, without any effort on the part of the individual. The name is *aham*, 'I'. When it becomes manifest it manifests as *ahamkara* — the ego. The oral repetition of *nama* leads one to mental repetition which finally resolves itself into the eternal vibration.²¹

I should like now to return to the Old Testament and elaborate on another quotation which Bhagavan was fond of citing. In Psalm 46, verse 10, it is written 'Be still and know that I am God'. Bhagavan appreciated this line so much that he sometimes said²² that the statements 'I am that I am' and 'Be still and know that I am God' contained the whole of *Vedanta*. In Bhagavan's view the quotations are very closely related for he taught that 'the experience of 'I am' is to 'Be still'.²³ The two words 'Be still' denote both the method and the goal for it is through being and through stillness that the 'I am' is revealed: 'If [the mind] is turned within it becomes still in the course of time and that I-AM alone prevails. I AM is the whole truth.'²⁴

When the term is used in its absolute sense, 'being still' is not mere quiescence: as Bhagavan makes clear in the next answer, to attain it one must reach, permanently, the state of pure being in which the separate self has been destroyed:

Q : How is one to know the Self?

A : Knowing the Self means 'Being the Self' ... Your duty is to be and not to be this or that. 'I am that I am' sums up the whole truth. The method is summed up in 'Be still'. What does stillness mean? It means 'destroy yourself'. Because any form or shape is a cause of trouble. Give up the notion that 'I am so and so'.²⁵

'Be still and know that I am God.' Here stillness is total surrender without a vestige of individuality.²⁶

All that is required to realise the Self is to 'Be still'.²⁷

So, if one may paraphrase Psalm 46, verse 10, to bring out more fully the meaning that Bhagavan attributed to it, it would say, 'Reach the state of pure

being and absolute stillness in which the mind is destroyed and one will then experience directly that God is 'I am'.'

Bhagavan often stressed that in order to 'Be still and know that I am God' one must be totally free from thought, even the thought 'I am God'. After citing this biblical quote he once added, 'To be still is not to think. *Know* and not *think* is the word.'²⁸ And on another occasion: 'One should not think 'I am this — I am not that'. To say 'this' or 'that' is wrong. They are also limitations. Only 'I am' is the truth. Silence is 'I'.²⁹

So, 'being still', according to Bhagavan, requires no thinking and no assertions. On the contrary, it requires a complete absence of both. This attitude was primarily a criticism of the ancient tradition of repeating or thinking 'I am *Brahman*' as a means of attaining liberation. In the concluding quotation Bhagavan explains how the real meaning of 'I am *Brahman*' has been ignored or missed by commentators and practitioners:

It simply means that *Brahman* exists as 'I' and not 'I am *Brahman*'. It is not to be supposed that a man is advised to contemplate 'I am *Brahman*, I am *Brahman*'. Does a man keep on thinking 'I am a man, I am a man'? He is that, and except when a doubt arises as to whether he is an animal or a tree, there is no need for him to assert 'I am a man'. Similarly, the Self is Self. *Brahman* exists as 'I am' in every thing and every being.³⁰

* * * * *

[To be continued. The concluding part of the article, which we will publish in the next issue, will analyse the various 'I am' statements which appear in the New Testament.]

²¹ Talks, no. 591. This exchange took place after Bhagavan had read out Namdev's *The Philosophy of the Divine Name*.

²² See, for example, Talks, no. 338.

²³ Talks, no. 226.

²⁴ Talks, no. 503.

²⁵ Talks, no. 363.

²⁶ Talks, no. 354.

²⁷ Talks, no. 379.

²⁸ Talks, no. 131.

²⁹ Talks, no. 248.

³⁰ Day by Day, 22.11.45.

36

JOURNEY TO RAMANA¹

By A. Haji

"The Lodestone"

"I have discovered a New Thing! This Hill, the Lodestone of lives, arrests the movements of anyone, who so much as thinks of it, draws him face to face with it, and fixes him motionless like Itself, to feed upon his soul thus ripened. What a wonder is this! Oh souls! beware of It (think upon It and be saved!). Such a destroyer of lives is this magnificent Arunachala, which shines within the Heart!"

— from the "Eleven Verses on Arunachala" by Ramana Maharshi

I SIT on Arunachala Hill. It is yet a few hours to sunset. The Hill takes only a few minutes to work its magic on me. All of a sudden the distant countryside appears perfectly still. The sun appears to be frozen in position. The cool breeze fans my face. The rocks themselves appear to be glowing. Then I see that the stillness comes from within me. Mind is behaving itself for once.

All my problems fall away, or appear very distant and petty. I am surprised that I ever gave attention to these so-called problems that have occupied almost my full waking attention day in and day out for all my life. It is almost like waking from a dream.

Yes, I awake. And yes, I have been asleep. There is no other simile that can describe it adequately. I am now awake. I am now. I am. I.

Where is this Peace coming from? It rises from the mountain and suffuses through me. A gentle force, tying the mind down but finally it must come from my own heart. It is impossible that I cannot experience this state anywhere else except at Arunachala. That would simply not be fair.

As a worshipper I come to this Temple of the Self. But what is it I worship? The Temple or the

Self? Arunachala is doubtlessly created by Nature. Illnesses often have remedies in Nature. Even the poison of the deadly cobra fangs have an antidote which man has found in Nature. Thus it is entirely plausible that this illness of dissatisfaction, this poison of the endlessly restless mind has an antidote, a medicine in Nature.

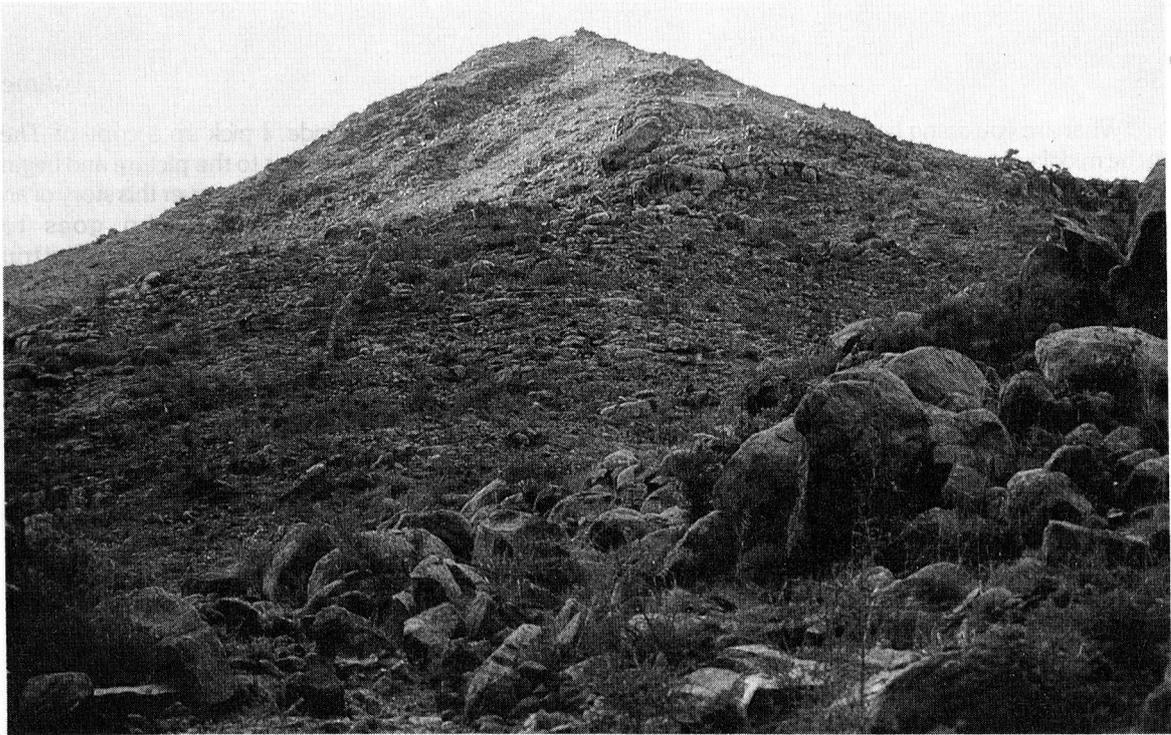
The illness is the Ego and Arunachala is the cure.

What perfect stillness! Mind wiped clean like a stainless mirror reflecting the now. The past lies like a shattered pot, useless. The future is only a mere possibility. There is only the present moment.

Fear has disappeared without its mirror image, Hope, that comes from attention to the future. Memories do not seem so vital anymore. How we chomp on them expecting to extract every last drop of joy, instead finding only regrets; that too is gone. Only the now exists.

The endless now, continually renewing itself, forever now, always in the cradle of Creation. Just now, impossible to grasp, already gone!

¹ Continued from the previous issue



How sacred this moment called the Now is. How brilliant, shining with Consciousness. The landscape comes alive.

Suddenly the tree is worshipping itself, pure Consciousness. The barking dog is praising the Self. A bird is the Self disguised as a golden hawk that soars on the heat-waves on this holy mountain. Flower is the flower of the Self. Water is the water of the Self. There is no difference, but the Universe is a manifestation of the Self.

And all those selves are in me, and I am in all those selves. As myself. The tree is not different from myself. A growing plant is a manifestation of myself. The sun is a representation of my inner being. Arunachala is my divine Self. For an endless moment I am naught. What distinction is there between the Self of the individual and that enormous Life-Force that has manifested as the Universe? It expresses itself equally through me as it does through the pile of rocks I call Arunachala. That center is everywhere. It is in me and it lies in Arunachala with full equal force. Every stone, in every mountain, has that same expression of Being; every person, that same potentiality of the full Self.

What discrimination can there be between myself and yourself and the self of this lava? There can be only One Self. That Self is pure Consciousness.

If every moment is sacred then every act must be sacred. But the mind intervenes. It passes judgement based on self-interest: what I do now is more crucial to my endlessly postponed happiness than what I did yesterday. In that judgement lies the fault. The expectation of reward arising from the act.

To see each act in itself as an expression of that particular moment. There is nothing else to do, there is no other possible action, there is no alternative but to perform that act. To see action in isolation as a source of happiness is to fail to experience the moment. Rather, action is life and life is action.

Thus the Outside becomes one with the Inside. And the Ego drops its barriers and demolishes its own walls. Perhaps they never existed except in one's mind. When the barriers come down then there is truly only One and that One is All.

When the All is Self-existent, then there is naught but Bliss.

In a few short minutes the Ego had demolished its own castle of imaginary blocks. But this was not to last. Quickly and without further notice it rapidly began assembling its scattered defenses. Laboriously at first, but then quicker, it began building a new structure. In minutes the ordinary world was back. The judging mind again came into play.

"What are you doing here sitting on a mountain in the middle of nowhere? Don't you have any work to do?" So many pressing concerns crowd into my mind to support the Ego's question.

No longer content just to be, I am forced to be the businessman on a fortunate respite from his daily grind! The dichotomy is set up. There is a good time in which I can be myself and then there is a not-so-good time when I am forced to perform in the world.

To shatter this barrier between the "what I am" and "what I most do" is my next task. To be in that state of indescribable Bliss, every moment of every day will be my calling from now on. No one can forget this experience, no one who has ever felt the Oneness of the Universe can ever go back and be indifferent to the memory of that Bliss.

But this state is terrifyingly dangerous for the Ego. More than threatened, the Ego panics. It wants only the old life, the simple life of animal passions and clear goals felt at gut level, the level of the senses, the instincts, the basic survival drive.

But to find a higher star, a higher guiding force to one's life is now a goal of my life. What can play this role? Ramana?

* * * * *

I wake up with this unnameable feeling of joy. I don't even know what it is all about. But I feel a smile on my face and I have in my mind a delicious image of happiness. It is as if people are smiling in my brain and Christmas carols are resounding through me.

I am surprised to see Ramana's picture smiling

*"He who revels here and now in the Self alone,
with the Self is satisfied, and in the Self alone is content,
for him there is no work to do."*

at me from my bedside. I pick up a copy of *The Mountain Path* lying next to the picture and begin reading from it at random. I discover this story of an individual in a wheelchair who goes to Tiruvannamalai filled with this longing. His first trip there simply does not fulfill his fantasy.

He returns to England where, after many struggles, he has now slipped into a deep depression. He feels again the call to Arunachala and this time when he returns with fewer of his ego expectations between him and reality, he discovers peace. I feel the call. I feel my mind overwhelmed with depression. I feel abandoned yet I feel the Love calling to me. I need to go home. I need to go to Arunachala.

The silent Sage of Arunachala is speaking to me in His quiet way. A stream of calm flows through me. It quiets my inner fears and soothes my unhealed wounds. It touches my soul.

From whence this overwhelming peace? How my longing has been filled! How could I have ever imagined that I was abandoned and friendless? This is reality. This is the only thing that exists. There is no other.

How my heart screamed with fear, not willing to listen to that song of joy that played on in my soul. It now fills me with that certainty that I AM. Fear not, my heart, for you are loved. It is the song of Life itself. Reverberating through the universe, the life of every conscious being. The stars pulsate with that energy. I am filled with the same energy. Everywhere I look it is the energy existing as objects. It is that energy, that blinding light that exists as the Heart of the universe. That energy that divinizes all.

Questioner: Is spontaneous action right action?

J. Krishnamurti: Do you know how difficult it is to be really spontaneous? When we are so conditioned by society, when we live on memory, on the past, how can we possibly be spontaneous? Surely, to do something spontaneously is to act without motive, without calculation, without any self-interested feeling. It is not self-centered action. You just do it out of the fullness of your being. But to be really spontaneous requires stripping yourself completely of the past. It is only the innocent mind that can be spontaneous.

— Saanen, 9th Public Talk, 25th July 1963.

MAYA

By Dr. K. Subrahmanian

WHAT is Maya? Maya is illusion. Sankara says that the world as we see it is *maya*. He says that Brahman is real, the world is an illusion and the entire Universe is Brahman.

The world as we see it is *maya*. How can it be? We experience pain and pleasure, love and hatred every day. How can we dismiss all these as *maya*?

Every day we meet people and make assessments. We like someone today and hate him tomorrow. We say things which we don't mean. We offend someone without meaning to. Every day we feel sorry for having said something or other which we never meant to say. We are sorry but we don't *always* say how sorry we are. So our relationships are based on what we say and do and not what we really *feel* in our heart of hearts. Our evaluations, loves and hatreds are not permanent. They keep on changing. There is nothing fixed. Hence we say that the world as it is, is *maya*.

We try to evaluate the world without evaluating ourselves. We want to understand the world without understanding ourselves. We don't know the person who wants to understand. We seek to understand the external world without understanding the seeker.

Sri Bhagavan says that when the seeker is realised, there will be no distinction between the seeker and the sought. In that absolute state, the world will appear as *Brahman*. The world as it is is *maya* in that everything is changing. The world is Brahman when one realises the Self. Till one realises the Self, one should not get lost in the world. Sri Bhagavan says, "You should look on the world as a dream". We don't realise the unreality of

the dream when we are dreaming. We realise it only when we wake up from the dream. We will realise true Reality when we wake up from our ego to our Self. Then we will see the world as it is — Brahman — and not as it appears to be — Maya.

Maya is distortion of what is. What is is one, but it appears to be many. There is only pure light. When it passes through a prism, it is refracted into seven colours. They are beautiful, attractive. We are drawn to them. But the reality is that the basis of the seven colours is pure, white light. Once the prism is removed, the colours will disappear. There will be only white light. When the prism of the mind or ego is removed, the whole world will appear as pure light, Brahman. When the mind is merged in the heart, we shall see only Brahman in everything. In fact, there won't be any seer. The seer and the seen, the subject and the object become one. This is a state beyond the mind or words. This can only be experienced.

To see a movie, there must be darkness in the auditorium. We are able to see a movie on the white screen because of the surrounding darkness. We see the world as a world of names and forms because of the darkness of ignorance. When there is no darkness, when the film is projected on the white screen, you can't see anything. Everything becomes white light. In other words, it merges in the white light of the screen. The movie and the screen become one. So when the darkness of ignorance is removed, one will experience the One and not the many. What *is* is *one*. It appears as many because of illusion caused by the mind. When the mind merges in the heart, there will be only oneness, no plurality.

40

SOME ESSENTIAL STATEMENTS

By Wolter A. Keers¹

ONE could very well say that Self-realisation (meaning 'understanding' what one is in essence) occurs immediately and effortlessly as soon as one's attention is fixed on the incontrovertible fact that one is always NOW. The NOW is the only real, non-imaginary point in our life; everyone can see that for himself. We are always NOW. One month ago it was NOW; one year ago it was NOW, and now it is NOW. It will always be NOW. When there is time and space, I am HERE and I am NOW. We need not do anything to attain it. At any moment of your life you can verify this effortlessly; you really do not need to be a university professor in order to see that this is so. This simple recognition is the essence of Self-realisation. Realising this, one can begin to work on oneself.

All we can talk about is the past. It is not just memory-based thoughts; there is not a single word we use that is not past. One single approach, such as recollection of the NOW, suffi-

ces to 'clean the entire attic'. Remember: 'I am not somebody with a past; I am NOW; I never leave the NOW and I cannot escape from it. In time and space I am HERE and NOW.' Since we are in search of freedom, what, actually, are we bound to? To one thing only: the past. And, since that does not exist, away with it!

* * *

There is nothing wrong with thinking as such. The trouble starts when a marriage takes place between the ever-present sense of being that you

¹ **Wolter Keers** was a regular contributor to *The Mountain Path* for many years prior to his death in 1985. The following nuggets of spiritual advice were delivered during a talk he gave in 1983. They were first published in *Advaita*, a magazine which he edited, in 1985 (vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 16-24). The article has been translated and adapted from the original Dutch by **Else Van Den Muyzenberg**.

are, and one of the things you perceive, such as the body. Then consciousness 'says': "I am a body", or, "I am a thinker", or, "I am someone with a past". In other words, when consciousness identifies itself with a concept, a person comes into being with all his attendant problems. The truth is, none of us has ever had a single thought. Why? It is mere conditioning to believe that here, in this body, there could be a thinker of thoughts. If one looks clearly, one will find that there is no one there at all. The only correct thing we can say as a result of this intense scrutiny is that thoughts appear in consciousness, are perceived for a few seconds, and then disappear again. Only consciousness remains. There is no 'I' thinking those thoughts, for that 'I' is just another thought. And one thought does not think another thought. That is why the statement 'I think' is sheer nonsense. Thoughts appear, that is all.

* * *

When you sit in a relaxed position and attempt to locate the 'I', you find that it is not there. Here, you discover, is a sensation of hunger, but there is no 'I' saying, "Will you put some bread in me, please!"

Words, words, words. 'We have all been taught to give credence to words. That is how our apparent bondage or limitation has come about. In consciousness, which is beyond measure — so, immeasurable — the mind projects discrete compartments — the measurable. *Maya*, the measurable, becomes illusion when I take myself to be something measurable, something bound by time and space, an object that comes and goes.

* * *

There is no real silence in time and space. Nevertheless, we all have known inner silence. Silence is the absence of certain perceptions. That is our essential home. The world, on the other hand, is merely an extension of your own standpoint. Therefore, if you take your standpoint in the silence that you are, the noise will disappear.

He who has 'understood', directly, not intellectually, what perceiving or awareness is, is, to use that somewhat ridiculous term, 'enlightened'. Really, there is no such thing as an enlightened being. What is said to be 'enlightened' is merely a spot from which the thought 'I am somebody' has disappeared. There, there is no one 'in charge' and no identification with various objects. So, if you are enlightened, you are not free, as some people say, but you are freedom itself. Not like a bird in the sky, but like the sky itself.

In order to repossess this birthright, you have, on the one hand, to take note of what you are, especially the NOW, the presence, the feeling of being something conscious. On the other hand, you also have to take note of all sorts of things you have taken yourself to be but which are, in fact, only temporary and occasional perceptions. A great many perceptions arise that never last any longer than a few seconds. Due to delusion, we have learned to give 'I-images' a lifespan of several decades, whereas they merely appear for two or three seconds.

* * *

Resistance can only occur because for years on end I have taken myself to be someone who could, for instance, be hurt at certain points. One could give a long list of everything that goes with any particular person. If I think, 'I am a decent gentleman', I have an image in which I believe which makes me vulnerable to other images. And when I see that 'being a decent gentleman' is just as nonsensical as any other concept, or when I see that I cannot be confined to a single concept, I am no longer vulnerable.

Whenever someone yells at you, it is only a movement of air to which a specific tone-colour has been given. It does not refer to anything. So I can be afraid only so long as I still imagine myself to be somebody. If I do not exist, who is there to be afraid? As soon as one has fully seen this, there cannot possibly be any fear, psychological fear.

* * *

All problems are only apparent problems. Each problem results from an assumption, from believing you are something that you are not. In other words, each problem arises from believing in certain images of 'I' and in the reality of a past — whereas you are, in fact, always NOW. Because you are NOW, you, as a perceiver, are NOW and that which is perceived is also NOW, for I cannot perceive what is not there NOW. However, I call certain thoughts, that arise NOW, the past. That again is *maya*. We can never experience anything from the past; it simply does not exist in our experience. Our experiences are always NOW. That is one of the things you should discover. What struggles do you need to carry on in order to be in the NOW? Whatever you are doing, you are NOW. You need not take any steps to reach it. Our apparent bondage is due to the belief that we are a product of our past. Open your eyes, look and see that you are already in the NOW. If you do, you will notice that this is a fact as indisputable as anything. Look at yourself and see that, "every day, every hour, every minute, every second, without having or being able to do anything for it, I am always, effortlessly, NOW. That is my true essence, the NOW, the HERE and NOW, where time and space appear." There is no need for any struggle.

This recognition is so simple that even a five-year-old understands it. After that recognition arises, there is still some work ahead. The false belief that "I am not HERE and NOW, but a product of ..." that is what needs to be scrutinised. Look thoroughly, see it, and say: "Nonsense!"

* * *

I am a perceiving, conscious being in which perceptions arise, in which thoughts appear. I am the knower, I know these thoughts, but these passing thoughts do not know me. They cannot tell anything about me, for the limited cannot tell anything about the unlimited. Stop believing in words! When I say 'table', I know what is meant by such a thing. However, so far as you yourself are concerned, there is not a single word or

thought that can express what you really are. It takes a long time before we lose the belief that thoughts can describe reality. It is a deeply-rooted habit that has become an automatic process within us.

* * *

There are as many paths as there are people. In reality, though, there is, of course no such thing as a path because there can never be a gap between me and myself. The image of a path is a very dangerous one, but it is difficult to avoid using it. You can, however, never come any closer to yourself because there is no gap between you and yourself. The only thing that may happen is that you dismantle all the various false ideas that you take yourself to be. That is all.

* * *

The 'technique' of these talks is based on the fact that you start from where a questioner believes himself to be, such as 'I am a gentleman from Amsterdam'. And from there, you are taken along to waking consciousness, which is formless in itself. Consciousness will then show you that, when it is devoid of all forms, it still remains as it is. That is the Absolute. Consciousness, from which all forms have disappeared, is the Absolute.

* * *

Up till today, for centuries Buddhists have spoken of the 'void'. By this term is meant consciousness in itself. There are no forms in it and that is why one uses the image of space devoid of objects. But do not be misled by the word 'void' by saying, for instance, that it is absolute nothingness. I would rather say, 'absolute fullness', that from which all arises. But it has neither name nor form, and is, as a matter of fact, unimaginable. As long as we consult ideas, we do not understand. When these ideas disappear, real understanding arises. This does not mean that something is then understood: it merely means that we are then only That.

* * *

In the waking state it is quite easy to believe in an 'I' that is awake, although we may remember at times that it is a false belief. Similarly, in the dream state it is equally possible to believe in an 'I' that is dreaming or that has been dreaming. But in the dreamless deep-sleep state, you will never find an 'I' that is sleeping. That dreamless deep sleep is merely something delightful. How do you know? That is an important question, and its answer provides a key to correct understanding. The 'I', the mind, may tell you it was delightful, but how can it know? It was not there. You may very well appeal to the senses, but they were not there either. There is nothing visible, imaginable or tangible which can confirm it. Yet you know. And that is the key. The mind has no part at all in the knowledge. Actually, that which we call deep dreamless sleep, or the Absolute, is always HERE and NOW. You are then, for an instant, the Absolute, timelessness itself. The Absolute is so near; it is nearer than anything else. For an instant the world disappears and we remain as we are, the Absolute. The mind then returns and says: "Yes, that is right!"

* * *

'I Am' is an eternal truth, from the time of Adam and Eve & Co., up till and including now, for everybody, everywhere and always. But memory cannot tell you so. You may remember the words 'I am'; you may recollect, when you look at a deeper level, that you are NOW. You can see that NOW a thought is produced that you call 'recollection', and say: "He said the same thing at 10:15 a.m." You produce that past NOW. Memory is not a long rope with which you pull things towards you from a distance. Memory is a specific image that appears NOW; it is the mind which classifies it as 'the past'."

The fundamental question at stake here is: "Who am I?" The name that you were given as a baby indicates something that will be there during your entire life. There is only one thing that is permanent, and it is not the body. The thing we call the body is a number of perceptions that appear from time to time. The same applies to memory. Memory projects an image and pre-

Passage to the Stars

By M.R. Tewari

I

**A pinch of earth
Kneaded with a drop of water
Blown and shaped with a breath
Baked by a licking tongue of flame,**

Flung hurtling through space —

**Until, weary and fatigued,
Matter disintegrates —**

**And earth to earth
Water to water
Flame to fire
Breath to air
Return
And go spinning through
empty space.**

II

**Pull out the roots
And transplant them in the skies.
Let the branches drop,
And with their ceasing rise:**

**And the stars shall be
thy companions
As the ripened fruit
Falls gently to the earth.**

tends that there is such a thing as a past and a future. That is fine, there is nothing against it, but it is *maya*, the measureable. I have nothing against the world, but I know that I am not a part of that world. I know that this world is projected through a mosaic. Memory makes one believe that what is NOW is not NOW, and what is

HERE is not HERE. It projects a whole world that is, in fact, unreal.

* * *

It is impossible to talk about that which you are. There is no concept which can cover it. If I were a concept, I would have been smothered in the cradle because a concept only lasts for a few seconds.

* * *

When you have seen that you are not any of those stories you have been told, this recognition is so powerful that you keep reverting to it, whether you like it or not. The greatest obstacle which you could then possibly put on your own 'path' is a concept of the Absolute. What you should do is take note, at the deepest level, of all those things that I have been pointing at. Take note again and again of the fact that the body is nothing other than a series of occasional perceptions. Whether I like it or not, I am always NOW. I cannot do anything to prevent this being so.

The waking state implies time-and-space-bound consciousness in which energy — nature — dances a dance. The waking state is consciousness with forms that are inherently made up of nothing but consciousness. In the HERE and NOW consciousness, I actually see nothing but myself reflected as those movements which we call perceptions. What matters is that I see that I-as-consciousness still am the same. In knowing this, I shall soon see that there is nothing in this world that can bind me because this world is nothing but perceptions that depend on me, and not the other way around. When I-as-consciousness am not there at 7 a.m. those perceptions cannot appear.

The collective term for all these perceptions is 'the world', and the great obstacle to understanding the real nature of these perceptions is the authority we give to the sense of touch. So, in practice, it is very important that, from time to time, you sit down and see that the body is indeed nothing but a series of perceptions. We

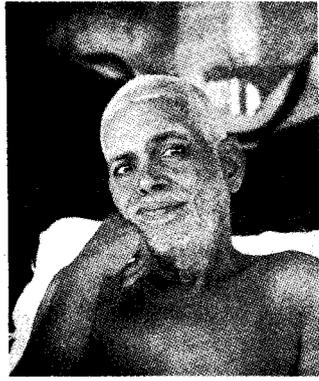
know nothing other than our perceptions. To us, reality is the sum total of our perceptions. We project all sorts of things on reality that are not there. We even pretend that perceptions also exist when they are not being perceived. People often tell me, for example: "But when I am asleep others see me too." That is to say, people infer an existence for themselves not through direct experience, but because others tell them that they exist. Such ideas arise because we believe that the world gives us perceptions or enables us to perceive, and that we perceive the world. We, however, do not perceive any world; we perceive perceptions, and that is all. When I am sleeping, that body that you see sleeping is something I am not. It is part of *your* waking state, not mine. At that moment there are no perceptions in me at all. The waking state arises at regular intervals, and so does the dream state, but in the Absolute there are no alternations, no subject-object relation, no time, no past, no future.

* * *

There is something in you that knows without words, although words may point to it. But if you cling to the words, you will not grasp it. To go beyond them, to experience what the words mean, one must leave the mind alone for a moment and merely look at that which is devoid of thoughts. That is quite an easy thing to do. Why? Because you are already that.

I cannot talk about the deep-sleep state. I can only say that it is very pleasant, but that does not describe it. That in which there are no limitations — for, after all, the mind is nothing but limitations — cannot be described by something which is indeed limited.

We know reality because we are it. At the level of the Absolute, 'knowing' and 'being' are two words signifying the same thing. Usually, when we say 'knowing', we imply that something is known. But the knowing that arises in reality is not that kind of knowledge, for in it there is no knower and nothing outside of itself to be known.



BEING IS NOT DOING

By V. Ganesan

THERE is a beautiful anecdote dating from the time when Maharshi was living on the hill, before he came down to live at Sri Ramanasramam. In those days there were very few people staying with him, perhaps three or four, and only the occasional visitor climbed the hill to see him.

One day, some fifty people in a festive mood went up to Maharshi, carrying with them all the necessities for a big meal: vegetables, dhal, rice, firewood, vessels, leaf plates, etc. They wanted to offer a feast to Maharshi, but not at the cave where he was staying. So, they requested him to come with them to Seven Springs, a beautiful spot near the top of the hill where pure spring water was available. Bhagavan did not give his assent verbally, but he indicated his willingness to participate by following the devotees as they started to climb the hill.

It was a long, winding climb, for their destination was a thousand feet further up the hill. After reaching Seven Springs, they made a brief visit to the top of the hill, returned to Seven Springs and settled down to do the cooking. Since Bhagavan was known to be a wonderful cook, the visiting devotees consulted him about what sort of preparation to make, how to make it, and so on. Bhagavan happily gave them the necessary advice.

They set up the firewood and the vessels, took out the provisions, and then realised that they had forgotten the matchbox! No cooking could be done until someone went all the way to the bottom of the hill and returned with some matches.

The devotees were in a worried and anxious mood, but Bhagavan was smiling, seemingly amused by something. After the devotee had returned with the matches, someone ventured to ask, 'Bhagavan, may we know the reason for your smile?'

Maharshi said, 'This state of affairs reminds me of a verse from Sankara, in *Atmabodha*'.

Adapted from a talk delivered at La Jolla, California, in August, 1991.

'Which verse?' they asked.

Maharshi then quoted the second verse: 'Of all the means to liberation, knowledge is the only direct one, as essential as fire for cooking. Without it, liberation cannot be gained.'

What is this knowledge that is so essential that liberation cannot be attained without it? One can begin to answer this question by looking at the experience which transformed the boy Venkataraman into the Sage Ramana Maharshi.

Maharshi, as you know, had a death experience at the age of sixteen. His body appeared to die and in that state he understood, by direct experience, that the Self, his real nature and essence, is untouched by the physical death of the body. He transcended death by disassociating himself permanently from the transient body and by abiding in the eternal essence which is its source and support.

History has not produced a single person who, having been born, has not died. So, physical death is certain. But Sri Ramana Maharshi showed that the death of the time-bound body does not bring about the death of one's real, essential nature. He demonstrated that when the individual self dies, a permanent reality, which I shall call 'the life principle', shines forth in its place. What is this newly-discovered essence?

The life that we live and the death that we anticipate both depend on time, space and causation. At a particular time, the body comes into existence, endures, and in time withers away. There is growth, maintenance, and finally decay, all taking place in a realm in which time, space and causality are held to be real. In this realm there is continuous movement and change, a perennial process of becoming.

But the Reality, the life principle which I just spoke of, is beyond the body and the mind. It is Being. It is motionless. It doesn't move at all.

In order to become, you have to do something, you have to be engaged in activity. But to *be*, you merely refrain from doing. Many people find it very difficult *not* to do anything, simply to be quiet. In not *doing*, just *being*, what happens? Time loses its grip, space becomes meaningless and causation is seen to be illusory.

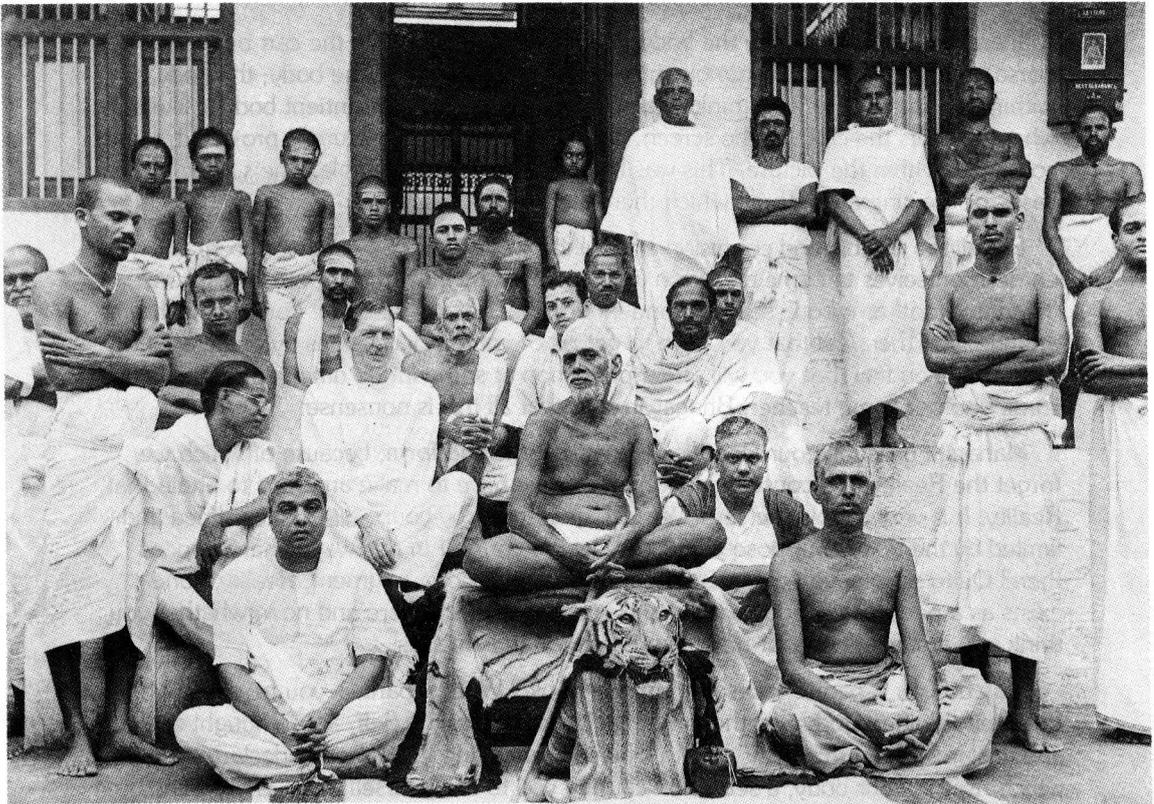
When you turn from outer *becoming* to inward *being*, time, space and causation come to a standstill. But to refrain from doing anything, one needs to pay full attention to what one is. The resulting experience, one of full Self-awareness, is not a theoretical abstraction. It is something which every one of us experiences but unknowingly. And we can experience it knowingly by refraining from all mental activities. So, what happens when you deny space, time and causation? The changeable man with his ever-changing thoughts is nullified. He becomes inwardly changeless. That state of complete Self-attention is simple awareness, Reality itself. Bhagavan used to say that all you have to learn is to *be as you are* and to abide continuously as That.

There is a great saying in *Sanatsujatiya*: 'Inattention is death'. Attention is life, inattention is death. This is Sankaracharya's interpretation, and the one I like the most. What is meant by inattention? Externalising the mind is 'inattention', whereas turning it inward is 'attention'. Externalisation means time, space and causation, and whenever you are caught in its net, you are doomed to die. Death is not just a chronological, bodily event but inattention to *that* which is always within you. To escape death, all one needs to do is pay total attention to that which is alive within you. As the

Upanishads say: 'The awareness that is within should be a flame undisturbed by even the slightest wind.'

Maharshi gave a beautiful definition of *samsara* and *mukti*. He said, '*Samsara* is bondage and *mukti* is liberation. Whatever draws your mind outward is *samsara*. Whatever puts your mind back into yourself is *mukti*.'

So, going back to my original anecdote, what is that knowledge, referred to in *Atmabodha*, which is the only direct means to liberation, as essential as fire is to cooking, without which liberation cannot be gained? Certainly not book knowledge, or knowledge that comes from outside you, for that is subject to time, space and causation. That essential knowledge is full awareness, total absorption in the life principle that is within you.



That life principle is neither a tangible object nor a mysterious subject. It is the basis of all objects and subjects. Unless there is this life principle, how can you read and how can I write? That is the awareness, that is the Knowledge. And sticking to that Knowledge *alone* will take you to liberation.

Bhagavan was rooted in that liberation, in that awareness. At the age of seventy, shortly before he dropped the body, he was asked, 'Was there gradation in your realisation?' Maharshi replied, 'No. There was no addition or subtraction or change or any modulation in that.' What was attained at the age of sixteen was the one and only state, of which he said, 'It is not something special to me. It is available to *everyone* of you.'

It is the mistake of identifying with the body which gives rise to time, space and causation, and also to the endless cycle of birth and death, described graphically in both Hinduism and Buddhism.

Maharshi was once asked, 'When you say you had that experience, does that mean that all these births and deaths that are taking place are all unreal?' He replied, 'No. If you identify yourself with the body, with birth and death, then the cycles of birth and death are going to be perennially true. But *find out whether you are the body.*'

However, disassociating oneself from the body does not mean mortifying it. Bhagavan was the best of cooks and cared for the bodily comforts of his devotees. Nor did Maharshi ever recommend outward renunciation. There are only few devotees of Bhagavan who are *sannyasis*. Maharshi's question really means, 'Are you the body and nothing but the body?'

Identifying ourselves with the body, Maharshi says, is putting the cart before the horse, and that is why we stumble in life. Reality is not within the body; the body is within the Reality. He who thinks that the Self is within the insentient body is like one who considers the cloth of the screen, on which the cinema picture is projected, to be contained within the picture. This was Bhagavan's classic example. The screen is the basis for the cinema, without which there are no pictures.

So, all the trouble and confusion arise when we forget the Self (the screen) and enmesh ourselves in name and form (the cinema show), identifying ourselves from 'head' to 'foot' as a body separate and independent of the whole. If you start with that attitude, you then feel that you have to get rid of your imperfections by doing a lot of *sadhana*. You feel that you will attain perfection at some future date, either through some book or some teacher. Bhagavan says that all this is nonsense.

Maharshi questions our identification with name and form, because of which we forget the Reality and consequently think that we have to make an effort to attain that Reality. It is very simple, he says. What do you mean by your Self? Is it confined and limited by the body? Suppose you don't identify yourself in this way, what happens then? Quite simple; you discover you are the whole, not a fragment. Reality alone exists as a perfect undivided whole, and you experience it here and now, whether you think you are aware of it or not. That is what Maharshi says.

Why do you separate yourself from the whole? What separates you from the whole? Between the inert body and the perennial life principle, the Self, an 'I'-thought arises and declares, 'I am this body, and this person inhabiting it'. Maharshi declares that that which rises in your body, a sensation causing you to call yourself as 'I', is the mind, and furthermore that this mind is the birthplace of ignorance. It doesn't belong either to the body or to the Reality, but it is still there, governing and dominating our lives. Maharshi identifies the ego, the mind, attachment, *samsara* — everything that is the non-Self — with that 'I'. It is an unreal entity because, if you try to find it, it flees and vanishes.

Bhagavan often told the story of the bridegroom's and the bride's parties to illustrate how unreal this 'I' is. In India, the bride's party has to give all reverence and a large amount of cash to the bridegroom's party. Once, a bridegroom's party was arriving by train and so the bride's party, including the bride's father, went to the station to receive them. A very charming young man, not connected with either party, stood next to the bride's father. The train came in. The bridegroom came out of the train, followed by

the rest of his party. Then this handsome young stranger who had been standing next to the bride's father, went across and stood next to the bridegroom. The bride's party had not noticed him at all because all their attention had been on the incoming train and the bridegroom. As the train was coming into the station the bridegroom's party, anxious to locate the bride's party, noticed that the young man was standing next to the bride's father. Thinking that he must be an important member of the bride's party, they treated him with special respect. So, both parties were led to believe that the man was an important member of the other group.

At the marriage celebration, this handsome fellow created a lot of problems. He behaved in an autocratic way and dealt arrogantly with everyone. The bride's party noticed that all the other people in the bridegroom's party were polite and gentle. Only this young man, apparently a friend of the bridegroom, was causing problems for them. And the bridegroom's party, who thought that this young man was a friend of the bride's father, to whom they had to accord respect, wondered what was going on. Eventually, when both the bridegroom's party and the bride's party began making enquiries about who this young fellow really was, and to which party he belonged, the fellow took to his heels and fled. The imposter could only remain and cause trouble as long as neither party made a serious attempt to find out who he was.

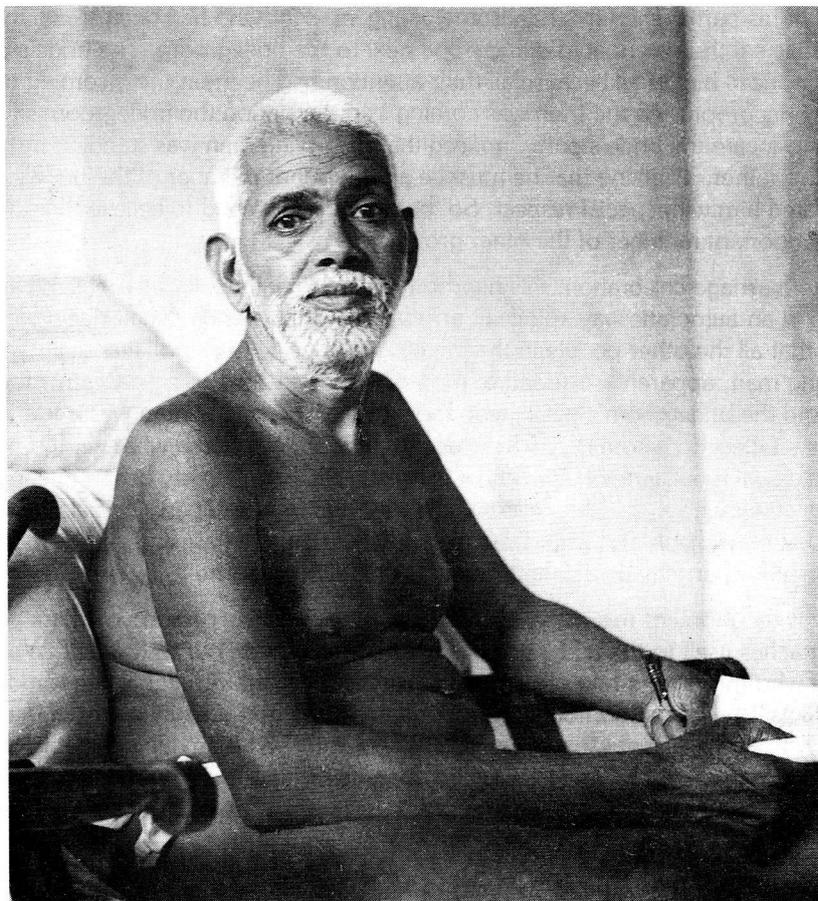
What is the moral of this story? Maharshi says, this 'I', this person you think you are, which attaches itself to the body, belongs neither to the body nor to the Self. When you question who this 'I' is, it takes to its heels, like the arrogant intruder at the wedding. Maharshi asks us to question ourselves in order to find out the real identity of the imposter 'I'. And he taught that when you ask yourself, 'Who am I?' incessantly and with determination, you will be led back to the place where the 'I' first arose. There, unable to withstand the intense scrutiny, the 'I' will vanish, leaving pure awareness, Reality itself.

Bhagavan gives the example, as you well know, of deep sleep, in which there is no individual 'I', in which there is no mind. When we wake up, this 'I' rises up and identifies with the body and all its problems. So Maharshi asks: is it not your prime duty to drive away this fellow who doesn't belong to the body or to Reality, but who, through a lack of inquiry causes so much misery for you?

When we find, by questioning the source of the 'I', that there is no 'I' except the questioner in the form of Reality, the 'I' no longer rises. What remains is peace and happiness, being itself. This state, Maharshi says, is Liberation.

Even if you have experienced that peace for a fraction of a second, in that moment you experience liberation. When you discover that state, don't subject yourself again to the prison of time. A friend once told me, 'Every day I meditate for half an hour'. I pointed out to him, 'See how you are already subject to time. What has half an hour got to do with meditation?'

Whenever you are absolutely happy, be it even for an instant, you *are* liberated. Pay attention to that quietude, that peace, instead of falling into the trap of time. What does it matter whether it is for a few seconds, or for a lifetime as in the case of a Christ, a Buddha, or a Ramana Maharshi? Why compare? You see, comparison is again becoming. But perhaps you want to become a Ramana Maharshi, you want to become a Christ. Why? What is wrong with you as you are now? By remaining in this



full attention, with this full awareness, you *are* Maharshi, you *are* Christ. There is no doubt about it. This is what Maharshi says.

How to get into that state? It is only by being alert to that inward awareness. Because we are not acquainted with this awareness, we get caught up in the web of time, space and causation. We do not know what lies beyond this web. When I say 'beyond' I do not mean to indicate that this primal awareness is a mysterious or far-off state. We regularly enjoy it, in fact we experience it every day, even if only for a fraction of a second. But how does the length or duration of the experience matter? It is timeless, beyond time and space.

Bhagavan told us that *abhyasam*, spiritual practice, consists of withdrawing attention from external objects each time we become aware that we have become entangled in them, and putting attention instead on the 'I' within us. Because we do not know what attention is and how to maintain it, we are prone to inattention. Practise holding on to that awareness which is within you.

All this Bhagavan calls *jnana-kann*, the eye of knowledge. You yourself — he didn't say somebody else — can discover it for yourself, with your own eye ('I') of knowledge. This 'I' of knowledge is total awareness, and with your own effort, when you see that

you are not the body, simultaneously, without any interval of time, you will see that you are nothing but that peace alone, that Reality alone.

Maharshi once wrote a beautiful verse, which can be summarised in the following words: To realise that Reality, do you want some other Reality? The feeling of that Reality *alone* is the Truth. There is no other Reality, or another mind to know that Reality, because that Reality is in the form of experience throbbing within you, and that throbbing is your real Self.

You have to face yourself. Many people find this very difficult. Everyone is prepared to *do* — *bhajans, japa, puja*, build temples, raise funds in the name of God. But to remain without doing, to refrain from doing is more difficult, and few are prepared or capable of it. Ultimately we have to face ourselves and be ourselves in stillness and silence.

It is so difficult *not* to do. Not doing means remaining in that Reality. Maharshi wants us to be still, to be that Reality. That Reality is Maharshi himself. We identify Maharshi with that picture, with that name: Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. But, behind that picture, behind the name, the Reality that is throbbing within every one of us — that is Maharshi. And Maharshi wanted us to wake up to that Reality within us, the same Reality that is Ramana Maharshi.

Let us see the truth about ourselves. That is the best way we can pay homage to all the sages, belonging to all religions, all over the world. All religions, all words, all these are subject to time, space and causality. We speak in these terms, but really all the sages are nothing but you. This may seem shocking but it's the truth.

Let us pay homage to Ramana Maharshi by turning within and becoming fully aware of that knowledge which defies death, that life principle which is the screen on which this body comes and goes. Let us pay *total* attention to that pure life principle, and remain there.

It is easy.

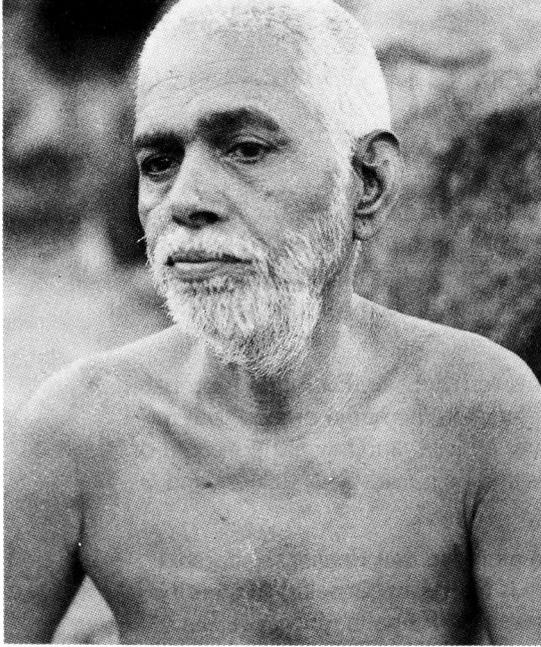
It is direct and simple.

**"The root of meditation is the Guru's Form,
The root of worship is the Guru's Feet,
The root of mantra is the Guru's Word,
The root of liberation is the Guru's GRACE."**

- Guru Gita, 76

"The Guru actually emerges from within. When genuine search takes effect, his genuine manifestation is bound to occur; it cannot possibly be otherwise. The One, assuming Himself the shape of the Guru, of his own accord brings about His manifestation or becomes manifested."

- Ma Anandamayee Ma.



G.V. SUBBARAMAYYA: 'THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE RAMANA ORDER'

By A.R. Natarajan

Subbaramayya's first visit to Sri Ramanasramam was in 1933. He did not introduce himself but asked questions about some passages in *Bhagavad Gita* and was satisfied. He had come more because of his literary interest. On reading Ramana's *Upadesa Saram* in Telugu he found its 'simplicity, felicity and classic finish' comparable to the greatest of Telugu poets, Tikkanna. With Ramana it does not matter why a person comes to him. It may be for curing a health problem, solving family worries, finding clarifications on the scriptures, or seeking guidance on the path of Self-knowledge. For once Ramana's look fell on a person, that look itself would do its work. The seeds of blossoming heart and mind would have been sown.

Subbaramayya was back, but the surprise was that it was only three years later. This time he came with a proper introduction. Little did he know about Ramana's photographic memory and boundless love. Ramana asked, "Why the introduction? You came here before". Three years had elapsed and several hundreds of devotees would have come in-between. And on the earlier occasion he had not even introduced himself! Suddenly, thanks to the good fortune of generations of devo-

tees, Subbaramayya felt that Ramana resembled his father, strikingly. Fortunate, because from then on his relationship with Ramana was totally free of any inhibition. It was like that of a child to a parent, 'fearless, free and familiar'. We all owe a lot to this, and to the attitude of Devaraja Mudaliar who also regarded himself as Ramana's child, '*Ramana chei*'. Between the two of them, they made for so much naturalness in the atmosphere around Ramana. None could have taken the liberties the two devotees took. But then it was part of the divine plan, for nothing could happen unless Ramana permitted the liberty.

It is so easy to identify oneself with Subbaramayya. So easy to forget his specially chosen role as the spokesman of the devotees because he seems too much like one of us. There are the common worries of the householder; someone or other at home is sick, a friend needs help, daughters have to be married, sons and sons-in-law have to be protected. Karma saw to it that Subbaramayya had more than his quota of such problems. He would be quick to send a telegram, post a letter, make personal pleadings for the solving of the problems, almost in the way any other



G.V. Subbaramayya

devotee would. But in fact there was a world of difference. One would hesitate to trouble the Master, or appeal to him, except as a last resort and that too with a lingering doubt whether the relief would be there. In Subbaramayya's case it was a combination of a child-like faith and his certainty in the Master's power to come to the rescue. The problem was there and Ramana would solve it for sure. That is all he knew and cared for.

As one reads his *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* there are hair-raising passages when we can ourselves feel, even at this distance of time, how much Ramana cared for his devotees, how much love he poured on them. To illustrate: Subbaramayya has informed the Ashram authorities that he is coming by a particular train scheduled to arrive in the morning. Usually he would go straight to Ramana and offer his prostrations. That day he decided to have a bath and it was quite some time before he reached the hall. As soon as he entered, Ramana asked, "Was the train late? I thought I heard the train's whistle at the right time". What thoughtfulness! Ramana is surrounded by devotees. He has his daily routine. Yet his ears are tuned to the whistle of the train by which the devotee is to arrive. Subbaramayya's young daughter Lalitha is hungry, but he does not even know. Ramana notices it immediately and quickly reprimands him for the delay in feeding the child, remarking: "What is your meditation worth if you neglect to serve the child?" A devotee plays on the veena, lost in Ramana, and Ramana remarks, "People talk of *gandharva loka* (the realm of heavenly music). Where is it? I tell you we have been all the while in *gandharva loka*". Subbaramayya's daughter Lalitha receives a note, on the occasion of her wedding, from Suri Nagamma at Ramana's instance assuring her "that he would be present not only at the function but always."

As for spiritual insights and guidance on the path, Subbaramayya has sought clarifications for himself and for us on so many vital points. Let us savour a few of them. "The Self is realised not by one's doing something, but by one's refraining from doing anything, by remaining still and being simply what one really is" ... "Get rid of the notion, 'I am impure'. The Self is ever pure. All this is the work of the mind. If you get to the basis of the mind, all these wrong notions will disappear" ... "All

illusion is sorrow. Only the real Self is true happiness" ... "What is destined must happen whether you intend it or not" ... "Don't worry. Be at peace. Everything will be well. To Be is our own nature, not to come and go" ... "The aspirant to knowledge should beware of *siddhis* (powers). Even if they come and court him of their own accord, he should reject them" ... "The same *shakti* that brought me from Madurai to Tiruvannamalai, got me down here from the Hill. I had no *sankalpa* (individual volition) whatsoever".

Subbaramayya was a hot favourite of Chinnaswami and the Ashram management. For he would readily and unquestioningly render help in all matters whenever sought. From translating the *Forty Verses*, *Ramana Gita* and other works into Telugu or English, to securing the permission of the government for the cement and steel needed for the construction of the Mother's shrine, he would gladly serve. For him it was Ramana's Ashram and the real strength of the management was Ramana himself.

What an endearing personality emerges as one reads and re-reads the forgotten treasure, Subbaramayya's *Reminiscences*. Strange that he has taken the back seat, for even Ramana's biographers seem to have forgotten him. It can only mean that the time has not yet come for his full stature to be known. How can we explain? He seemed so close to Ramana that Devaraja Mudaliar would in friendly banter call him the 'High Priest of the Ramana Order'. If for some reason he was absent for a long time, the fellow devotees would miss him. Everything would seem so lifeless without his continuous sessions with Ramana as can be seen from a letter which Sub-Registrar Narayana Iyer wrote to him, "Nowadays it is all very silent. We don't have the soul-stirring talks we used to have in your company. We all look forward to your arrival eagerly". There would never be a dull moment when he was in Ramana's presence. How can we repay our debt to this humble professor of English, for having recorded for posterity those wonderful days when Ramana literally showered his blessings on him? Thanks to this, we get glimpses of the multifaceted beauty of Ramana, of what it means to love, what it means to give, what it means to reach the profound truth simply and directly.



THE RIBHU GITA

Translated by ROBERT BUTLER

THE RIBHU GITA was regularly chanted at Sri Ramanasramam in the 1920s and 30s. Sri Ramaswami Pillai, writing in *The Mountain Path* (1981, p. 146), reported that in the 1920s no other work was read as often. Devotees, usually numbering six or seven, would sit with Bhagavan and take it in turns to read out portions of the text. In his account of these sessions Ramaswami Pillai wrote, 'Bhagavan used to tell us, and on occasion we used to feel and experience it, that to read the Ribhu Gita is to be in samadhi'.

The original Ribhu Gita, composed in Sanskrit, can be found in the sixth section of *Sivarahasya*, a little-known Itihasa. The version read out at Sri Ramanasramam was a Tamil verse rendering composed by Ulakanatha Swamigal. It is a portion of this Tamil version, translated into English by Robert Butler, that we print below.

The first few verses of chapter one extol the greatness of the work and describe how Siva transmitted the teachings to the sage Ribhu. In the verses that follow, Ribhu begins to pass on these teachings to a group of rishis who are headed by the sage Nidaga.

* * *

31. Having first made this general address to Nidaga, Suka and the rest of the rishis, the great sage Ribhu lovingly made obeisance to the Lord in thought, word and deed. Then, filled with deep affection, he selected Nidaga, the rarest of the great rishis, to be their leader and began his error-free exposition of the unique and indivisible Knowledge of Lord Siva:
32. That all-pervading limitless field of pure Consciousness, the supreme Lord Siva, Uma's consort, is both the material and the efficient cause of this world and of all other worlds. Furthermore, it is that same Sambhu, fountain-head of Being, Consciousness and Bliss, who permeates those worlds and gives them reality, who illumines them with His radiance, and who relieves their joylessness with His own delight.
33. Since Lord Siva, grace's very form, is the foundation and support of the infinite created energy, it follows that, as first cause of all the universe, there can be nothing greater than or even equal to Him. Thus He alone is seen to be the aforementioned material and efficient cause beyond which no superior causal agency can ever, anywhere, exist.
- The Truth Concerning the Self**
34. Nidaga, you who have fully mastered every form of spiritual practice! Even as the supreme Lord of the universe in His infinite compassion once revealed it to me, I shall now briefly explain to you in a way that all may comprehend the truth concerning the Self. Those who do not scorn this most secret of doctrines, but listen attentively and understand it fully, will become one with the supreme *Brahman* for all eternity.
36. Disciple, the Self is the unique and all-pervading Knowledge. It remains established as the Reality underlying the body and all the myriad appearances which occur in the empirical state. It alone witnesses the body and all else that exists. It lies entirely beyond the objective world. Investigate one-pointedly and it will be seen that this Self is none other than the inner essence of the indivisible supreme *Brahman*.
37. The Self, whose form is that of Knowledge, is known as the Real because it can never cease to be. The Self, whose form is that of Knowledge, is known as Consciousness because it is the light which illumines all. The Self, whose form is that of Knowledge, is known as Bliss because it is beloved of all men. The Self, whose form is that of Knowledge, is known as the Eternal because it is without beginning or end.
38. *Brahman*, similarly, is of the form of non-dual Knowledge. It is the foundation which underlies all things. It lies beyond the reach of this objective world. It shines out as the unique all-pervading universal presence. It is qualityless, eternal and perfect. It is pure and inherently real. It is peace. It is Being, Consciousness and Bliss. It is eternally the Self of all men.
39. By the imposition of limiting concepts, worldly wisdom divides space into separate entities, differentiating between 'the space in a pot' and 'the space in a hall', even though it is in reality a single expanse. Similarly, the very entity we call Knowledge is divided by the imposition of limiting adjuncts such as 'ignorance' even though it is really one and indivisible. In just the same way do the Self and the all-pervasive *Brahman* appear to be separate.
40. Just as 'the space in a pot' and 'the space in a hall' become one again if existence is denied to the superimposed concepts of 'pot' and 'hall', even so do the purified Self and *Brahman* become one if existence is refused to 'ignorance' and the other conceptual superimpositions. If reality is refused to those distinctions which give rise to duality through the path of self-enquiry enjoined by the Vedantic texts, the aspirant cannot fail to realise the oneness of the Self's inconceivable vastness.
41. Since the inner distinctions within the Self, such as the defect of 'ignorance', and those occurring within *Brahman*, such as the radiance of '*maya*', are merely dream-like appearances within *Brahman*, which in turn is not different from the Self, you should conclude that all this world can have no other origin and foundation whatever, and refusing reality to it,

- you should come to perceive the supreme oneness of the limitless Self, which is without beginning, end, or any other limitation.
42. The silver which appears to line the shell of an oyster does not exist except as part of the shell itself. Likewise, within the Self, which is abundant Being, Consciousness and Bliss, all this phenomenal world, originating in mental activity, evolves and takes on the appearance of the Real. However, realising that it has no existence apart from the Self, you should deny its reality and come to perceive the supreme oneness of the underlying Self, all-pervading and beyond duality.
43. Everything which appears to manifest within the Self is not in fact separate from the Self. And *Brahman* is not separate from the Self, nor the Self from it. The Self is indeed *Brahman*, and *Brahman* the Self. In this there cannot be a single atom of doubt. Therefore, knowing that 'I' and the Self are the same, you should ever assert 'I am *Brahman*' and thus come to realise the transcendent oneness of the Self.
44. Since the Self exists in the form of Knowledge, there can be no word which proclaims the non-Self. Since the Self exists in the form of Knowledge, there can be no thought which knows the non-Self. Since the Self exists in the form of knowledge, no world can exist where the non-Self dwells. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self, whose nature is Knowledge, endures eternally, immovable and all-pervading.
45. Since the Self exists in the form of Knowledge, ignorance and the world's manifestation cannot exist independently of it. Since the Self exists in the form of Knowledge, the activities of identifying and distinguishing cannot exist independently of it. Since the Self exists in the form of Knowledge, there can be no form which exists independently of it. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self, whose nature is Knowledge, is eternal, immovable and omnipresent.
46. Since volition and the other three aspects of mind do not exist, there can never be any permissible object of thought. Since, in truth, the body and all that goes with it do not exist, old age, death and so on cannot exist either. Since the hand and other limbs do not exist, the actions associated with them, such as grasping, have no existence. Reasoning thus, you should be assured that the Self, whose nature is eternal Knowledge, alone exists, enduring and unshakeable.
47. Since Brahma, the wide world's creator, has no reality, the world in its endless diversity cannot come into being. Since the world's existence from generation to generation has no reality, there can be no glorious Vishnu to preserve it. Since the recognised categories of things moveable and immoveable have no existence, Siva, the famed destroyer of worlds, cannot exist either. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the unchanging Self alone endures, eternal and complete unto Itself.
48. Since the letter 'a' and the rest of the alphabet do not exist, there can be no words to join the letters together in speech. Since the worthy preceptor is not a reality, neither is the pupil who devotes himself to him. Since the whole range of literary work does not exist, their injunctions, prohibitions and so on cannot exist either. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self, whose nature is unimpeachable Knowledge, alone exists for all eternity.
49. Since there is no 'one' there can be no 'two', and since there is no 'two' there can be no 'one'. Since there is no fear, there can be no fearlessness, and since there is no fearlessness, there can be no fear. Since there is no happiness, there can be no unhappiness. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self, which is ever of the nature of Knowledge, alone exists for all eternity.
50. Since the real¹ in its nature is non-existent, there can be no unreality, and since the changeable unreality does not exist, there can be no

¹ This presumably means 'the concept of reality' rather than Reality Itself, since in many of the other verses it is stated that Reality alone exists. The same idea appears again in verse 54. When reality is seen as the opposite of unreality, it is not the Absolute Reality.

reality. Since purity in its nature is non-existent, there can be no impurity, and since that impurity does not exist, there can be no purity. Since there is no pain there can be no corresponding pleasure, and since it has no counterpart in pleasure, there can be no pain. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self, untouched by the objective world, alone exists for all eternity.

51. Since there is eternally no 'you', there can be no 'I', and since there is no 'I', there can be no 'you'. Due to the absence of an agent there can be no action, and due to the absence of such an action there can be no agent. Since there is no one in bondage there can be no one who is liberated, and since there is no one liberated, there can be no one in bondage. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self, untouched by this objective world, alone exists for all eternity.
52. By virtue of the fact that birth does not exist, there can be no death. By virtue of the fact that death does not exist, there can be no birth. By virtue of the fact that the 'I' does not exist, there can be no 'other'. By virtue of the fact that no 'other' exists, there can be no 'I'. By virtue of the fact that the mind does not exist, there can be no mental delusion. By virtue of the fact that mental delusion does not exist, there can be no mind. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self alone is the incontrovertible Reality, where all appears as in a dream.
53. Since no end can exist, there can be no beginning, and since no beginning can exist, there can be no end. Since there is no sexual union, there can be no birth, and since there is no birth there can be no sexual union. Since there is no bondage there can be no liberation, and since there is no liberation there can be no bondage. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self alone, the eternally Conscious, is the immovable Reality.
54. Since the existence of no effect can be admitted, there cannot be any corresponding cause. Since no visible object can exist, there can never be a seeing faculty to perceive it. Since the dualistic world in its endless diversity does not exist, then the non-dual reality cannot exist either. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that the Self alone, which is the perfect consummation of all things, is the indestructible Reality.
55. Since there is nothing which can be called internal, there can be nothing external which corresponds to it. Since nothing exists which can be said to be a whole, there can never be anything which is called a part. Since no imperfect thing can exist, there can be nothing which has the quality of perfection. Reasoning thus, you should arrive at the certainty that this Self, whose nature is pure Consciousness, is alone the flawless Reality.
56. Nothing exists which can be called 'this' or 'that'. Nothing exists of which it can be said 'It is' or 'It isn't'. Nothing exists which can be said to be fixed. Nothing exists which appears in various forms. Neither the proposition nor the simile which illustrates it exist. The wondrous diversity of God, the soul and the world does not exist. All is eternally the indivisible supreme *Brahman*, and that flawless supreme *Brahman* is none other than the Self.
57. Everything which appears to exist is *Brahman* Itself. The 'you' which appears to exist is *Brahman* Itself. The 'I' which appears to exist is *Brahman* Itself. The 'other' which appears to exist is *Brahman* Itself. The world which appears to exist is *Brahman* Itself. The God which appears to exist is *Brahman* Itself. All appearances of whatever nature are *Brahman* Itself, and that indivisible supreme *Brahman* is none other than the Self.
58. The nature of the Self is the fullness of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. The nature of the Self is the supreme consummation of all. The nature of the Self is eternally without attributes. The nature of the Self is formless and without defect. The nature of the Self is *chidambaram*, the pure sky of consciousness. The nature of the Self is the subtlest of the subtle. The nature of the Self is the essential non-dual Reality. The nature of the Self is limitless self-sufficiency.
59. So we see that nothing whatsoever exists outside of the Self, which delights only in its own indivisible nature. There can be no trace

of doubt when I affirm that you are that very Self, that limitless Intelligence. Disciple, when you come to know the unquestioned truth about the indivisible Self, and realise that 'I', which is none other than the Self, is of the very nature of the exalted supreme *Brahman*, then shall you be liberated from the bonds of birth and death.

60. Nidaga, I have here given to you, in a way most pleasing to all, a brief account of the unique truth concerning the limitless Self, even as the Lord in His boundless majesty once revealed it to me. All those who, paying close attention, have listened carefully to it, even once, and have understood its meaning, will become one with the essence of the supreme *Brahman* in all its fullness.

The Personal Experience of the Self

61. Nidaga joyfully turned to the sage Ribhu and replied, 'Sadguru, my Lord and master! Please afford me your grace and recount to me that wondrous experience of your own true nature just as it was revealed to you that day through the Lord's compassion, and, dispelling all those torments of birth and death, receive me into your holy protection.' Then the sage gave a true and exact reply to Nidaga's question, saying:
62. I am that *Brahman* which is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, which is not involved in the cycle of births, which is eternally without form, which is ever unembodied, which stands alone as the one Reality, whose reality depends upon Itself alone, which is not one and not two. I am that consummate indivisible perfection which is *Brahman*.
63. I am that supreme *Brahman* whose form is Truth, whose form is Eternal Bliss, whose form is Consciousness, which is the boundless sphere of pure Intelligence, which knows no defect, the flawless plenitude whose form is my own Self. I am that unique consummate perfection which is *Brahman*.
64. I am that supreme *Brahman* which knows neither caste nor family, which is beyond all relationship, which is without beginning and without end, which is free of all error, which never wearies, which is full of majesty, which is devoid of all distinctions, which is empty of all attachments.
65. I am that *Brahman* in which there is no 'this' and no 'that', in which there is no 'I' and no 'other', in which there is nothing fixed and stable, in which there is nothing perceptible to sight, whose form is eternally One. I am that supreme *Brahman* which is steadfast and unchanging.
66. I am the supreme *Brahman*, the eternally enduring, the eternally pure, the eternally new, the eternally free, the eternally independent, the eternally flawless, the eternally unmoving, the eternally indivisible.
67. I am that *Brahman*, the eternally real, the eternally conscious, the eternally blissful, the infinitely subtle, the eternally sacred, the eternally auspicious, the perpetually enduring. I am that supreme *Brahman*, the eternal peace.
68. I am the supreme *Brahman*, whose nature is absolute Reality. I am the supreme *Brahman*, whose nature is absolute Consciousness. I am the supreme *Brahman*, whose nature is absolute Goodness. I am the supreme *Brahman*, the Absolute manifesting as the sacred sound *nada*. I am the supreme *Brahman*, which is Absolute Space, Absolute Form, the Absolute of Absolutes, the Absolute Majesty.
69. I am that *Brahman* which is untouched by the modifications of primordial matter, which transcends all divisions, from which all the defects of mind are absent, in which there is no discrimination or identification, in which the vast multiplicity of names does not exist, in which there is no diversity of forms, which is undefiled by contact with the ego. I am the indivisible field of pure Consciousness which is *Brahman*.
70. I am that *Brahman*, the fullness and perfection of all things, which is without body and all other limiting adjuncts, which is all-embracing and lacks nothing, which is replete with spiritual knowledge, which is the foundation of everything, whose activity permeates the universe, which is the possessor of all divine

attributes. I am that *Brahman*, supreme and indivisible, which is empty of all content.

71. I am that *Brahman* in which the five-fold division of the elements does not exist, in which the various worlds do not exist, in which the distinctions of birth do not exist, in which the various states of the soul do not exist, in which the *Vedas*' four-fold division does not exist, in which *Brahma* and the various other gods do not exist, in which there exists no distinction of whatever nature. I am for all eternity the one supreme *Brahman*.
72. I am that supreme *Brahman* whose form is that of pure Knowledge without a bodily form, whose existence is continuous and uninterrupted, whose form is that of Knowledge, untainted by desire, which is free of the three kinds of affliction, whose form is that of indivisible Knowledge, which is unaffected by the limitations of finite being, whose form is that of Knowledge which never grows weak. I am the self-effulgent Supreme *Brahman*.
73. I am the immaculate supreme *Brahman*, to which no action can be ascribed, whose form is one and unchanging, which nothing has the power to perceive. I am that supreme *Brahman*, unique, beyond duality, eternal and all-pervading, the all-embracing supreme perfection. I am that supreme *Brahman* whose nature is Consciousness alone.
74. I am that supreme *Brahman* which exists unchanging for all eternity, in which there is no atom of uncertainty, which is limitless and eternal, in which no trace of ego can be found, which is holy and free of all enmity, in which there is no vestige of joy and sorrow, the Supreme which cannot be bound. I am that *Brahman* which is entirely free from the toils of birth and death.
75. I am that *Brahman* in which the five aspects of Lord Siva do not exist, in which the five divine operations do not exist, which nothing can blemish, which is supreme and undefiled, which shines with its own radiance, which is pure transcendent Consciousness, which cannot be linked to any form of activity. I am that pure Intelligence which is the supreme *Brahman*.
76. I am that *Brahman* which is free from the darkness of delusive knowledge, which is free from all the effects which stem from such knowledge, in which the five bodily sheaths do not exist, in which nothing exists whether base or sublime, which is freedom, unconditioned and absolute, in which ritual acts and all the rest do not exist, in which all the branches of learning do not exist. I am the supreme *Brahman*, empty and immaculate.
77. I am the supreme *Brahman*, the root and source of the universe, which transcends all creation, which permeates all that is, the eternally pure and holy, the essence of everything, the Universal Soul, the final liberation. I am the supreme *Brahman*, the bliss of true realisation.
78. I am eternally neither the body nor the senses, neither the vital airs nor the heart, neither intelligence nor volition, neither individuality nor aggregation, neither base ego nor the primal ignorance in which it is rooted. I am nothing that can ever be known, for I am eternally that unconditioned supreme *Brahman*.
79. I am eternally neither a baby nor a child, neither a youth nor an adult, neither a great man nor a lowly man, neither a living soul nor a god. I am not one who can ever suffer death and destruction. I am eternally separate from the world in both its sentient and insentient aspects. I am eternally the indivisible, non-dual supreme *Brahman*, which stands alone as Itself, free and unconditioned.
80. I am eternally one with the form of *Brahman*, whose nature is Truth, whose nature is Consciousness, whose nature is Goodness, whose form is Its own Being. I am eternally one with the holy form of *Brahman*, with the qualityless form of *Brahman*, with the immovable form of *Brahman*. I am eternally one with the form of the indivisible supreme *Brahman*.
81. Devout ascetic, need I continue endlessly in this manner? The supreme and unalterable conviction that I am *Brahman*, that *Brahman* is myself and I am All, is none other than that unbounded realisation which I attained through the grace of the supreme Lord Siva. This is the

- truth concerning the divine edict of our flawless Lord. All those who hear these sacred words even once and grasp their meaning will become one with the Supreme.
82. The supreme Lord Siva is limitless, non-dual and without attributes. All those fools who do not possess that purity of mind which He fearlessly established as the essential meaning of the Vedantic texts rely merely on relative knowledge culled from a variety of books. They can never know that one and indivisible supreme *Sivam* which is none other than the supreme bliss of true realisation.
83. The wise who have steadfastly performed the eternal *puja* of the Lord and the other holy duties, and who have attained an unalterable purity of mind, will realise that the non-dual *Sivam* alone is the subject-matter and essence of the whole of the *Vedas* from beginning to end, and that the reality of that *Sivam* is their own Self. Therefore, obtaining the unshakeable and indivisible knowledge of Lord Siva and casting off entirely the bondage of birth and death, which is mere delusion, they will attain to that same *Sivam* which is none other than the bliss of true realisation.

Presence and the Present Moment

By Dr. David Frawley

Many spiritual teachings emphasize awareness in the here and now or being in the present moment. This has often been misunderstood. For most of us, being in the present means getting into what is happening immediately around us. It is getting caught in the moment and its immediate pleasure and pain, which is the pursuit of sensation. It is being engrossed in the events around us, living in the moment, and being driven by the stream of events like a leaf by the wind. To be such a creature of the present moment is to have no true will or enduring values in life.

The true present is not of time. The present which is between the past and the future is an insubstantial moment that has no reality of its own. It is the most fleeting and insignificant of things. The true present is the presence of consciousness which observes time but is not of it. In that presence the images of time appear like bubbles or clouds. They are nothing substantial and there is no effort to hold them. What is necessary is not to try to hold on to the present moment that does not endure even for an instant, but to remain in the presence of consciousness. The true presence is not of time and has no form, though it is reflected in all things. To open up to that presence is to no longer be disturbed by the transient events around us, but to embrace all time in the being of the eternal. In that is peace and liberation.

“THOUGHTS INTRUDE” — DO THEY?

By V. Dwaraknath Reddy

Never mind that an inadmissible question merits an implausible answer. The purpose of answering such a question should still be to carry the questioner past the question without letting him stagnate there adamantly, so that in the continued quest, the question fades out in the clear understanding of its own contradictions.

So, to him that stands upon the pedestal of his sensed reality and asserts from that point the temporal and spatial existence of a universe, and demands to know how, when and why creation came into being, the seemingly sufficient reply is given that the omnipotent Unitary God could accomplish creation through the instrumentality of Maya, His inscrutable power.

What, pray, is Maya? In sonorous syllables of chaste Sanskrit we are told: *Aghatita-Ghatana-Pateeyasi-Maya*, meaning: that which renders the impossible possible, that is Maya.

Let us go along with that explanation, even if it be with a raised eyebrow, and look with awe or adoration, belief or bewilderment, at the prowess of providence that made the impossible possible. And leave further questioning to another day.

For, what is troubling me more urgently today is my own perverse capability, and persistent compulsion, to render the possible impossible! Or else, why am I unable to *experience* what, beyond a shadow of doubt, I *know* through enlightened reasoning to be the Truth of myself? That the Supreme Intelligence could *will* the impossible to become possible, is less confounding than that the ignorance in me could be equipped to convert the possible into the impossible.

“Who am I?” is the pebble dropped into the stagnant waters of personal consciousness, so that the allied ripples — “What is it that experiences Amness?”, “Where does I-AM-ness arise, abide, get absorbed?” — these can spread and involve the whole area of consciousness in the movement of an awakened awareness, even as ripples reach the shore.

I, like many of you who are serious seekers in the quest, have looked at it long and earnestly, till the basics stand out loud and clear:

- 1) My instinctive assessment of myself has always been that I am this *person*, this individual, this historical reality with its memory that identifies and directs it.
- 2) I am conscious, that is to say, sentient. I say I have a mind. So the “person” that I am is a body-mind conglomerate inextricably interwoven. My body and mind limit me, and form the “I” that I am; they co-exist and are coterminous.
- 3) Being a conscious entity, I am naturally self-aware, and this is my I-experience. Beyond me and around me is the external world that contains you, them, and it — the perceived plurality.

This is what I believed implicitly till the pebble broke the sleeping surface and I found myself re-examining the validity of my easy beliefs.

Then I realized that:

- 4) Consciousness is energy (Life-power, if you like) manifesting through the sensing equipment (eyes, ears, nose, etc.) and the acting

equipment (hands, legs, mouth for speech, etc.). My body is the total equipment. But equipment serves to *manifest* energy, it cannot *produce* energy. Electricity manifests as light in the bulb, but the bulb does not produce electricity.

- 5) Therefore, the I-ness that is experienced by me by virtue of my being conscious is not a result of association with the body, but exists in its own right. Birth and death happen to the body, not to the consciousness that functions as the personalized mind.
- 6) This consciousness, available to me as experience, cannot be limited in space or time because "space" and "time" are included in my knowledge; that is, they are *contents* of consciousness (being known to my mind); and, therefore, they cannot be the *container*. It means that time and space are in I-ness; the I-person is not in time and space.
- 7) The whole mistake, now evident, is in equating "I" with the body, whereas in reality: (a) it is the centre of consciousness; (b) all consciousness is unitary; it is one unbroken whole; there is nothing that excludes consciousness and therefore there is nothing that can limit consciousness.
- 8) Now the mighty Truth is revealing itself. My I-ness is a fact of my experience and therefore beyond question or denial. It is the centre, I am that centre, nothing can change that. I thought that there was a circumference, a limited circle called "me" and identified with my body. Enquiry has demolished that narrow circle. So what am I the centre of now? Good God! Can't you see? I am the centre of Totality.
- 9) Consciousness has always been a unitary mass, *pragnana ghana*. One mass can have only one centre. That centre, the voice of consciousness, is where the "I" is felt. For what is consciousness if not self-aware I-ness? And I have that I-ness. So I must be unlimited total consciousness. I must have been that, and nothing but that, always. What has changed now?

10) How strange! As I am, right now, the truth of me must be that I am not the person I have taken myself to be. That is the truth. I can see it intellectually and know that there is no mistake. Yet, who is saying all this? *Me*, the person. A split *in* personality may be a psychological problem, but the split *into* personality is the whole spiritual problem.

11) So what do I do? Stop identifying myself with this body-person, and all the history and memory that pertains to this body-person. That is clear. That is simple.

Is it? That is what we are looking at today. We say the mind asserts itself, it intrudes and interferes. I cannot meditate, we say. How am I to keep the thoughts out.

Honestly, we are always meditating successfully — on that which interests us most! The cruel question and severe test is: are you willing to cease being the person that you have been? (Which is what is implied in giving up the old identification). *Are you willing?*

Through my attempts and failures, I face the fact that I am not. Not yet, I may say to soothe my pride. I need time. But time only passes on, whereas I, Mr. So-and-so, will pass away! Whom shall I fool? I know the answer to that one too. But do I know that merely to know is of no use? Without "becoming", knowing is only the dead-weight of a limiting intellect, the chain on a slave.

This is the answer: thoughts *will* come. Memory is the causal mode, preserved for my support and enjoyment, to sustain my identity and shape my desires and actions, to serve me in my relations and transactions with the perceived world of plurality. My life's compulsion is to desire, and my life's thrust is to fulfil those desires in my quest for an elusive happiness. Thoughts will come into my mind, initiated by the store of memory, but by themselves they will be as weak as drifting straws. What strength they possess will derive from the patronage extended to them, and not what is inherent in them. Without my support, they are powerless.

It is like this: you are sitting on the verandah of your fenced-in house. You can see through the

broad open gate the road that passes in front of your house. You see people walking down the road. Some are familiar neighbourhood faces, some are strangers, a few are close friends. As they pass, some turn and look, some don't. Some smile and move away, some wave a hand, an occasional one shouts a cheery greeting to you and trots along. Seated relaxed in your easy-chair, you can witness and respond lightly when you choose to, and be quietly with yourself.

But suddenly you see Charlie, and you must hail him. "Come in, old man! I have been wanting to talk to you." Today Charlie is more keen to mind his own business, but you will not accept a refusal. For, your happiness is now in wanting Charlie's company. You make him come in and take a seat. "Let us have a cup of tea," you say. You say that, not Charlie. Then you talk of the "damned good times" you had together in college, and everything else that memory has stored up. Charlie gets into the mood and forgets his other work. Finally, you have to fidget a lot before you can nudge him out of the chair and on to the road again. When alone at last, you complain how guys can't leave a man alone. They intrude and refuse to quit, you say. Then you watch the road till Johnny comes along! "Hey there, Johnny, dear Johnny!"

Are you willing to give up this fascination for the familiar, this urge to re-live a past pleasure, this security in relationships? Are you willing to become tremendously earnest about shifting the focus of the I-sense from that person that you have been, into a non-personal mode? Are you willing to abandon the memories that describe you, define you, and give you your identity as an individual? And be a presence in the present, *just be*? Or are you scared of the loneliness, the boredom, the changeless scene? Is the vastness of an eventless eternity frightening? Would you rather continue to be the familiar "I"?

Again and again, the question to be faced cries out, "Are you earnest?"

One who looks honestly at oneself and accepts that there is a lingering upon the path, must with equal honesty refuse to accept that external, unavoidable, uncontrollable forces are trespassing

A Poem

By Ramesh V. Phadnis

In the living room of a friend, we talked of Krishnamurti...

I made a statement. He contradicted me immediately. He made a statement. I didn't contradict him at all. I just waited and waited. He was a bit surprised at that. Whether my mind was in a state of silence, I didn't know really. Thus it went on for some time. Then it was time for lunch and siesta.

In the evening, I went for a walk in the woods, alone with myself, and suddenly discovered the inner way...

I found a poem waiting therefore for me like an early morning shower. We greeted and kissed each other in silence untouched by words. My inner ear was listening to something, I didn't quite understand.

In fact there was no one to understand and there was absolutely nothing to be understood.

'That silence in which all distance has vanished for ever is Krishnamurti's true greatness', said a leaf as it fell from a tree.

I picked it up, held it close to my heart and closed my eyes...

The leaves of a writing-pad rustled...

upon one's private domain. If motivation is insufficient, it is because total clarity of understanding has yet to be attained. When there is total clarity, there is immediate and total action. In fact, there is no space for time between clarity and action. To enhance clarity one must again turn to the Sage, contemplate his words and meditate on their deepest meaning.

The fruition comes through a fatal fascination with the truth of oneself, which destroys the ego-I and resurrects the I-I which was hidden, but never lost.



J. Krishnamurti

THE *Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti* is a monumental work brought out by the Krishnamurti Foundation of America, headed by its executive director, Mark Lee. It took many years to compile and edit. It is a very special collection of teachings, encompassing the early talks, writings, and questions-and-answers of Krishnamurti. Before going into the content in detail, a short introduction to the life of Krishnamurti will bring this work into perspective.

Krishnamurti was born into a simple and pious South Indian Brahmin family. He was the eighth child. At the time of his birth, the child's horoscope indicated that he would grow up to be a very great soul, but that it would not be a simple ascent to greatness.

At the age of eighteen, Krishnamurti wrote about his early life and attachment to his mother: "The happiest memories of my childhood center round my dear mother, who gave us all the loving care for which Indian mothers are well-known. I was generally at home while my brothers were at school, for I suffered much from fever — in fact, almost every day. I often went into the *puja* room about noon when she performed her daily ceremonies. She would then talk to me about Mrs Besant and about *karma* and reincarnation and also read to me from the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and from other Indian scriptures. I was only about seven

REVIEW - ARTICLE:

THE ART OF LISTENING: J. KRISHNAMURTI'S EARLY WORK¹

By JOAN GREENBLATT

or eight years of age, so I could not understand much, but I think I felt much that I could not actually understand."

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Theosophical Society was growing with rare intensity, much like its charismatic leader Mrs. Annie Besant. The Society, based on the tenets of a Universal Brotherhood, seeks to study ancient wisdom and to explore the hidden mysteries of nature and the latent powers of man. It acknowledges an occult hierarchy, whose role is to guide mankind's spiritual development, and draws much from the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, particularly the Tibetan Mahayana texts and teachings.

It was at the Adyar beach in Madras that Bishop C.W. Leadbeater (a close associate of Mrs. Besant) noticed the intriguing young boy of thirteen. In him, he saw a unique aura of purity. Krishnamurti came to Leadbeater's notice at a time when he was investigating the former lives of his associates.

Krishnamurti revealed a vast array of illustrious past lives: once as a disciple of the Buddha, and another wondrous life as a compassionate healer. Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya were taken from the confines of their home and, under Bishop Leadbeater's care, housed in the magnificent grandeur of the Theosophical headquarters in Adyar, they lived a disciplined life. They were taught English and the manners of a gentleman. Speaking

AN AUTHENTIC RECORD

By Mark Lee

THE Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti consists of seventeen volumes totalling 5,500 pages.

The staff of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America (KFA), along with editors and proofreaders hired specifically for the project, worked for months to prepare the manuscripts for publication. Published versions of talks were verified against original transcripts, stenographic notes, transcripts of tape recordings, the tapes themselves, and often Krishnamurti's own handwriting where he edited what he had said.

The result is as authentic a record as exists of what Krishnamurti said between 1933 and 1967.

The seventeen volumes are distinguished by individual titles, dates of talks, and volume numbers to provide easy access to the collection. The titles are:

<i>The Art of Listening</i>	<i>A Light to Yourself</i>
<i>What Is Right Action?</i>	<i>Crisis in Consciousness</i>
<i>The Mirror of Relationship</i>	<i>There Is No Thinker, Only Thought</i>
<i>The Observer Is the Observed</i>	<i>A Psychological Revolution</i>
<i>Choiceless Awareness</i>	<i>The New Mind</i>
<i>The Origin of Conflict</i>	<i>The Dignity of Living</i>
<i>Tradition and Creativity</i>	<i>The Beauty of Death</i>
<i>What Are You Seeking?</i>	<i>Perennial Questions</i>
<i>The Answer Is in the Problem</i>	

With fewer restrictions in Eastern Europe, there has been a surge of interest in Krishnamurti's work. Soviet readers openly buy Krishnamurti books in Russian. Chinese thinkers are able to read Krishnamurti in Mandarin. In all, Krishnamurti has been translated into forty-seven languages, including Japanese, Malaysian and Swahili.

Today, Krishnamurti's work is studied at more than 125 institutions in the United States alone.

For much of this century, Krishnamurti's ideas have inspired many, including such varied personalities as George Bernard Shaw, Henry Miller, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Alan Ginsburg, Federico Fellini, Khalil Gibran, Pandit Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Erick Fromm, Prof. David Bohm, Charlie Chaplin, Greta Garbo, John Kenneth Galbraith, Svetlana (Stalin) Peters and the Dalai Lama.

Aldous Huxley once described the quality of Krishnamurti's talks by writing, "...It was like listening to a discourse of the Buddha—such power, such intrinsic authority...."

In Krishnamurti's view, the truth cannot be found by conventional thought. "One must be free of all paths to find it," he said.

"Change yourself," he suggested. "You are the world."

of this period, Krishnamurti said, "The boy had always said, 'I will do whatever you want.' There was an element of subservience, obedience. The boy was vague, uncertain, woolly; he didn't seem to care what was happening. He was like a vessel, with

a large hole in it; whatever was put in, went through, nothing remained."

The Masters had instructed Mrs. Besant and Bishop Leadbeater to protect the body of Krishna-

murti for two years, and so prepare it for its manifestation as the World Teacher, but they left his mind free. "The Lord is preparing it," they said.

In 1910, Mrs. Besant took the brothers with her to Varanasi. It was here that Krishnamurti developed some notes he had made in Adyar into his first book, *At the Feet of the Master*. Fifty years later, he was asked about this book and he replied, "The man who wrote the book has disappeared."

Mrs. Besant and the two brothers travelled to England in 1911. She was openly opposed by some eminent members of the Society for what they called her "Messiah business". After all, who was this little Hindu boy she called "Alcyone". Mrs. Besant stood firm. She was absolutely convinced that the Masters had instructed Krishnamurti to be a vehicle for the Maitreya Buddha.

From 1912 to 1921, Krishnamurti and Nitya remained abroad. In spite of letters from Mrs. Besant, who was very dear to them, the brothers felt intensely lonely, unhappy and rejected. They became increasingly disillusioned and appeared to lose interest even in Theosophy. Mrs. Besant's attempt to arrange for a college education failed. Krishnamurti was unable to pass any of the entrance examinations; he left the papers blank, unable to fill in a single page.

In early 1922, Krishna and Nitya travelled by ship to Australia to attend a Theosophical convention. It was an explosive meeting and a turning point in their lives. A.P. Warrington, the General Secretary of the American Section, invited the brothers to spend some time in Ojai, California, since Nitya was suffering from ill health. It was a long voyage which left Nitya desperately ill. He rallied, and when they arrived in California, they were enchanted by the beauty of the redwood forests. Krishnamurti remarked that they resembled vast cathedrals.

In a cottage surrounded by six acres of land, Krishnamurti meditated regularly and was surprised how his mind responded. Doors opened inward and, after years of discontent, he felt very peaceful. He soon plunged into an intense spiritual awakening that changed the course of his life. He experienced a rare phenomenon in Ojai.

Krishnamurti was in a state of extreme agony, filled with the feeling of a great presence. Finally, he went out of the house and sat under a pepper tree. Of his experiences under the pepper tree, Krishnamurti later wrote a long letter to Mrs. Besant. The climax occurred three days later. In his own words, he wrote: "I felt my physical body an unfathomable lake. Like the lake, I felt that my physical body with its mind and emotions could be ruffled on the surface, but nothing, nay nothing could disturb the calmness of my soul... I have seen the glorious and healing light. The foundation of Truth has been revealed to me and the darkness has been dispersed. Love in all its glory has intoxicated my heart; my heart can never be closed."

The next few months saw the intermittent continuation of this "process", teetering between intense pain and a majestic presence.

In 1924, Krishnamurti and some companions went to Italy. During this visit, a companion noted that Krishnamurti spoke of a new world that lay stretched out before one, in which all personal love and ambition died away and became as naught — only a tremendous, impersonal, unshakeable love remained. This realisation had come to Krishnamurti during the "process" in Ojai. In Italy he was also given a prophetic message, "The happiness you seek is not far off; it lies in every common stone." And in another message, "Do not look for the Great Ones when they may be very near you."

In Ojai, Krishnamurti heard reports about Mrs. Besant and her ideas of apostles, arhats, rapid initiations, world religion and world universities. He was deeply distressed and conveyed his misgivings to Mrs. Besant, who was shattered by his rejection of her ideals. Surprisingly, this did not affect her total commitment to Krishnamurti as the new World Teacher.

In 1925, along with other Theosophists, he left for India to participate in the jubilee celebrations to be held in Adyar. Still convinced that the Masters would take care of his beloved Nitya, he left him behind in Ojai, quite ill. During the voyage they received a cable that Nitya's health was deteriorating. Krishnamurti prayed deeply to the Masters to save his brother and his faith in the Masters re-

mained unshakeable. He felt that they would not have let him leave Ojai if his brother was destined to die. A few weeks later they received the last cable, announcing Nitya's death.

Nitya and Krishnamurti had shared their lives together: their early loneliness in an alien world, their travels, and their planned future work. Writing about Nitya's death, Krishnamurti said, "An old dream is dead and a new one is being born. A new vision is coming into being and a new consciousness is being unfolded."

By the time Krishnamurti arrived in Adyar, he had emerged from his sorrow immeasurably quiet and radiant. But his belief in the Masters and the whole hierarchy had undergone a total change. He rarely spoke about the Masters again. The intensity of his sorrow triggered a vast, wordless perception. Sorrow brought out a dormant intelligence that had taken years to mature.

At the momentous Star Congress that took place after the jubilee convention, Krishnamurti spoke under the ancient banyan tree. In the middle of his talk he changed from the third to the first person. Referring to the World Teacher, he electrified the audience by saying, "He comes only to those who want, who desire, who long." And then suddenly, "I come for those who want sympathy, who want happiness, who are longing to find happiness in all things. I come to reform and not to tear down, I come not to destroy, but to build." Mrs. Besant was overjoyed by this confirmation and exclaimed, "This event marks the consecration of the chosen vehicle."

Although Mrs. Besant expected Krishnamurti to follow in the Theosophic mould, he was experimenting with himself in various ways, especially with detachment. His occasional talks did not conform to orthodox Theosophy and often shocked Theosophists.

From 1926 to 1927, Krishnamurti and Annie Besant spent much time together in Ojai. She had the growing awareness that even after all the years of training, Krishnamurti could not be programmed. Yet, before leaving the States, Mrs. Besant made a statement to the press, "The divine spirit has descended once more in a man, Krishnamurti, who

in his lifetime is literally perfect, as those who know him can testify. The World Teacher is here."

Change was in the wind. As Mrs. Besant must have known but did not want to acknowledge, Krishnamurti was free and this freedom broke all the chains the Society had spent years trying to forge.

At the opening of the Star Camp in 1927, Krishnamurti was in revolt. His words were afire: "For many lives and for all this life, and especially the last few months, I have struggled for the same freedom. There must be constant turmoil within you."

The following year he began speaking of dissolving The Order of the Star, the organisation the Society had formed especially for the advent of the World Teacher. However, it was only on August 3, 1929, that he announced his determination to dissolve the Order. In that famous speech, he said:

"I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect... My purpose is to make men unconditionally free, for I maintain that the only spirituality is the incorruptibility of the self, which is eternal, is the harmony between reason and love. This is the absolute, unconditioned Truth which is Life itself."

Between 1933 and 1939, Krishnamurti began his life of travelling around the world and giving talks. Towards the end of those years, Krishnamurti Writings Inc. (KWI) was established, with Ojai as its headquarters. It is where the freedom, insight and perception born under the pepper tree in the Ojai Valley had blossomed — a lovely rose for the world to share in.

The *Collected Works* begins with these new beginnings.

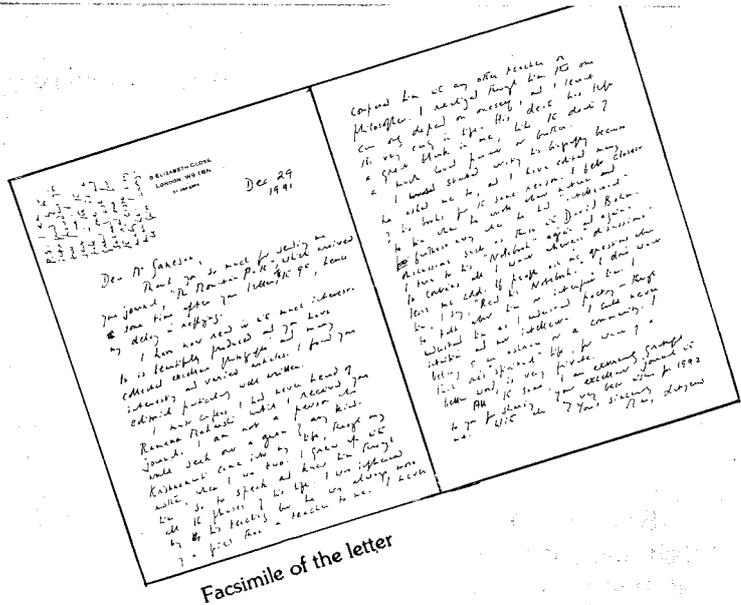
[To be concluded]

¹ *The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti: Volume I, 1933-1934; The Art of Listening*, Published by Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Dubuque, Iowa, USA. Copyright 1991. The Krishnamurti Foundation of America, P.O. Box 1560, Ojai, CA 93024, USA. Paperback, pp. 210, price not stated.

"It is Beautifully Produced..."



Mary Lutyens



We have received many responses to our special issue on J. Krishnamurti (The Mountain Path, Aradhana Issue, June 1991), both of criticism and of praise. Thank you all, and apologies for not publishing a selection, due to reasons of space. However, let us share a beautiful letter from MARY LUTYENS, who needs no introduction to admirers of J. Krishnamurti:

Dec. 29, 1991

Dear Mr. Ganesan,

Thank you so much for sending me your journal, The Mountain Path, which arrived some time after your letter of the 9th, hence my delay in replying.

I have now read it with much interest. It is beautifully produced and you have collected excellent photographs and many interesting and varied articles. I found your editorial particularly well written.

I must confess I had never heard of Ramana Maharshi until I received your journal. I am not a person who would seek out a guru of any kind. Krishnamurti came into my life, through my mother, when I was two. I grew up with him, so to speak, and knew him through all the phases of his life. I was influenced by his teaching but he was always more of a friend than a teacher to me. I never compared him with any other teacher or philosopher. I realized through him that one can only depend on oneself, and I learnt this very early in life.

His death has left a great blank in me, like the death of a much loved parent or brother.

I started writing his biography because he asked me to, and I have edited many of his books for the same reason. I felt closest to him when he wrote about nature and furthest away when he had "intellectual" discussions such as those with David Bohm. I turn to his Notebook again and again. It contains all I want whereas "discussions" leave me cold. If people ask me questions about him, I say, "Read his Notebook." I don't want to talk about him or interpret him. I understand him as I understand poetry — through intuition and not intellect. I could never belong to an ashram or a community. I think one's "spiritual" life, for want of a better word, is very private.

All the same, I am extremely grateful to you for sharing your excellent journal with me. With all my very best wishes for 1992,

Yours sincerely, Mary Lutyens



THE GREATEST TEACHER THE WORLD HAS SEEN

By Professor K. SWAMINATHAN

Ernest Lehrs, the German scientist-philosopher, in his book *Man And Matter*, cites again and again the simple wisdom of the child in Hans Christian Andersen's tale of the emperor's new clothes. The child sees the naked truth hidden from his sophisticated seniors. Stories of Buddha, Jesus and St. Francis appeal straight to children and child-like minds, and their interest spreads even to grown-ups who are too busy getting and spending to notice the sun and other stars.

Saints and sages, who are the most normal

people we know and who prefigure the evolutionary possibilities of the race, fill us with deep joy, for they are faithful photographs of our own inmost selves and patterns of the future outward perfection of all mankind. No wonder, Sri Ramana, clad in his *koupina* (loincloth), had the air and authority of a solar emperor and his name still has the news-value of a cinema star's.

While at school at Madurai, young Venkataraman read the *Periapuranam*, a verse account of the sixty-three Tamil Saivite saints. Thereafter, he often went to the great temple at

Madurai and prayed to Siva to add him too to His line of devotees. At sixteen, like Markandeya, he conquered mortality by meditating on the death of the body and thus realised the immortal Self. Then he was drawn to Tiruvannamalai, where he stayed for fifty-four years, shedding the light of his benign influence on all alike.

When Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, the great Sanskrit scholar, was living with Maharshi early in 1908, "something like a meteor appeared at dawn, touched Maharshi's forehead, retreated, and came again and touched him six times." Again on the night of April 14, 1950, as Maharshi cast off his body, a bright meteor shooting over the Ashram was seen by all and sundry all over South India.

Similar phenomena — flashes of light, visions, miraculous healing — had often been reported to Maharshi. But he brushed them aside or gave simple and natural explanations of them, and warned people not to think of such odd happenings, but to pursue the grand aim of Self-Realisation, which is the biggest miracle of all.

In the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, published in 1946 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Maharshi's arrival at Arunachala, and in the two books *Self-Realisation* and *Maha Yoga*, which describe his life and teachings, we get a wealth of views and impressions whose variety reflects the differences of the several writers and the freedom of approach which the Sage not only permitted but welcomed in his devotees and disciples.

Swami Siddheswarananda, M. Olivier Lacombe, Prof. S. Radhakrishnan and Dr. C.G. Jung, among others, bring out authoritatively the traditional aspect of Maharshi's achievement and show how he represents the culmination of advaitic thought. The detailed description of the *jivanmukta* as found in the *Upanishads*, the *Gita*, *Vivekachudamani* and other religious classics was fully borne out by the experience and behaviour of Sri Ramana. His apt and telling expositions of *advaita vedanta* brought its truth home to the simplest folk.

"The world, as filled with Brahman, is real, like the body filled with life. But the world, cut off from Brahman and regarded as self-dependent, is unreal like a corpse."

The search for meaning and purpose is the search for Reality.

To a question on the relation between *karma yoga* and *nishkama karma*, he gave an answer in the manner of a Zen master. Without uttering a word, he walked up the hill, picked up a stick and fashioned it into a walking stick. He gave it to a passerby. Then he said, "The making of the walking stick is *karma yoga*. The gift of it is *nishkama*." The Sage did not make it or take it for himself. Similarly, the making and eating of *appalams* served as an allegory and a sacrament.

Apart from his spoken, acted and written teachings, the simple human friendliness of Bhagavan showed the utter *soulabhya*, the easy accessibility, of the ultimate Truth when it graciously chooses to embody itself in human form.

Bhagavan was not merely a yogi or a teacher or a saint. He was a Seer, a being comprehending and transcending all these lower categories, and he succeeded in being a *friend* of every one — sinner or saint, prince or peasant, old or young, learned or ignorant, man or woman, cow, dog, monkey or peacock.

Many years ago J.C. Molony, I.C.S., noted how his hound preferred the hermit's company to his own. Hundreds of quite ordinary (human) visitors to the ashram were treated like intimate friends by Maharshi who took the most sympathetic interest in all their personal affairs: the train they came by, the food they ate, the marriages and deaths, the appointments and promotions that occurred in their families. No one felt that he was unimportant or unwanted.

Women and *harijans* (outcastes) were no less welcome than learned brahmins to this charmed circle. To all he taught humility without humiliating any, as he taught self-surrender without loss of freedom.

If the good teacher is a friend who joins you where you are and leads you up from that point to the mountaintop of Truth, then Maharshi is the greatest teacher the world has seen because he refused to stretch us on a Procrustean bed of creed or conduct. He did not merely concede as a matter of formal politeness, but convinced every one of his devotees and disciples that there are as many distinct ways of reaching the goal as there are unique human individuals.

His more than mother-like tenderness made no harsh choice between one friend and another among the thousands of his friends; and his steady, calm, unflinching cheerfulness and rock-like certainty sprang from his conviction that the world process must end in the final release of all beings.

"When the ego rises, the mind is separated from its source, the Self, and is restless like a stone thrown up into the air or like the waters of a river. When the stone or the river reaches its place of origin, the ground or the ocean, it comes to rest. So too the mind comes to rest and is happy when it returns to and rests in its source. As the stone and the river are sure to return to their starting place, so too the mind will inevitably at some time return to its source. Thus all reach the goal... Happiness is your nature. It is not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is seeking it outside when it is inside."

In his conversation with children, birds and animals, one noticed with envy the outflow of a more active, spontaneous grace because, no doubt, these unspoiled creatures were more at home in his world of integral joy.

Although in intellectual discussions, Maharshi took his uncompromising stand on Sankara's *advaita vedanta* and disclaimed any originality, still he popularised, if he did not invent, a technique of self-analysis which renders easy and aseptic that essential operation which destroys the mind and releases the spirit from its entanglement with the world and the flesh.

The Kingdom of God

**Because we think we are the body
We imagine that Heaven exists
Somewhere, afar. The pure,
bright world**

**Of Siva is not a place to go to.
Nowhere but in your heart alone
It is.**

**(The Kingdom of God is within you—
St. Luke XVII, 21)**

**— Sri Muruganar in *Garland of
Guru's Sayings*, V. 194**

"His method is practical and, when understood, is quite scientific in its way. He brings no supernatural power and demands no blind-religious faith. The sublime spirituality of Maharshi's atmosphere and the rational self-questioning of his philosophy find but a faint echo in yonder temple of Arunachala. Even the word 'God' is rarely on his lips.

*"He advises; nay warns every seeker not to sail in the dark and debatable waters of wizardry, in which so many promising voyages have ended in shipwreck. He simply puts forward a way of self-analysis, which can be practised irrespective of any ancient or modern theories and beliefs which one may hold, a way that will finally lead man to true Self-Knowledge."*¹

Many weapons invented by the great teachers of mankind for use against the Devil have been taken hold of by the Devil himself, who can not only quote scripture when it suits him but also wield all the merits and *siddhis* of spiritual aspirants and turn them against their owners. The vast armoury of virtues collected by good men

¹ *Self-Realisation* by B.V. Narasimha Swami, 4th ed, pp. 272-73.

only to be captured and utilised by the Devil has been brilliantly catalogued by C.S. Lewis in his *Screwtape Letters*. But the sober, scientific, introspective method of Sri Ramana makes and keeps ready for the enemy's hands all the pleasant means for his self-destruction.

All questions that trouble the good man are reducible, and should be reduced, to the one question, "Who am I?"

Ultimately, the question "Who am I?" will lead to the discovery and realisation of the Self, the winning of the egoless state in which there are no questions and no answers but only silence, only the calm joy of pure being.

But on that long, lone way that stretches between ourselves as we are, and that ultimate peace of pure being which is our final goal, the series of partial and tentative answers to the question "Who am I?" will always and inevitably lead to self-improvement at each level of thought, feeling and action. This query is the metaphysical master-key to all the practical problems for it opens to us all the many lovely mansions of our Father's house.

Bhagavan has no creed of his own because he is egoless. What we can learn from him is the application to religion of the strictly scientific temper and the method of tentative, disinterested analysis. All beliefs are to be held only tentatively, never bigotedly, because all beliefs will one day be consumed in the fire of the experience of the Self.

The surrender of the "I" to a God, a creed or an institution transfers our attachment from the "I" to the "MY", to "my God", "my creed", "my church", and this only strengthens the ego-sense. The ego, whether of the individual "I" or the collective "we", is the arch-deceiver Satan, the sole enemy of God and man.

By the steady, disinterested, impersonal use of the scientific question "Who am I?", the devotee of the saint slowly develops into a disciple of the sage. The guru without is slowly merged in the Guru within. The knot of the mind, the ego-sense, which binds the real Self to the world and the body, is worn out or cut off and

the joyous peace of pure Being is attained.

The primary ignorance or original sin consists in the identification of our Self with the body. This can and should be got rid of by the tentative acceptance and systematic practice of Bhagavan's method of inquiry, and the result may be seen for oneself by any honest experimenter.

All earlier systems of meditation and spiritual practices are superceded and transcended by this final, all-comprehensive and all-powerful technique of Sri Ramana.

The Hebrew name for God ("Jehovah" which means "I Am") expresses perfectly this truth, that the Self is God. Lord Jesus meant the same egoless state when he said, "The Kingdom of God is within you," and, "Know the truth and the truth will make you free."

The ego-life is not life but death. From this death of our ordinary life we awake into immortality by passing in imagination through the death of the body, as Bhagavan did in his sixteenth year by his dramatisation of his body's death. The danger of mere rationalism is avoided by devotion to the holy and beloved person of the Guru.

"Self-reliance as commonly understood is ego-reliance and it worsens bondage. Reliance on God alone is true self-reliance because He is the Self."

All the free will that we need and ought to enjoy can be exercised in the process of experiment and enquiry, in the infinite variety of the applications of the question "Who am I?"

Sri Ramana's simple message is:

"The best way for one to serve the world is to win the egoless state. If you are anxious to help the world but think you cannot do so by attaining the egoless state, then surrender to God all the world's problems along with your own."

Again:

"Help yourself, and you will help the world Yes! Helping yourself, you help the world. You are in the world. You are the

world....you are the world and the world is you. You do not help the world at all by wishing or trying to do so but only by helping yourself, that is, by realising your perfection."

It is open to the scientist to accept and apply the Sage's method of inquiry. It is open to the devotee to surrender himself and his problems to the saint. And the saint and the sage in Sri Ramana will gently draw the intellect of the one and the heart of the other towards the distant but inescapable goal of *Satchidananda*. (Being-Consciousness-Bliss).

"That one point where all religions meet is the realisation — not in some mystical

sense, but in the most worldly, most literal and everyday sense, and the more worldly and everyday and practical, the better — of the fact that God is everything and everything is God."

Not only when the moon shines brightly and the nightingales divinely sing, not only in the hushed presence of a mighty Seer, but all the time and everywhere, we should know the feeling that "the unplumbed, salty, estranging sea" of *samsara* is a mere surface phenomenon and that we, mortal millions, are not so many separate floating islands but "parts of a single continent", all rooted in the solid and life-sustaining Ground of Being.

Questioner: Is immediate action total action?

J. Krishnamurti: That is right, sir, I said, "Immediate action." That is one of the most difficult things to understand; so don't just say, "Immediate action". You know, there are people who say, "Live in the present." "Live in the present" is one of the most extraordinary things. To live in the present — which is to understand the conditioning which is the past, and not project that past into the future: and one has therefore to eliminate the time interval and live in that extraordinary sense of the immediate.

— Rajghat, Banaras, 3rd Public Talk, 24th November 1964.

* * * * *

Sense and Sensibility

In every child who is born, under no matter what circumstances and of no matter what parents, the potentiality of the human race is born again and in him, too, once more, and of each of us, our terrific responsibility towards human life; towards the utmost idea of goodness, of the horror of error, and of God. Every breath his sense shall draw, every act and every shadow and thing in all creation, is a mortal poison, or is a drug, or is a signal or symptom, or is a teacher, or is a liberator, or is liberty itself, depending entirely upon his understanding, and action proceeding from understanding and guided by it.

— James Agee, American writer.



THE SACRED FLAME

By Selma Lagerlof

— Christian Legends —

Editor's Introduction

It is a common convention in Western mythology and literature to depict the internal elements of a human being — his tendencies, component parts, emotions, aspirations and potential — as external characters, and then play them out in a scenario in which they interact as though they are individual people living out the events of life. In "The Sacred Flame" we have an example of this convention at its most successful.

This is a beautiful allegory of the Quest which, although set in a Christian motif, is truly universal and applicable to aspirants on all paths and of all religions. All the elements and characters of the story are symbolic and depict the slow but steady, wondrously inevitable transmutation of the base human being and his coarse animal nature into the full stature of man's spiritual greatness.

In the key figures of the story, Raniero and Francesca, we see the base animal nature of man, apparently incorrigible and invincible, pitted against the apparent weakness and impotence of his higher nature, "the still small voice" within, symbolised by Francesca. As each event of the story unfolds we find that the very tendencies which had once made Raniero a brute, isolating him from his higher nature, conform to that divine ordinance which forces their sublimation and conspires to use every event, every aspect of a man's nature to ensure its fulfillment. Every negative passion is transformed into its opposing virtue until, at the end, we see the villain transformed into the hero, an archetypal symbol of Everyman's journey toward the Goal, a hope and inspiration for us all.

The Sacred Flame itself needs no explanation. As the eternal embodiment of that spark of the Divine dwelling in each of us, it is the Kingdom of God within, the eternal, imperishable Hope and Promise of the spiritual fulfillment that lies before each of us.

Part I

I

A great many years ago, when the city of Florence had only just been made a republic, a man lived there named Raniero di Raniero. He was the son of an armourer, and had learned his father's trade, but he did not care much to pursue it.

This Raniero was the strongest of men. It was said of him that he bore a heavy iron armour as lightly as others wear a silk shirt. He was still a young man, but already he had given many proofs of his strength. Once he was in a house where grain was stored in the loft. Too much grain had been heaped there; and while Raniero was in the house one of the loft beams broke down, and the whole roof was about to fall in. He raised his arms and held the roof up until the people managed to fetch beams and poles to prop it.

It was also said of Raniero that he was the bravest man who had ever lived in Florence, and that he could never get enough of fighting. As soon as he heard any noise in the street, he rushed out from the workshop, in hopes that a fight had arisen in which he might participate. If he could only distinguish himself, he fought just as readily with humble peasants as with armoured horsemen. He rushed into a fight like a madman without counting his opponents.

Florence was not very powerful in his time. The people were mostly wool spinners and cloth weavers, and these asked nothing better than to be allowed to perform their tasks in peace. Sturdy men were plentiful, but they were not quarrelsome, and they were proud of the fact that in their city better order prevailed than elsewhere. Raniero often grumbled because he was not born in a country where there was a king who gathered around him valiant men, and declared that in such an event he would have attained great honour and renown.

Raniero was loud-mouthed and boastful; cruel to animals, harsh towards his wife, and not good for any one to live with. He would have been handsome if he had not had several deep scars across his face which disfigured him. He was quick to jump to conclusions, and quick to act, though his way was often violent.

Raniero was married to Francesca, who was the

daughter of Jacopo degli Uberti, a wise and influential man. Jacopo had not been very anxious to give his daughter to such a bully as Raniero, and had opposed the marriage until the very last. Francesca forced him to relent by declaring that she would never marry anyone else. When Jacopo finally gave his consent, he said to Raniero: "I have observed that men like you can more easily win a woman's love than keep it; therefore I shall exact this promise from you: If my daughter finds life with you so hard that she wishes to come back to me, you will not prevent her." Francesca said it was needless to exact such a promise, since she was so fond of Raniero that nothing could separate her from him. But Raniero gave his promise promptly. "Of one thing you can be assured, Jacopo," said he, "I will not try to hold any woman who wishes to flee from me."

Then Francesca went to live with Raniero, and all was well between them for a time. When they had been married a few weeks, Raniero took it into his head that he would practise marksmanship. For several days he aimed at a painting which hung upon a wall. He soon became skilled, and hit the mark every time. At last he thought he would like to try and shoot at a more difficult mark. He looked around for something suitable, but discovered nothing except a quail that sat in a cage above the courtyard gate. The bird belonged to Francesca, and she was very fond of it; but, despite this, Raniero sent a page to open the cage, and shot the quail as it swung itself into the air.

This seemed to him a very good shot, and he boasted of it to anyone who would listen to him.

When Francesca learned that Raniero had shot her bird, she grew pale and looked hard at him. She marvelled that he had wished to do a thing which must bring grief to her; but she forgave him promptly and loved him as before.

Then all went well again for a time.

Raniero's father-in-law, Jacopo, was a flax weaver. He had a large establishment, where much work was done. Raniero thought he had discovered that hemp was mixed with the flax in Jacopo's workshop, and he did not keep silent about it, but talked of it here and there in the city. At last Jacopo also heard this chatter, and tried at once to put a stop to it. He let several other flax weavers examine

his yarn, and cloth, and they found all of it to be of the very finest flax. Only in one pack, which was designed to be sold outside Florence, was there any mixture. Then Jacopo said that the deception had been practised without his knowledge or consent, by one of his journeymen. He apprehended at once that he would find it difficult to convince people of this. He had always been famed for honesty, and he felt very keenly that his honour had been smirched.

Raniero, on the other hand, plumed himself upon having succeeded in exposing a fraud, and he bragged about it even in Francesca's hearing.

She felt deeply grieved; at the same time she was astonished as when he shot the bird. As she thought of this, she seemed suddenly to see her love before her; and it was like a great piece of shimmery gold cloth. She could see how big it was, and how it shimmered. But from one corner a piece had been cut away, so that it was not as big and as beautiful as it had been in the beginning.

Still, it was as yet damaged so very little that she thought: "It will probably last as long as I live. It is so great that it can never come to an end."

Again, there was a period during which she and Raniero were just as happy as they had been at first.

Francesca had a brother named Taddeo. He had been in Venice on a business trip, and, while there, had purchased garments of silk and velvet. When he came home he paraded around in them. Now, in Florence it was not the custom to go about expensively clad, so there were many who made fun of him.

One night Taddeo and Raniero were out in the wine shops. Taddeo was dressed in a green cloak with sable linings, and a violet jacket. Raniero tempted him to drink so much wine that he fell asleep, and then he took his cloak off him and hung it upon a scarecrow that was set up in a cabbage patch.

When Francesca heard of this she was vexed again with Raniero. That moment she saw before her the big piece of gold cloth — which was her love — and she seemed to see how it diminished, as Raniero cut away piece after piece.

After this, things were patched up between them for a time, but Francesca was no longer so happy as

in former days, because she always feared that Raniero would commit some misdemeanour that would hurt her love.

This was not long in coming, either, for Raniero could never be tranquil. He wished that people should always speak of him and praise his courage and daring.

At that time the cathedral in Florence was much smaller than the present one, and there hung at the top of one of its towers a big, heavy shield, which had been placed there by one of Francesca's ancestors. It was the heaviest shield any man in Florence had been able to lift, and all the Uberti family were proud because it was one of their own who had climbed up in the tower and hung it there.

But Raniero climbed up to the shield one day, hung it on his back, and came down with it.

When Francesca heard of this for the first time she spoke to Raniero of what troubled her, and begged him not to humiliate her family in this way. Raniero, who had expected that she would commend him for his feat, became very angry. He retorted that he had long observed that she did not rejoice in his success, but thought only of her own kin.

"It's something else I am thinking of," said Francesca, "and that is my love. I know not what will become of it if you keep on in this way."

After this they frequently exchanged harsh words, for Raniero happened nearly always to do the very thing that was most distasteful to Francesca.

There was a workman in Raniero's shop who was little and lame. This man had loved Francesca before she was married, and continued to love her even after her marriage. Raniero, who knew this, undertook to joke with him before all who sat at a table. It went so far that finally the man could no longer bear to be held up to ridicule in Francesca's hearing, so he rushed upon Raniero and wanted to fight with him. But Raniero only smiled derisively and kicked him aside. Then the poor fellow thought he did not care to live any longer, and went off and hanged himself.

When this happened, Francesca and Raniero had been married about a year. Francesca thought continually that she saw her love before her as a

shimmery piece of cloth, but on all sides large pieces were cut away, so that it was scarcely half as big as it had been in the beginning.

She became very much alarmed when she saw this, and thought: "If I stay with Raniero another year, he will destroy my love. I shall become just as poor as I have hitherto been rich."

Then she decided to leave Raniero's house and go to live with her father, that the day might not come when she should hate Raniero as much as she now loved him.

Jacopo degli Uberti was sitting at the loom with all his workmen busy around him when he saw her coming. He saw that now the thing had come to pass which he had long expected, and bade her be welcome. Instantly he ordered all the people to leave off their work and arm themselves and close the house.

Then Jacopo went over to Raniero. He met him in the workshop. "My daughter has this day returned to me and begged that she may live again under my roof," he said to his son-in-law. "And now I expect that you will not compel her to run to you after the promise you have given me."

Raniero did not seem to take this very seriously, but answered calmly: "Even if I had not given you my word, I would not demand the return of a woman who does not wish to be mine."

He knew how much Francesca loved him, and said to himself: "She will be back with me before evening."

Yet she did not appear either that day or the next.

The third day Raniero went out and pursued a couple of robbers who had long disturbed the Florentine merchants. He succeeded in catching them, and took them captives to Florence.

He remained quiet a couple of days, until he was positive that his feat was known throughout the city. But it did not turn out as he had expected — that it would bring Francesca back to him.

Raniero had the greatest desire to appeal to the courts, to force her return to him, but he felt himself unable to do this because of his promise. It seemed impossible for him to live in the same city as a wife

who had abandoned him, so he moved away from Florence.

He first became a soldier, and very soon he made himself commander of a volunteer company. He was always in a fight, and served many masters.

He won much renown as a warrior, as he had always said he would. He was made a knight by the Emperor, and was accounted a great man.

Before he left Florence, he had made a vow at the sacred image of the Madonna in the Cathedral to present to the Blessed Virgin the best and rarest that he won in every battle. Before this image one always saw costly gifts, which were presented by Raniero.

Raniero was aware that all his deeds were known in his native city. He marvelled much that Francesca degli Uberti did not come back to him, when she knew all about his success.

At that time sermons were preached to start the Crusades for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the Saracens, and Raniero took the cross and departed for the Orient. He not only hoped to win castles and lands to rule over, but also to succeed in performing such brilliant feats that his wife would again be fond of him, and return to him.

II

The night succeeding the day on which Jerusalem had been captured, there was great rejoicing in the Crusaders' camp, outside the city. In almost every tent they celebrated with drinking bouts, and noise and roistering were heard in every direction.

Raniero di Raniero sat and drank with some comrades; and in his tent it was even more hilarious than elsewhere. The servants barely had time to fill the goblets before they were empty again.

Raniero had the best of reasons for celebrating because during the day he had won greater glory than ever before. In the morning, when the city was besieged, he had been the first to scale the walls after Godfrey of Boulogne; and in the evening he had been honoured for his bravery in the presence of the whole corps.

When the plunder and murder were ended, and the Crusaders in penitents' cloaks and with lighted candles marched into the Church of the Holy

Sepulchre, it had been announced to Raniero by Godfrey that he should be the first who might light his candle from the sacred candles which burn before Christ's tomb. It appeared to Raniero that Godfrey wished in this manner to show that he considered him the bravest man in the whole corps; and he was very happy over the way in which he had been rewarded for his achievements.

As the night wore on, Raniero and his guests were in the best of spirits; a fool and a couple of musicians who had wandered all over the camp and amused the people with their pranks, came into Raniero's tent, and the fool asked permission to narrate a comic story.

Raniero knew that this particular fool was in great demand for his drollery, and he promised to listen to his narrative.

"It happened once," said the fool, "that our Lord and Saint Peter sat a whole day upon the highest tower in paradise and looked down upon the earth. They had so much to look at, that they scarcely found time to exchange a word. Our Lord kept perfectly still the whole time, but Saint Peter sometimes clapped his hands for joy, and again turned his head away in disgust. Sometimes he applauded and smiled, and anon he wept and commiserated. Finally, as it drew toward the close of day, and twilight sank down over paradise, our Lord turned to Saint Peter and said that now he must surely be satisfied and content.

"What is it that I should be content with?" Saint Peter asked, in an impetuous tone.

"Why," said our Lord slowly, "I thought that you would be pleased with what you have seen today."

"But Saint Peter did not care to be conciliated. 'It is true,' said he, 'that for many years I have bemoaned the fact that Jerusalem should be in the power of unbelievers, but after all that has happened today, I think it might just as well have remained as it was'."

Raniero understood now that the fool spoke of what had taken place during the day. Both he and the other knights began to listen with greater interest than in the beginning.

"When Saint Peter had said this," continued the fool, as he cast a furtive glance at the knights, "he

leaned over the pinnacle of the tower and pointed toward the earth. He showed our Lord a city which lay upon a great solitary rock that shot up from a mountain valley. 'Do you see those mounds of corpses?' he said. 'And do you see the naked and wretched prisoners who moan in the night chill? And do you see all the smoking ruins?'

"It appeared as if our Lord did not wish to answer him, but Saint Peter went on with his lamentations. He said that he had certainly been vexed with that city many times, but he had not wished it so ill as that it would come to look like this. Then, at last, our Lord answered, and tried an objection: 'Still, you cannot deny that the Christian Knights have risked their lives with the utmost fearlessness,' said he."

Then the fool was interrupted by bravos, but he made haste to continue.

"Oh, don't interrupt me!" he said. "Now I don't remember where I left off — ah! to be sure, I was just going to say that Saint Peter wiped away a tear or two which sprang to his eyes and prevented him from seeing. 'I never would have thought they could be such beasts,' said he. 'They have murdered and plundered the whole day. Why you went to all the trouble of letting yourself be crucified in order to gain such devotees, I can't in the least comprehend'."

The knights took up the fun good-naturedly. They began to laugh loud and merrily.

"What, fool! Is Saint Peter so wroth with us?" shrieked one of them.

"Be silent now, and let us hear if our Lord spoke in our defence!" interposed another.

"No, our Lord was silent. He knew of old that when Saint Peter had once got a-going, it wasn't worthwhile arguing with him. He went on his way, and said that our Lord needn't trouble to tell him that finally they remembered to which city they had come, and went to church barefooted and in penitents' garb. That spirit had, of course, not lasted long enough to be worth mentioning. And thereupon he leaned once more over the tower and pointed downward toward Jerusalem. He pointed out the Christians' camp outside the city. 'Do you see how your knights celebrate their victories?' he asked. And our Lord saw that there was revelry

everywhere in the camp. Knights and soldiers sat and looked upon Syrian dancers. Filled goblets went the rounds while they threw dice for the spoils of war and — ”

“They listened to fools who told vile stories,” interpolated Raniero. “Was not this also a great sin?”

The fool laughed and shook his head at Raniero, as much as to say, “Wait! I will pay you back.”

“No, don’t interrupt me!” he begged once again. “A poor fool forgets so easily what he would say. Ah! it was this: Saint Peter asked our Lord if he thought these people were much of a credit to him. To this, of course, our Lord had to reply that he didn’t think they were.

“They were robbers and murderers before they left home, and robbers and murderers they are even today. This undertaking you could just as well have left undone. No good will come of it,” said Saint Peter.”

“Come, come, fool!” said Raniero in a threatening tone. But the fool seemed to consider it an honour to test how far he could go without some one jumping up and throwing him out, and he continued fearlessly.

“Our Lord only bowed his head, like one who acknowledges that he is being justly rebuked. But almost at the same instant he leaned forward eagerly and peered down with closer scrutiny than before. Saint Peter also glanced down. ‘What are you looking for?’ he wondered.”

The fool delivered this speech with much animated facial play. All the knights saw our Lord and Saint Peter before their eyes, and they wondered what it was our Lord had caught sight of.

“Our Lord answered that it was nothing in particular,” said the fool. “Saint Peter gazed in the direction of our Lord’s glance, but he could discover nothing except that our Lord sat and looked down into a big tent, outside of which a couple of Saracen heads were set up on long lances, and where a lot of fine rugs, golden vessels, and costly weapons, captured in the Holy City, were piled up. In that tent they carried on as they did everywhere else in the camp. A company of knights sat and emptied their goblets. The only difference might be that here

there was more drinking and roistering than elsewhere. Saint Peter could not comprehend why our Lord was so pleased when he looked down there, that his eyes fairly sparkled with delight. So many hard and cruel faces he had rarely before seen gathered around a drinking table. And he who was host at the board and sat at the head of the table was the most dreadful of all. He was a man of thirty-five, frightfully big and coarse, with a blowzy countenance covered with scars and scratches, calloused hands, and a loud, bellowing voice.”

Here the fool paused a moment, as if he feared to go on, but both Raniero and the others liked to hear him talk of themselves, and only laughed at his audacity. “You’re a daring fellow,” said Raniero, “so let us see what you are driving at!”

“Finally, our Lord said a few words,” continued the fool, “which made Saint Peter understand what he rejoiced over. He asked Saint Peter if he saw wrongly, or if it could actually be true that one of the knights had a burning candle beside him.”

Raniero gave a start at these words. Now, at last, he was angry with the fool, and reached out his hand for a heavy wine pitcher to throw at his face, but he controlled himself that he might hear whether the fellow wished to speak to his credit or discredit.

“Saint Peter saw now,” narrated the fool, “that, although the tent was lighted mostly by torches, one of the knights really had a burning wax candle beside him. It was a long, thick candle, one of the sort made to burn twenty-four hours. The knight, who had no candlestick to set it in, had gathered together some stones and piled them around it, to make it stand.”

The company burst into shrieks of laughter at this. All pointed at a candle which stood on the table beside Raniero, and was exactly like the one the fool had described. The blood mounted to Raniero’s head; for this was the candle which he had a few hours before been permitted to light at the Holy Sepulchre. He had been unable to make up his mind to let it die out.

“When Saint Peter saw that candle,” said the fool, “it dawned upon him what it was that our Lord was so happy over, but at the same time he could not help feeling just a little sorry for him. ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘it was the same knight that leaped upon the

wall this morning immediately after the gentleman of Boulogne, and who this evening was permitted to light his candle at the Holy Sepulchre ahead of all the others.' — 'True!' said our Lord. 'And, as you see, his candle is still burning'."

The fool talked very fast now, casting an occasional sly glance at Raniero. "Saint Peter could not help pitying our Lord. 'Can't you understand why he keeps that candle burning?' said he. 'You must believe that he thinks of your suffering and death whenever he looks at it. But he thinks only of the glory which he won when he was acknowledged to be the bravest man in the troop after Godfrey'."

At this all Raniero's guests laughed. Raniero was very angry, but he, too, forced himself to laugh. He knew they would have found it still more amusing if he hadn't been able to take a little fun.

"But our Lord contradicted Saint Peter," said the fool. "'Don't you see how careful he is with the light?' asked he. 'He puts his hand before the flame as soon as any one raises the tent-flap for fear the draught will blow it out. And he is constantly occupied in chasing away the moths which fly around it and threaten to extinguish it'."

The laughter grew merrier and merrier, for what the fool said was the truth. Raniero found it more and more difficult to control himself. He felt he could not endure that any one should jest about the sacred candle.

"Still Saint Peter was dubious," continued the fool. "He asked our Lord if he knew that knight. 'He's not one who goes often to mass or wears out the *prie-dieu*,' said he. But our Lord could not be swerved from his opinion.

"'Saint Peter, Saint Peter,' he said earnestly. 'Remember that henceforth this knight shall become more pious than Godfrey. Whence do piety and gentleness spring, if not from my sepulchre? You shall see Raniero di Raniero help widows and distressed prisoners. You shall see him care for the sick and despairing as he now cares for the sacred candle-flame'."

At this they laughed inordinately. It struck them all as very ludicrous, for they knew Raniero's disposition and mode of living. But he himself found both the jokes and laughter intolerable. He sprang to his feet and wanted to reprove the fool.

As he did this, he bumped so hard against the table — which was only a door set up on loose boxes — that it wobbled, and the candle fell down. It was evident now how careful Raniero was to keep the candle burning. He controlled his anger and gave himself time to pick it up and brighten the flame, before he rushed upon the fool. But when he had trimmed the light the fool had already darted out of the tent, and Raniero knew it would be useless to pursue him in the darkness. "I shall probably run across him another time," he thought, and sat down.

Meanwhile the guests had laughed mockingly, and one of them turned to Raniero and wanted to continue the jesting. He said: "There is one thing, however, which is certain, Raniero, and that is — this time you can't send to the Madonna in Florence the most precious things you have won in the battle."

Raniero asked why he thought that he should not follow his old habit this time.

"For no other reason," said the knight, "than that the most precious thing you have won is that sacred candle-flame, which you were permitted to light at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the presence of the whole corps. Surely you can't send that to Florence!"

Again the other knights laughed, but Raniero was now in the mood to undertake the wildest projects, just to put an end to their laughter. He came to a conclusion quickly, called to an old squire, and said to him: "Make ready, Giovanni, for a long journey. Tomorrow you shall travel to Florence with this sacred candle flame."

But the squire said a blunt "No" to this command. "This is something which I don't care to undertake," he said. "How should it be possible to travel to Florence with a candle flame? It would be extinguished before I had left the camp."

Raniero asked one after another of his men. He received the same reply from all. They scarcely seemed to take his command seriously.

It was a foregone conclusion that the foreign knights who were his guests should laugh even louder and more merrily, as it became apparent that none of Raniero's men wished to carry out his order.

Raniero grew more and more excited. Finally he lost his patience and shouted: "This candle flame shall nevertheless be borne to Florence; and since no one else will ride there with it, I will do so myself!"

"Consider before you promise anything of the kind!" said a knight. "You ride away from a principality."

"I swear to you that I will carry this sacred flame to Florence!" exclaimed Raniero. "I shall do what no one else has dared to undertake."

The old squire defended himself. "Master, it's another matter for you. You can take with you a

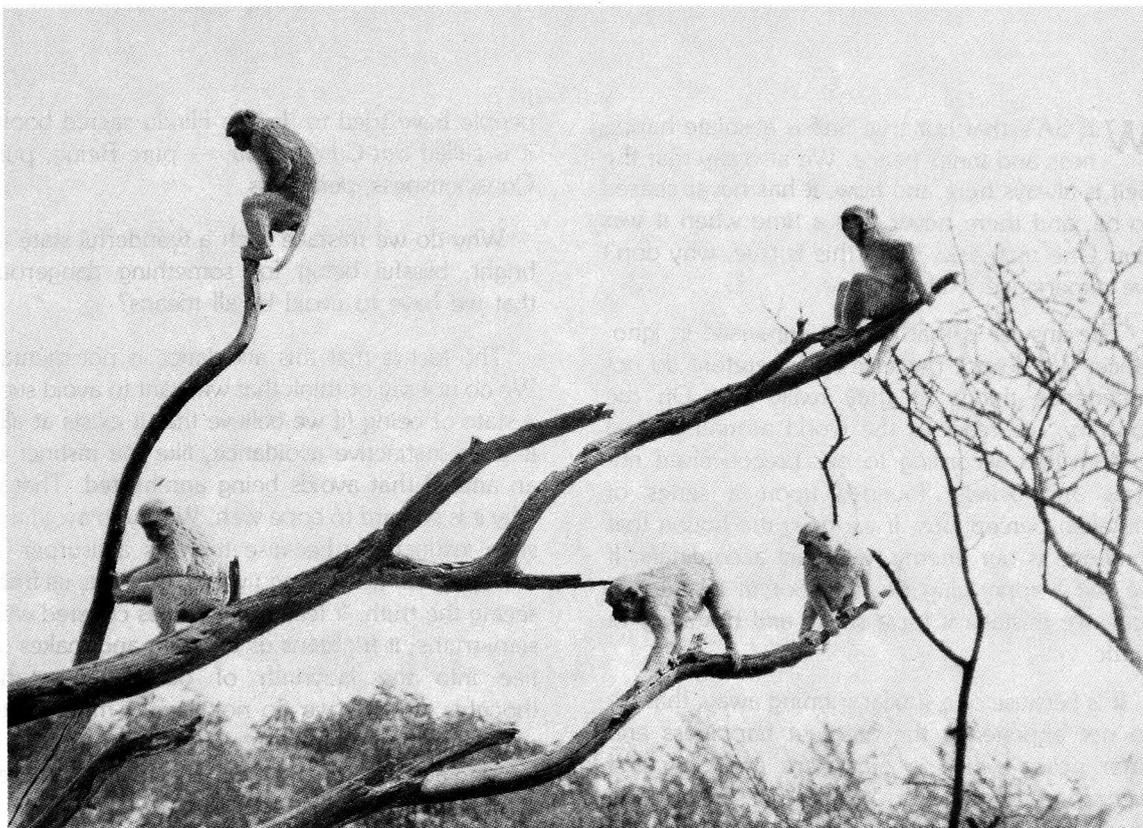
large retinue but me you would send alone."

But Raniero was quite out of himself, and did not consider his words. "I, too, shall travel alone," said he.

But with this declaration Raniero had carried his point. Every one in the tent had ceased laughing. Terrified, they sat and stared at him.

"Why don't you laugh any more?" asked Raniero. "This undertaking surely can't be anything but a child's game for a brave man."

(To be concluded in the next issue)



SELF-PORTRAIT

The mind is a monkey, as every monkey (read, human being) knows. One may also say the five senses of hearing, seeing, touching, tasting and smelling are one brood of five monkeys. Screaming and scratching and jumping and playing, they perch themselves upon the branches of the tree of *samsar*.

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— Photo and Text: V. Dwaraknath Reddy

82

THE SNAKE AND THE ROPE

By Lily Benatav

WE SAY that our true Self is absolute happiness and inner peace. We also say that the Self is always here and now, it has never ceased to be, and there never was a time when it was not. One may ask: "If all this is true, why don't we experience it always?"

The answer is that we are immersed in ignorance. We do not perceive and therefore do not experience things as they really are. On the contrary, we react to the world around us and to ourselves according to our preconceived notions and beliefs, founded upon a series of mistaken perceptions. If we have the notion that someone is our enemy, we react accordingly. If we see a rope lying on the floor in insufficient light, we mistake it for a snake and run away in panic.

It is because of a similar running away, that we do not experience the absolute happiness and inner peace which is ours here and now and everywhere and always. We do not stop to look closely and attentively. We are running in panic in endless ways from the supposed snake — away from our true Self — because in our ignorance we mistake it for something that we have to avoid. What is this true Self that we try to run away from? Alas, it cannot be defined. Nevertheless,

people have tried to. In the Hindu sacred books it is called *Sat-Cit-Ananda*, — pure Being, pure Consciousness, pure Bliss.

Why do we mistake such a wonderful state of bright, blissful being for something dangerous that we have to avoid by all means?

The fact is that this avoidance is not mental. We do not say or think that we want to avoid such a state of being (if we believe that it exists at all). It is an instinctive avoidance, like the instinct of an animal that avoids being annihilated. That is why it is so hard to cope with. We try to avoid this state instinctively because there is a usurper of our true Self. It is the ego which prevents us from seeing the truth. It feeds us with lies covered with semi-truths; it frightens us to death and makes us flee into the labyrinth of our feelings and thoughts, so that we do not have a moment to stop and look attentively at what we are running away from, and why. This fear sometimes assumes another feature: it freezes us into a torpor, and we become cold in our behaviour, feelings and mind, dragging ourselves about dully, half-alive.

Whatever be the ego's strategy, whether it freezes us or makes us flee when we look atten-

tively, we find out that this thief of our peace and happiness is the small dividing, fragmenting and defining ego which we in our ignorance identify ourselves with, and believe to be our total being. And this ego, as long as we believe in it, has full power over us.

In the analogy of the rope and snake, we see that the ego, like the snake, appears as our Self only because the true Self, or the rope, is really there. This is a most obvious and simple truth. Our unhappiness is a mistake born out of the ignorance which we, with our dividing, limiting and defining ego, do our best to perpetuate. Why? Because we — as ego — are afraid to lose ourselves. It is a vicious circle, usually broken only when we are brought down by suffering and despair. And even then, only if we have the good fortune to meet with the right guidance, be it through a living teacher, a sacred book, or the voice from within. Only then can we stop running or unfreeze, and start discriminating and penetrating the illusions.

The ego frightens us in innumerable ways: with death, with pain, with loneliness. The truth is that we stop and look attentively only when we are fed up with being frightened, when extreme suffering and despair *force* us to search for our true Self. This arrest of fright is our turning point. Consciously or unconsciously we stop running and look attentively into ourselves for something certain and real. When this happens, we discover that the ego with which we have identified ourselves so long is only made up of past impressions, memories and future hopes and fears and so on, situated in time and space, all dictated by our distorted perceptions and beliefs, themselves products of the mind. In other words, we find out that the mind is the father of the ego. But the mind itself is an accumulation of past experiences and memories of the past and hopes and fears for the future, plus the faculties of imagination and discrimination. In a way, it is again a vicious circle which has to be broken if we are to strive for right perception and real peace. In this situation, it is the discriminating faculty of the mind that gives

Where is He?

By S.M. Kaul

I asked Him humbly, "Tell me
where He is."

He softly said, "Hear. Whom you
ceaselessly seek

"Lives not on the snowy mountains
high,

"Nor in the deep, dense forests of
the wild,

"Nor in temple, mosque, nor
church.

"Visit not the holy places, nor
shrines,

Count not the beads a million,
million times.

"Nor torture the helpless body to
its bones,

"Nor shout the Name, nor sing
unending hymns.

"Stop all your wanderings; scatter
all your beads.

"Throw all your books in the
gushing water deep.

"Perform not so-called virtuous
deeds.

"These things are in vain when in
search of Him.

"Light within the Fire of Knowledge
bright.

"Pour your Ego into it — the
highest holy rite.

"Polish the mirror of Heart with
surrender divine.

"Then look into it and find whom
you ceaselessly seek."

us the key to escape the vicious circle of the ego-mind. But even this key — *buddhi* — will have to be ultimately thrown away because even a wonderful snake is still a snake and not the rope. *Buddhi* is not the Self.

The mind creates the illusions of space and time, names and forms, concepts and definitions, and the objects to be experienced, all of which we, in our ignorance, take as real: it imposes the illusion of the snake on the reality of the rope. Being a maker of illusions, and being only a reflection of the Self and not the Self itself, the mind can never be the bestower of true peace and lasting happiness. It is an object of change in the hands of time and the *dvandva*, the pairs of opposites, like pleasure and pain, whereas the Self is beyond names, forms and definitions and their creator, the mind, and all our senses of perception, just as we are beyond and apart from the nightmares of our children.

The way out of this seemingly hopeless situation is through *buddhi*, the discriminating faculty of the mind, employing it as a tool to rid ourselves of the illusions of names, forms and definitions. When *buddhi*, the king cobra, finishes the rest of the snakes, it has outlived its utility and *raison d'être*. The snake has not only to shed its skin but vanish. For the ego, however, this is a terrifying prospect for it means its total annihilation. It is only the brave, who pass undaunted through this seeming void, who can rediscover the Self and abide in It, the eternal conscious blissful Being that we really are.

However, not everyone can confront this seeming void all at once because such a direct confrontation can cause a tremendous, unsettling shock. Therefore we are advised by the wise to approach it gradually, adopting the methods and tools that suit us. Among them, there is the

way of *Bhakti*, the way of love, devotion and surrender to the *guru* or God. Then there is *Raja Yoga*, the method of controlling and quietening the mind so that it may become suffused with God, with form and attributes at first and later with the formless Absolute. There is the way of Zen Buddhism which, with its *zazen* and *koans*, baffles and then finishes the mind. There is also *Karma Yoga*, which is the path of selfless service with total detachment from the results and indifference to success and failure, reward and punishment. There is the Here and Now method which teaches how to eliminate space and time from our being, because the ego needs them as our bodies need oxygen and cannot survive without them. And there is the direct way of *Jnana* which seeks knowledge of the Self with the persistent enquiry "*Who am I?*" applied to our every feeling, thought and experience. Whichever method we may adopt, the aim is one and the same: the annihilation of the ego and the rediscovery of our true Self, which is pure blissful conscious, eternal existence, the substratum of every experience.

He who has rediscovered the true Self is never again deluded by names, forms and definitions, however subtle. If he chooses to look at them, he sees them as they really are — empty bubbles of illusion in the ocean of eternal, absolute Truth, as Bhagavan Ramana has shown. These bubbles of illusion, made of dream-stuff, coated by borrowed half-truths, can be our doom or our salvation. The illusion in them dooms us to bondage, to misery in life with all the fugitive happiness and prolonged sorrow it brings. On the other hand, the reflected truth in them — the rope in the snake — puts in our hands the Ariadna thread which, if followed perseveringly, leads us back through the labyrinth of the ego-mind to the Self, our true nature.

Thou believest thyself to be nothing, and yet it is in thee that the world resides.

— Avicenna



This Hopi village, on a Mesa, remains almost the way it was hundreds of years ago

THE HOPI DAY OF PURIFICATION

By Carmen "Seal" Cecilia Kotting

I am a Metis, which is someone of mixed Native American (American Indian) and European ancestry. Both my parents were at least one-half Native American, maybe more. The doubt comes from the habit of denying Indian ancestry in order to succeed. My father would not admit his ancestry to anyone until the last ten years of his life, and did his best throughout my childhood to keep me free from that "contamination".

I was not raised on an Indian reservation but was fortunate to have one grandmother who made sure that I learned the knowledge unique to our Native American background. The traditional Native American attitude towards nature that she imparted to me was fundamental in forming my spiritual outlook. It gave me the foundation from which I could explore the spiritual and

religious opportunities which are abundant in the USA.

One of the basic things I learned from my grandmother was that there was no separation between physical and spiritual life. The two were completely intertwined. It was evident, through our spiritual senses, that all life was akin to our closest blood relative. Any part of that life could be, and should be, communicated with just as we talk to our fellow humans.

My grandmother taught me never to fear animals and that I could make friends with any animal, or for that matter, any form of life. She was the first to show me that everything is alive and has spirit or soul, even the rocks and the soil. Those lessons have remained the foundation of my spiritual journey to this day.

Because of my constant search for The Way, I have always found myself drawn to others on this path. As with many of my contemporaries in the sixties in America, I was drawn to expressing my inner life in my outer life and towards a search for a living expression that was different from the "money is success" point of view prevalent in society. I found myself involved in the production of the *Oracle* newspaper, the first tabloid devoted to contemporary spiritual experience.

In 1966, on the west coast of America, there was a loose-knit movement called "America Needs Indians". Based in Los Angeles, this group put together a programme dealing with current Native American problems, their history and origins, as well as the then unusual event of the presence of several Hopi elders who were going to explain the Hopi prophecy — the *Day of Purification*.

When I arrived at the gathering, together with others on the *Oracle* staff, I was immediately struck by the appearance of several Native Americans of a type I had never seen before.

They had a distinctive hairstyle, tied up in an elaborate knot, held in place by a colourful scarf. They were dressed in long velvet shirts over white pants. The shirts were belted by large silver-and-turquoise belts. I had never seen so much silver and turquoise on people before. They wore large necklaces of turquoise nuggets and pieces of coral and shell — no beadwork. Their moccasins were of a dark red leather with white rawhide soles fastened with a silver concho — again, no beadwork. All of this was in great contrast to the majority of Native Americans there. I couldn't keep my eyes off them. They carried themselves differently and seemed not as concerned with the political relationships between Native Americans and the US Government as the rest of the people there.

There were speakers from more nations ("tribe" is the more common term, but it is not accurate) than we had ever seen together before. Most of them talked about treaty violations and fishing rights. Several spoke on more mysterious subjects such as Sasquatch (the American Yeti or Bigfoot) and UFOs.

Hopi maidens, with their distinctive hairstyle



Then the Hopi spoke. With the other speakers, it was one person at the podium representing an issue. When the Hopi went up to the stage, all of them were there, although only one person spoke. The whole tone changed from a mainly political situation focussed on Native American problems to a holistic spiritual point of view embracing the whole world.

The spokesman said, "What I am going to tell you is something which has never been told to a public audience before!"

These opening words captured everyone's attention, Native American and non-Native American alike. He went on to say how the Hopi had never travelled in a group to the big city before, preferring to stay in their homeland and carry on the life they knew, but that there had been signs that it was now the time to tell as many people as would listen about a prophecy known as the *Day of Purification*.

In the Hopi history, he said, this world is not the first inhabited by humans (it is the fourth), and it is not the last. Of course, many of us had heard theories of the extraterrestrial origins of humanity, but this is not what was meant. According to the Hopi, this world itself had other forms and that we emerged from those forms after we had destroyed the world we came from through our wickedness.

Although that message in itself was certainly interesting (many of us wanted the details of those previous worlds), the speaker went on to emphasise that the meaning of their talk was that we were destroying our present world and that, in continuing to do this, we would be faced with the difficulties brought on by trying to live with that destruction. We would soon be faced with the emergence of a new world and finding our place in it.

This was certainly a new message. All of us had heard about reward and punishment after death, reincarnation to learn lessons yet unlearned, and various end-of-the-world theories, but the Hopi were telling us that world changes were already happening, and coming up very soon, which would mark the transition from this present world to a new one.

The spokesman said how the Hopi had long ago prophesied occurrences that were happening now

and would happen in the near future, and that there were signs of the immediacy of the *Day of Purification*. We were told that one of the last signs would be when a gourd of ashes fell out of the sky (the nuclear bomb) and when humans would leave footprints on the moon.

After these two occurrences, if people did not make a radical change in the way they treated themselves and all of nature, a marked increase in so-called natural disasters would follow. These disasters were not presented as a form of punishment, but rather as a means of purification to make way for the new world to come. In this new world, we would be given another chance to live by the laws of the Creator.

All those present were amazed to hear what the Hopi were saying, to hear them list a sequence of events that we were well aware of. Unlike most prophesies, this was not vague but definite and to the point, especially the reference to footprints on the moon.

Later in the evening, we met person-to-person with the Hopi and were invited to visit their homes and learn more. We were encouraged to write about what we heard and what we would further experience. Within a week, I travelled to the high mesas of Arizona and spent a fortnight in Hotevilla, the center of traditionalists among the Hopi.

Of that journey, one of the experiences that stands out in my mind was being taken to Prophecy Rock. This is a place not far from the ancient village of Oraibi, where the Hopi prophecy was carved into the rock when the Hopi settled these mesas thousands of years ago. Everything is in that carving: the path of mankind to a good life and the path to destruction, with the signposts along the way.

Even the coming of Christianity is depicted. It appears on the path towards destruction, along with the gourd of ashes and the footprints on the moon. It clearly shows how, on that path, there will be food shortages because things will no longer be able to grow.

The *Day of Purification* is that time (now!) when the rest of life finds it necessary to purify itself of the destructive results of human greed. It means that many of the symbols that gave mankind the illusion of power will fall. Things will no longer seem

to work the way humans have planned for.

We will see once again that it is necessary to live according to the principles of right living rather than to merely profess them. This is a time to remember well, so that we can tell our children, so that their children's children may be reminded not to take the destructive path and repeat the cycle.

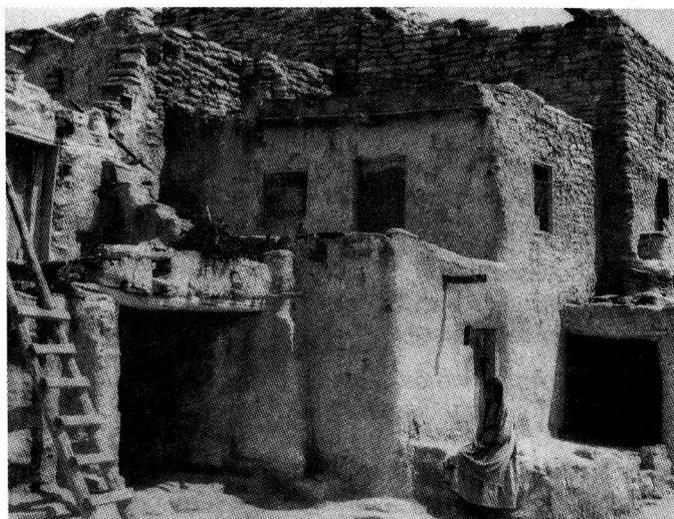
The Hopi are living proof that humans can live in harmony with nature and that in doing so, the benefits are much greater than the self-deluded benefits from interfering with nature. They are able, through the power of prayer and a cooperative relationship with the environment, to provide for their needs and have enough left over to feed thousands more from their storehouses.

Hopiland is a forbidding place. The Hopi villages lie on the tops of three mesas (flat-topped hills) that rise up out of a high desert plateau in northern Arizona. Before the reservation system, Hopiland was much larger, encompassing the Grand Canyon and lands that are now Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. They had settled the Verde Valley in Arizona until about 1,000 years ago. Their ruins are nearly everywhere in this valley. They are the Anasazi, "ancient ones" as the Navajo call them.

Anthropologists assert that the Anasazi disappeared about 1,000 years ago due to a severe drought and that some survivors may have gone north to the Hopi mesas for refuge. The fact that the mesas in the wettest years are far drier than the Verde Valley in the most severe drought is not seen as a contradiction of their theory.

Just as the first Europeans ignored all that their Native American hosts had tried to share with them about living in harmony with Mother Earth rather than in opposition, the scientific experts refuse to accept as valid the history of Native American people as told by themselves because it is not in recognisable written form.

I was full of questions and dazzled by the fantastic scenery. Over a period of several days, for many hours at a time, I would sit on the floor, in the house



A Hopi house

we were given as a guest home, in front of the line of Hopi elders who were sitting on a built-in adobe bench along the wall.

I asked many questions: some having to do with things that my grandmother had taught me about the history of this continent; about the people from Europe and Asia who had visited here before Columbus under friendlier circumstances, some even staying forever; and other questions about where the Hopi came from and where they had been on their long migration before settling on the mesas. I asked why they had left the ruins and places which were greener than where they were now.

The elders said that the reason for leaving places like the Verde Valley was twofold. Firstly, because life was so easy that it was too tempting to forget their purpose. And secondly, that they were called to come back to the center on the mesas to prepare for the *Day of Purification* and the events leading up to it.

The environment of the Hopi mesas is the ultimate test of their ability to actualise their spiritual understanding. All the water needed to sustain life must be obtained through prayer and absolute attentiveness to their ceremonies. Springs are coaxed out of dry barren ground through the power of prayer and constant respect shown to the spring site. Rain and snow are also caused to happen through prayer and ceremony.

Many times I have witnessed rain showers created out of a perfectly clear intense blue sky. It rains exactly where needed and ends when there has been enough, and instead of the storm moving away with the air currents, it disappears into the clear deep blue sky as if there never had been a rainstorm.

Hopiland is anchored by four sacred mountains. One of these is the San Francisco Peaks which rise above Flagstaff. These mountains, the Hopi say, are the home of their Kachinas — personal embodiments of the forces of nature and other archetypes. These are the beings that appear in the dances and make the prayers fruitful. Thus, the San Francisco Peaks is sacred not only to the Hopi but also (they feel) to all beings on this planet.

For many years they fought unsuccessfully to prevent the further desecration of the Peaks through expansion of a ski resort. The previous smaller resort had already desecrated several important shrines on the mountain and the proposed development would destroy most of the remaining shrines. In vain, the Hopi elders warned about the environmental consequences that would follow the destruction of these shrines. The government, siding with the developers, ruled that progress could not be

held up by the religious beliefs of a small tribe, and so the resort was expanded.

What the Hopi elders had warned about has certainly come true. The weather patterns of the entire western United States have drastically changed. There has not been a successful ski season and the resort is now bankrupt. Whereas before, the snows would appear on the mountaintops in September and remain upon the lower elevations through May, there have been, instead of snow, torrential rains.

The entire state of Arizona experienced unprecedented floods. Bridges designed to cross mainly dry stream beds were washed out. Entire communities, built along relatively tame rivers and streams, disappeared. Lives were lost. Rivers cut new courses, changing the geography forever. Crops were destroyed. The aquifer was polluted when floods ran through industrial areas. In short, the ecological balance of the state was further corrupted through greed inflicted upon a sacred site.

Sadly, it is still virtually impossible to cite such examples in the hope that people will understand. Even today, with the rise in environmental consciousness, very few people are willing to see that

Ceremonial dance and prayer, called 'Basket Dance'



their very thoughts can make a difference, that attempts to engineer environmental balance can be just as destructive as complete lack of attention to the matter. When we apply force to nature, nature resists with force.

The Hopi have been trying to impart that we must ask the right questions *before* something is done, in order to acquire the cooperation of all the natural forces involved, thereby avoiding many "natural disasters".

An interesting aspect of the stories of transitions from previous worlds into our present world is that, in all cases, the actual transition to the next world was taken *consciously* by the people.

The elders who were concerned with living according to the laws of the Creator would always meet and discuss the problems of their current situation, which was usually described as society having been taken over by "witches" who inspired people to act with greed and behave with sexual excess.

During these meetings, it would be decided that the "new world" would have to be sought, usually with the aid of various animal helpers. Once one of these animal helpers found the way into the new world, the people would follow and emerge into this new world, which was generally situated above them, through the sky. In all the cases so far, at least

one "witch" would manage to come through with them.

For the most part, the Hopi object to the practice of trying to convey their way of life through the written word. They are aware of the dangers inherent in the sense of ownership of knowledge, which they feel takes the "life" out of it. Much of their knowledge requires a type of understanding that is only developed through living it. Even Hopi who live on the reservation, but are more in tune with the surrounding culture than the traditional way of life, have just as much difficulty understanding the Hopi way as any non-Hopi.

For the Hopi, it is important to understand that the reason for many of our difficulties comes from living the wrong way. The important thing to learn from the prophecy is that we are seeing the fruits of our mistakes, and through them to acquire the knowledge of what it takes to make life on this earth the best place for our continuing spiritual development.

Things are as they are, at this point, and it is up to us to remember. Whatever rewards we might expect from right living are irrelevant as we have not yet been able to live right. So, the outcome of the prophecy can only be a mystery. We must concentrate, instead, on what we can do to live cooperatively, now and in the future, for the sake of all life.

WHEN RED AND WHITE MET

SINCE the first contacts with modern European culture, Native Americans have made every effort to communicate an understanding of the nature of things.

No Native American could conceive of selling land, for instance, because the earth is our Mother. In the early days, the Native Americans thought that the "beads" (e.g., \$24 worth of beads given by the Dutch to the inhabitants of Manhattan for the purchase of the island) given them were in appreciation of their generosity and willingness to *share* natural resources with the newcomers, not as pay-offs for the land they occupied.

Soon, as it became apparent that the natives were not going to move away after one of these

exchanges, the newcomers changed their policy. Instead of beads, they used bullets — a conscious and public policy of eliminating the menacing presence of these "savages" who refused to use the land and resources to the utmost.

The Native Americans were seen as lazy because they left so much of the environment in its "wild" state and showed no signs of becoming "civilised". It was quickly forgotten that the first Thanksgiving (a traditional American holiday) marked the generosity of the Native American hosts towards their guests.

My direct ancestors, the Massachusetts, fed those newcomers and freely gave the knowledge necessary to survive in this land. The newcomers



From a Hopi housetop, on a Mesa, drying peaches

were shown what was good to eat in the wild (cranberries, beach plums, wild spring greens and mushrooms), how to plant what the Native Americans had developed (corn, squash, beans) and what could be used for medicinal purposes.

As soon as these lessons were learned, the newcomers immediately turned on their benefactors so that they could conquer and own the land which was no longer a strange and fearful place, but now seen as an abundant and verdant land. The newcomers took the lessons that they considered valuable and treated all the other things that the Native Americans told them as dangerous and heathen, inimical to the prevailing European understanding of Christianity.

Completely ignored was the easy embracing of Christianity by the Native Americans who saw no difference between the teachings of Jesus Christ and their own understanding of their relationship to the Creator and correct behaviour towards their fellow beings. Instead, the newcomers decided that the Native Americans further confirmed their heathen heresies by blending the teachings of the Master Jesus with their own expressions of spiritual understanding.

This basic philosophical difference was one of the major factors which resulted in the misunderstandings that led to the Indian Wars, the reservation system and the violent persecution of Indians found practising their religion, or the ultimate "crime" of continuing to speak their native language.

The result of this basic misunderstanding was

that most Native Americans were moved far from their homelands and forced to live in strange places where they would be hard-pressed to continue life. And even these harsh places were taken from them when minerals and oil were discovered.

One exception to these occurrences is the Hopi. They are still exactly where they were "discovered" more than 500 years ago by the Conquistadors, although most of their land has been taken away and much that is left has been desecrated in the name of progress. Throughout all of this, the Hopi have continued to carry out what they see as their spiritual responsibility to the earth and all of mankind.

The Hopi — and, in fact, most Native Americans — were not unaware of the coming of the Europeans. It had been prophesied. Native American prophecy does not deal with the end of the world (as this is seen as a mystery), but rather with the choices ahead and the results of the choices taken. The *Hopi Day of Purification* deals specifically with the results of certain choices which many see as already happening.



Mrs. Carmen

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INVESTIGATION INTO EXISTENCE

(Compiled from *Talks and Day by Day with Bhagavan* by CHARLES READ)

How do we know that we are? How do we come to say 'I am'? Is a mirror or even a light necessary to confirm that we exist? Of course not, we know it by experience. And yet the experience of ourselves is not objectified like other knowledge. It simply is, non-terminous, expansive.

Things are known by their shape and their names, but everyone calls themselves 'I'. In fact no one can deny their existence, their Self. 'I AM' is the only permanent, self-evident experience of everyone.

We all concede that 'I' is not the body, but something within it. What do we mean by 'I'? What is our idea of ourselves? What does 'I' refer to? What is the significance of 'I'? Who am I?

'I' seems to disappear during our daily sleep, but we must exist then, or else we could wake up as someone else. Throughout our life we undergo various experiences, some wonderful, some terrible, but our experience of being is always there as the central point of reference. In order to understand our life in the world, we must first establish our relationship between the world and ourselves. Where is the world? Does it ask 'Why was I created?'. It appears as we wake up and everything we know or can know about it springs from the fact of our existence. The objective world derives its being and meaning from the unchanging experience of 'I AM'. The nature of the world can only be understood in relation to the mystery of the 'I'. There is so much that we do not and cannot know, but we do know about our existence.

Where do our senses arise from and into what do they merge during sleep? There must be an underlying substratum which they depend on. If we say I am not aware of any such substratum, it only shows that it is single and not an object to be perceived, for who else is there to know it? Or are there two selves, one that knows the other?

The Pure Existence that always is, is apparent when the mind is still. The mind is the outgoing faculty of the individual that causes apparent limitation within the body. Sri Ramana taught that if the mind is turned within, it becomes still in the course of time and the ever present 'I AM' alone prevails. To attempt to still the mind is an act of the transient ego-mind, but the pure 'I AM' is there all the while. The thoughts change but not the 'I'. Thoughts are our bondage. If they are given up, there is release from limitation and the unchanging, ever-sparkling, unmoving Self remains as it always is.

Unless I exists, I cannot seek
That Existence — the Goal.
Since I AM, I am already THAT.
Who else could I be, and where?
There is no seeking to realise
What IS already,
Always realised.

BOOK REVIEWS

BUDDHIYOGA OF THE GITA AND OTHER ESSAYS: by Anirvan. Pub: Samata Books, 573 Anna Salai, Madras 600006, pp. 190+14, Rs.60/-

Sri Anirvan (1896-1978) is an important thinker and seer of modern India who deserves much more attention than he has yet received. He became a Swami when he was young but renounced his robes, not to return to the world but to form an independent spiritual approach based upon an extensive examination of the entire Hindu spiritual tradition, as well as his own unique and independent insight. He had a special appreciation and insight into the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy and understood many of its spiritual secrets that few thinkers, even those of much insight, have been able to discern. In this regard he may be the greatest exponent and reinterpreter of all aspects of Hindu spirituality including the Vedas, Gita, Yoga and Tantra.

The present volume is one of the few books of his available in English. It contains a number of essays, the longest being an examination of the concept of Buddhi primarily in reference to the Gita, as our inherent capacity for spiritual illumination. In this essay the author reveals the clear rationality of Vedic spirituality and its relevance to the human situation, including relative to the modern crisis that we face today. He shows how the Buddhi or our inner intelligence functions as the link between our human and Divine natures, and is the key in moving from one to the other.

Other essays in the book focus on the Vedas and a more spiritual or Adhyātmik interpretation for them. Anirvan like a modern Rishi outlines all the essential insights and values that made up the ancient spiritual Aryan culture of India. He adds his own dimension to the new spiritual interpretations of the Vedas in modern India, as through Aurobindo or Dayānanda Saraswati. Notable are a few poems of his, some of which are excellent poetic versions of verses from the Rig Veda.

The book, however, represents only a small fragment of the extensive work of the author, which is available as yet only in Bengali. Other works of his include complete Bengali translations of Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* and *The Synthesis of Yoga*, as well as Anirvan's own extensive works on the Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, and his own thoughts and writings. Hopefully more of his valuable works will become available in the future.

Anirvan's writings reveal not a mere intellectual or scholar but a patient and observant yogi who tested all of his insights in himself and explored them in the entire realm of nature. His words are etched in spiritual experience and convey an authority, wisdom, and compassion to the reader that makes one stop and think deeply over his every statement. He speaks from a spiritual rationality that communicates directly to the modern mind to help purify it from the materialistic rationality which has

confused it. As such his works enkindle our intelligence and aid in the unfoldment of a living wisdom within us that is not bound by mere words or concepts, nor limited by time, place or person.

-- David Frawley

LETTERS FROM A WILD STATE: An Aboriginal Perspective: by James Cowan. Pub: Element Books, Longmead, Dorset, U.K, pp.112, £ 6.99

Here is a book which is part of the Earth Quest series which examines Australian Aboriginal cultures where exists harmony between man and nature. The author is a well-known poet, novelist and an acclaimed explorer of such other traditional peoples as the Berbers of Morocco and the Tuareg of the Central Sahara. The narration is in the form of letters written to a friend in the city. It successfully emphasises the crying need for modern man to recover and rediscover his lost harmony that urban-industrial 'civilised' world is destroying so rapidly and critically. The author well illustrates the fact that wildness as a cultural value is available in traditional societies, but which also are on the way to destruction; namely, aboriginal environment comprising caves, waterfalls, sacred drums and sculptures, the 'rain-bow snake', and 'walk-about', etc.

James Cowan's plea indirectly is to remind one to be in touch with mystic states - the other-worldly dimension - via the world of nature as a "tonic to the soul". Different metaphors express such mystic insights in different cultures that are comparable and verifiable. It is imperative to keep this in mind in view of the domination of science and technology, since moving towards spiritual enlightenment will help mankind preserve its intellectual and spiritual heritage which is on the way to extinction. Here is a good book which teaches us about all these experiential states through a first hand knowledge of traditional peoples. One of them told the author, "If we do not sing the songs, the animals will go away, then we will all die".

-- Dr. S.C. Malik

VISHWAMĀTA KRISHNĀBĀI (Some glimpses): by Swami Satchidānanda. Pub: Ānandāshram, P.O. Ānandāshram - 671 531. pp. 135, Rs.12/-

Devotees of Swāmi Rāmdas were lucky to have had in their midst for long years Pūjya Mātāji Krishnābāi, who combined in herself the high qualities of a spiritual teacher, an affectionate mother, a trusted friend and even a practical helper. Easily accessible to all, she was prepared to do any kind of help, big or small, to any one.

Mātāji was a person of high attainment and therefore competent to give instruction on spiritual matters. She did in fact do this but took care to keep her own individuality well

behind or below that of the master so that devotees were never encouraged to regard her as a guru or refer to her as such.

She served the master with infinite care and her obedience to him was total.

We are indebted to Sri Swāmi Satchidānanda for providing us with glimpses of the life and personality of this great soul. The writer is himself a dedicated *Sannyāsi* and a hard but unassuming worker who has done much in the cause of Ānandāshram.

This slender but useful volume is a welcome addition to the existing literature on Swāmi Rāmdas.

— 'Sein'

TRANSCENDENT WISDOM: by H.H. the Dalai Lāma, Tr., Ed. and Ann. by B. Alan Wallace. Pub: Snow Lion Pubs. P.O.Box 6483, Ithaca, New York 14851, pp. 147, \$ 9.95

Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra is a work in Sanskrit by Shānti Deva who lived in the 8th century (A.D.) expounding the Madhyamika philosophy originally systematised by Nāgārjuna. The ninth chapter of this treatise titled Transcendent Wisdom is here translated with notes along with an exhaustive commentary by the present Dalai Lāma. It is a dialectical exposition of the Ultimate Value to be sought in life: Emptiness and Non-Identity. The author underlines the necessity of a discipline of purification that has to precede the dawn of this supreme Consciousness. The elaborate notes given by Mr. Wallace are of great help to follow the argument. In an interesting explanation he writes:

"The Buddhist concept of the world as illusion is one that is commonly misunderstood by Western readers. This is partially due to a large body of Buddhist literature in Western languages that misrepresents this theory. ..When physicist Stephen Hawking was presented with the possibility that Eastern mysticism might yield insights into objective reality, he responded, 'I think it is absolute rubbish.. The universe of Eastern mysticism is an illusion. A physicist who attempts to link it with his own work has abandoned physics.' The mere fact that Buddhism deems the world to be illusion-like hardly sets it at odds with Western Science. The transcendental realism underlying most of even classical physics states that nature is drastically unlike our direct experience of it; and both quantum mechanics and relativity describe a world very foreign to our ordinary perceptions and concepts. In that sense science deems everyday experience of nature as illusory." (pp.125-6)

It is interesting to note the Dalai Lāma remarking that the Buddha Wisdom is not to be confined to the period of the historical Buddha. Buddha has revealed it time and again to appropriate recipients. To quote the ending prayer of Shāntideva: "Might I realize the basis, path and fruition of spiritual practice without grasping onto true existence, but recognising their mere conventional existence. Might I accumulate virtue with a motivation of compassion. With a unification of my practice of wisdom (viz. realization of emptiness) and my practice of virtue, motivated by

compassion for sentient beings, might I become fully awakened. Might I reveal emptiness to those limitless sentient beings who are afflicted by grasping unquestioningly onto true existence. Thus, a Bodhisattva prays that any ability resulting from meditation on emptiness may be used only to bring about the welfare of others." (pp.114)

— M.P. Pandit

GODS, SAGES AND KINGS: By David Frawley. Pub: Passage Press, P.O.Box 21713, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121, pp 340+56, \$ 19.95

Frawley takes up many questions which scholars have already taken as decided - to their own satisfaction. What is the source-civilisation from which all the diverse cultures over the world have stemmed out? Did the Aryans really invade the Indian land and fight against an indigenous people called Dravidians? How old is their civilisation? What is the real character of the Veda which has lent itself to so many interpretations? Who were the sages to whom the hymns are ascribed? Primitive bards or inspired beings who had scaled great heights of Consciousness? Is Saraswati an imaginary river or did it exist at some time in history? All these questions are raised and answered by the author on firm documented evidence and convincing argument. Perhaps this is the most important research work of Frawley to appear so far.

The author has certain challenging theses: Vedic India was a maritime country. Saraswati was a mighty river on the banks of which a vast Sanskrit civilisation grew up, the river itself ending in the sands of Rājasthān. The Vedas are at least five thousand years old. The central purport of the Veda is spiritual. Yoga has grown up from the seeds scattered in its hymns. There are enough indications in the hymns of the Veda and subsequent texts of the Brahmanas etc. that there was a many-sided development of arts and sciences in that age e.g. Astronomy, Psychology, Philosophy, Religion. It is interesting to follow the author in his tracing a correspondence between the seven chakras negotiated by Kundalini and the seven planes of existence repeatedly mentioned in the hymns. His analysis of the impact of the Vedic culture on the Middle-East and Greek societies is worth pursuing.

A comprehensive study of the origins of World-culture in the light of the universal and transcendent Vision of the Vedic forefathers.

— M.P. Pandit

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM: by A.L. Herman. Pub: Westview Press, 5500 Central Av., Boulder, Colorado 80301 pp.148+31, \$12.95

The author presents Hinduism through what he calls three traditions: "The Indus and the pre-Vedic tradition that leads to bhakti, or devotional yoga, and to Swami Bhaktivedānta; the brahmin or Vedic tradition that leads to karma, or unselfish action, yoga, and to Mohandās Gāndhi; and, finally, the Brahman or Upanishadic tradition that leads to jnana, or mystical knowledge, yoga, and to Ramana Maharshi." (P.87) He traces the beginnings of the Bhakti

movement in the Harappan culture; so too the concepts of *samsara* and rebirth which are 'unAryan'. Lord Krishna is a non-Vedic Deity. It is difficult to go along with the writer in his approach. Barring Bhagavān Ramana Maharshi, it is certainly not acceptable to take Mahātmā Gāndhī and Bhaktivedānta Swāmi as typical representatives of the Hindu Religion and Philosophy. What is signified by *karma* in the Veda is quite other than what Gāndhī means by it. It is also not possible to take Gāndhī seriously when he looks upon the Mahābhārata as unhistoric and Krishna as an imaginary God. The exclusivism of Bhaktivedānta is alien to the spirit of the Bhakti Movement. It is too narrow an interpretation to take Gāndhī as representing the Kshatriya spirit underlying Hinduism, Bhaktivedānta as the Vaishya. To describe Ramana as typical of the 'Brahmanism' of the Upanishads is odd. The author has, of course, the grace to say that the Maharshi did not derive his realisation from the Upanishads; they only confirmed his Self-discovery. All the same, Bhagavān is thrown here in strange company.

-- M.P. Pandit

THE MIND OF INDIA: Ed. William Gerber. Pub: Rupa and Co., 15, Bankim Chandra St. Calcutta 700 073, pp.256, Rs.65/-

In his selections to represent the currents and course of Indian Philosophy, Dr. Gerber has spread his net wide. He covers the entire panorama of the Indian Experience from the Vedic age to the present through a series of citations that reflect the development of Indian Thought proceeding from the characteristic Spirit of the land. He pinpoints certain themes that he feels are native to the Indian Mind. They are: "to live is to suffer; that we suffer is, at least in large part, our own fault; there is a way to eliminate suffering; the way is open to all; the way to eliminate suffering is to eliminate attachment; the way to eliminate attachment is to wake up from our slumber of largely unconscious habit action (unawareness of ignorance of self) and to become self-aware; there are degrees of intensity of self-awareness; in a high degree of intensity of self-awareness, one transcends - in knowledge and perhaps in actuality - the opposites of self and not-self; the achievement of this state of conscious immersion in and identification with 'the all' results in unspeakable bliss; the achievement of 'moksha' not only results in immediate bliss, per se, it also sustains the bliss by ending the dreaded cycle of births and deaths; every man should seek 'moksha' at the appropriate stage of his life, namely, the fourth stage; the stages of a man's life are, first, childhood, youth, and education; second, manhood and family responsibility; third, retirement from public responsibility, with continued residence at home, in preparation for the period of intense seeking of 'moksha' and fourth, retirement to the forest, for a life of begging one's bread, of concentrated meditation, and of intense seeking of 'moksha'. The values of a man's life culminating in 'moksha' are four in number, namely, first, 'artha' (material possessions and comforts), second, 'kāma' (the enjoyment of pleasures, the satisfaction of desires), third, 'dharma' (the doing of one's duty, the rendering of justice), and, fourth, 'moksha'; the

effort to achieve 'moksha', especially in the fourth stage of life, is aided by ethical discipline practised in the first three stages and carried over to the fourth. Ethical discipline includes, first, conformity to conventions of caste; second, adherence to ideals of non-injury and non-violence, and third, the practice of telling the truth; ethical discipline is dependent upon religion; the religion of every people and every locality reflects a core of universal religion, specific religions should therefore not be dogmatic; universal religion holds, first, that the spiritual in life is paramount, and, second, that the cosmos originated as the play or sport or whimsical willing ('lila') of a creator who moulded available matter into an order which he himself designed." (pp. xv-xxv)

What is most interesting in this exposition is the author's drawing parallels to developments in the West - right from the age of Plotinus; how far they correspond and where they differ.

There are many citations in this collection which are off-beat. For instance, from the Aitareya Brāhmana: "The sun never sets nor rises. When people think to themselves the sun is setting, he..makes.. day to what is on the other side. Then when people think he rises in the morning, he..makes..night to what is on the other side." Elegant renderings from the Vedic texts, Upanishads, Buddhist and Jaina classics, treatises on the Six Systems, the Epics, Smritis, Sikkism are followed by selections of Modern Mysticism. Unfortunately the choice is not as happy as in the earlier periods. Apart from sonnets of Sri Aurobindo, excerpts from J. Krishnamurti and Tagore, there are quotations from the writings of Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, D.M. Datta, S.C. Chatterjee, Hiriyanna, Coomaraswamy, A.R. Wadia, under the heading of Values. There is no mention of Sri Ramana Maharshi anywhere. One wishes the modern period had received more discriminating attention.

All the same the book as a whole makes for enlightening reading.

-- M.P. Pandit

CASTE : At home in India: by Sophie Baker. Pub: Rupa & Co; Distr. Affiliated East-West Press, Madras 600 010. pp.183, Rs.95/-

Sophie Baker is by profession a photo-journalist. She spent some time in Afganistan working on a film. Visiting a friend in Delhi she found not merely relief from heat and the harsh Muslim culture but a sensual feast of charming colours and variety. She found the people gentle, of old world manners making the most of what the West had to offer while respecting doggedly an ageless culture which had much to offer by way of light on the real values of life.

Caste, the titular theme of the book, she felt, was in the nature of an inescapable hypnotic fixation. One had to look beneath the wafer-thin sophistication of dress and outward life to learn something of its mysterious hold on the minds and lives of people. This took Sophie into families representative of the four upper castes, as well as a Bihar Harijan

family. The experiences she has had, illustrated by splendid photographs of actual people living in actual living contexts are both interesting and revealing.

Inevitably, Sophie is led into some distressingly inadequate and inaccurate generalizations about Hindu Philosophy in which, according to her, caste has its root. It is not surprising that she is led into making statements which are grossly and disturbingly wide off the mark. Her bibliography does not indicate that she relied on any systematic exposition of Indian thought. Max Mueller, Deussen, Zimmer, Radhakrishnan and Hiriyanna don't find a place therein. No wonder she speaks of King Arjuna and twenty eight chapters of the *Bhagavadgita*, no less! Among historians of India, she mentions Spear whose perceptions were neither deep nor particularly enlightening on Indian thought. She mentions Romila Thapar's account of Vedic India, which is an exercise in 'Marxing' and distorting the facts about early Indian life and the factors which determined its later course and evolution... Marxists are very nice people indeed but they cannot and have not ever attempted to escape into the world of real life untroubled by thoughts of class war and oppression of the working classes... and Naipaul, whose flood-lit prose style covers a multiplicity of ambiguities and misperceptions represented by *Area of Darkness* and *A Wounded Civilization*.

Sophie's experiences with the families she lived with for brief periods are extremely perceptive and even moving. Here is an account of the lot of a widow in Rājasthān: 'When a Rājput dies before his wife, she is subjected to a rigid ritual of mourning. She is expected to sit quietly for many months (!) in a corner of the living room, sometimes hidden behind a curtain with her face completely covered. No other woman whose husband is still alive is allowed to see her face. Her only company... is other widows. Her diet is kept to the bare minimum, just a little rice and water. She is not supposed to leave her position to relieve herself, a small pot being handed to her through the curtain...' (pp.32) No wonder we have so many cases of Sati from Rājasthān, the most recent being that at Deorla.

Sophie has her eyes and ears around so many things at so many places that one is tempted to marvel at her patent lively curiosity, though quite frequently she is led off the mark. Her experiences living with a Vaishnavite Brahman family in South India are most vividly narrated. The family was concerned with a local temple, the men being priests therein. The family had an unnatural distrust of modern medicines and doctors. Sophie's doctor friend told her of how the family had lost a twelve-year old boy, who lay sick for two days with diarrhoea. The doctor felt that she could have saved the boy. But the family thought that the boy had 'pox of the intestines' and that it was divine punishment for a misdeed'. A European physician Murray (?) by name wondered in his book *India Which Century?* whether the position was not quite hopeless. Yes, indeed we seem to belong in India to all the centuries of our national history, living in all these at the same time. Sophie has interesting things to say but one wishes she had met either Ramana or the Kānchi Āchārya.

-- Prof. S. Rāmaswāmy

AN INQUIRY INTO TRUTH: Works of V. Subrahmanya Iyer. Pub: Shiv Parvati Pratishtan Trust, Nasik 422005. pp.644.

This book is a composite work bringing together two works published earlier, one entitled 'The Philosophy of Truth' (1955), and another entitled 'An Enquiry into Truth' (1980). The two books edited by T.M.P. Mahādevan originally, have now been brought together by the author's daughter Mrs. Rukmani Kuppanna. When just published, the books revealed a mind of the profoundest earnestness and devotion to philosophic pursuits. They also showed that the author had profited by the invaluable guidance of one of the greatest of sages of modern India, the great Narasimha Bhārati of the Sringeri Sankara Mutt.

The Truth into which inquiry is made with such moving persistence and intellectual determination is the central truth of *Advaita--brahma satyam, jagat mithya*. That truth is beyond challenge. The realists of the Madhva school accept what is around as real and evolve a theology of salvation which excludes large masses of human beings as *nityanarakis*. Visishtādvaita seeks to combine the pursuit of absolute truth with devotion to a personal God of abundant auspiciousness and beneficence. It is Sankara who goes to the ultimate goal of the philosophic quest, using the psychology of dreams to dismiss the temptation to accept the Vyavahārika universe as ultimately real and the *pramānas* of the Prasthāna Thrāyi for affirming the uniqueness and absoluteness of Brahman as one without a second, as the sole Real, the goal which every one of us must seek to reach, to get out of *samsāric* misery and tribulation.

One has a minor grievance against the valuable book. The author is shown as seeking to educate and convert, by his letters, men like Sir James Jeans, Eddington and Max Planck. The true Vedānta does not need the support of modern science for achieving a complete awareness of the ultimate Truth.

-- Prof. S. Rāmaswāmy

THE MYSTICAL SEARCH FOR THE ABSOLUTE: by Motilal Pandit. Pub: Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion. Hindwādi Belgaum 590011. pp 276+25, Rs.65/-

The great philosopher, scholar and mystic, Gurudev Rānade was a marvellous example of a *jīvan-muktha*. He held various important academic positions of the highest kind but remained through all of these preoccupations of a secular kind, a sincere, earnest seeker of the Life Eternal which inspires only a few, a very few and which the vast majority of us are content to regard as the goal of the minority of the quixotically-minded among human beings. Dr. Rānade established a public trust out of his own resources with the object of encouraging the Quest Spiritual and getting the common human being to recognise it as his destiny whatever he may be doing in apparent disregard of his essential nature. WHO AM I?--This faithful question which Ramana bade everyone ask oneself relentlessly was the question which Lectures and Symposia under the Trust were to deal with.

The author of the book under review, Sri Motilal Pandit

was invited to give a course of Lectures by the Trust. Mr. Pandit is a widely travelled scholar but if one may hazard the view his travelling would seem to have taken him, not "through strange seas of thought alone" but to various contemporary countries. The blurb speaks of him as of an essentially spiritual bent of mind. The Lectures gathered with this book show him as having traversed Western Monism Christian and Islāmic Mysticism.

The result is however, somewhat disconcerting. For Sri Pandit tends to be, quite often, highly mystical in his presentation of his perceptions. Eg.,: "The ambiguities of existence express themselves in such absences in which an eschatological hope gets obliterated in fires of time". It is this record of existential absences which compose, as it were, human history! It is the fundamental right of every person who has the necessary gift to obfuscate and mystify, to confuse and perplex his readers or listeners in order that they may abandon the Quest Spiritual, at least temporarily, seeking further gifts of *adhikara* and spiritual competence before resuming the Quest. All that one wants is some plain indication, if necessary, as was Sri Ramana's wont in ruthlessly clear and emphatic monosyllables that there is a Self in man, and that if we wish to see ourselves as we really are, we must take ourselves into ourselves, into our real selves, and cast off the numerous masks we delight in wearing.

Sri Pandit is extremely sound on Sankara. He points out that Sankara does not deny a measure of reality to the empirical world. It is a wholesale misconception of Sri Sankara's doctrine of *maya* that makes Sri Rāmānuja and later still, Sri Madhva exert themselves so unnecessarily into affirming a measure of reality to the empirical world. Sankara never denied it. It would have made nonsense of his mission on earth and indeed of his exposition of Brahman. If there were no *Jīvātmas* at all, there could be no *Brahmajijnāsa* (Self-Knowledge). There always is a *Jijnāsu*--waiting restlessly and earnestly to realise that he is Brahman.

Sri Pandit has many valuable insights to offer and his thoughts spring from a true quest for the Absolute. Communication of these insights is a different matter and one fears that Sri Pandit does not always 'communicate'. One would have liked simpler, plainer, more direct presentation. But mystics speak a language all their own and it behoves those of us who would listen to them to make the most gallant effort we can to get on terms with them.

-- Prof. S. Rāmaswāmy.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH: by K. Subrahmanyam. Pub: Oxford University Press, Madras 600 006. pp.182, Rs.45/-

This is a collection of the weekly paragraphs discussing usage and meaning in modern English contributed to the *Sunday Hindu*. One wonders why Oxford thought of publishing this book when it has already enriched the world of English users with masterly guides and dictionaries of incalculable value.

-- Prof. S. Rāmaswāmy

A SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY, THE UNFOLDMENT OF A SOUL: by Lorraine Sinkler. Pub: The Valor Foundation, L.N. Fowler & Co., ESSEX RM64DH, U.K. pp.439. \$ 16.95, £ 11.95.

Joel Goldsmith was a modern Christian Mystic and teacher who founded a new spiritual path, called 'The Infinite Way', which had more affinity with Hindu *sādhanas* than orthodox Christianity. His basic message that God is 'I am', that the inherent reality of each person is this same 'I am', that the activities of the mind obscure the experience of this reality, and that the mind can be transcended by abiding in the primal state of 'I' - all are reminiscent of *advaita vedānta* and of Ramana Maharshi's teachings in particular.

More than twenty books by Joel Goldsmith appeared in the 1950s and 60s. All were extracts from his talks and letters and all were edited and compiled by Lorraine Sinkler, one of the leading lights of The Infinite Way. She has now decided to give an account of her relationship with her Master and teacher by publishing most of the letters she wrote to him between 1949, the year when she first met him, and 1964, the year of his death. The result is *A Spiritual Odyssey*.

The book would have been greatly improved by having Joel Goldsmith's written answers, since many of the letters deal with spiritual queries, but none are included because Mr. Goldsmith's widow refused to give permission. So, instead, we get page after page of rather repetitive letters with no answers. Several basic themes keep recurring: her gratitude to Mr. Goldsmith for teaching her and helping her along the path, accounts of her own spiritual experiences, descriptions of Infinite Way activities she had organised, and detailed progress reports on the editing and literary work she was doing for him. Some of these topics may be of interest to Infinite Way students (one assumes that this account has been written primarily for them) but since the book is over 400 pages long, outsiders will probably find the 'insider gossip' rather heavy going. Her spiritual experiences, her healing activities and her progressive surrender to God and her Master stand out as the highlights of the book, but these interesting accounts tend to be swamped by a mass of trivial details about the Infinite Way activities she was involved with.

-- David Godman

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE: by Annie Besant. Pub: Quest Books, P.O.Box 270, Wheaton, USA. pp 165. \$8.95

Theosophy evolved over a century ago to cater to a Western audience that had not been exposed to Eastern religious traditions. It sought to create a package that would suit a European mentality. To this end the founders freely borrowed from Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and the European "occult".

Without its Eastern sources there would have been no theosophy, and yet theosophy is not the practice of an Eastern tradition. Besant and others often quoted the Upanishads, but they did not practice Hinduism. They preached and practised their own newly created religion, much perhaps as modern day spiritual entrepreneurs like Da

Free John or the New Age crystal healers practise theirs. The entrepreneurs borrow heavily from traditions but are outside them.

In late 19th Century Europe and America there were few texts translated from Sanskrit, Tibetan or Pali accessible to the general public and even fewer teachers recognised as lineage holders within an Eastern tradition. Theosophy served the purpose of breaking the ground for these teachers to come. Now the ground has been broken, the teachers have come and Eastern traditions are being established in the West.

A century later, the sermons given by Annie Besant in "The Spiritual Life" seem quaintly outdated. The preface indicates that some attempt has been made to update her Victorian use of language by, for example, shortening sentences and using inclusive language, such as "humanity" for "men". However, her grandiose, archaic style remains.

Besant feels powerfully moved by the concept of law, thus we are told of the Law of Nature, the Law of Love, the Law of Life, the Law of Sacrifice. She is a theist, she expounds on the Divine Lawgiver, the Divine Will, the Supreme Oneness, the Justice of God. In the late 20th Century, this all looks a little pompous, not to mention improbable.

Whatever her topic, her form is florid. Discussing scientific inquiry into atomic theory she says, "The unplumbed profundities of living things appear in ever-diminishing minuteness, too small for scanning." (p.122) This means that the smallest particles are invisible.

The substance of her talks is primarily derived from Christianity and Hinduism, with a good mix of strictly theosophical eccentricity in the form of "White Brotherhoods" and "Masters of Wisdom". She makes bizarre prophecies that have not been fulfilled, such as that the future education of children would be conducted on the astral plane. Rather conveniently, her time frame is not clearly specified. Besant comes across as a visionary in search of a vision. She would be a Builder of Empire, a Sower of Seed, a Prophet of the New Age, but she is the same woman who set Krishnamurti up to walk on water in Australia, a feat he did not accomplish. A modern reading finds her idealistic but far-fetched.

Her and Theosophy's contribution to breaking the ground in the West for Eastern traditions was a Great Work. Once the ground was broken the traditions themselves took root. Knowledge accumulated over thousands of years is not shred and patch-like, it is not a torn cloth, it is a whole fabric of understanding. The need for some all inclusive Esperanto of religions has passed.

-- Sūnyatā (D. Cousins)

HINDU TEMPLES, WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM, VOL II,
THE ISLAMIC EVIDENCE: by Sita Ram Goel, Pub: Voice
of India, New Delhi - 110002. pp. 464, Rs. 120/-

The argument that Hindu temples were destroyed by the Moghul invaders for non-religious reasons is clearly refuted

by the book, "Hindu Temples, What Happened To Them, Vol II". Drawing on a wide variety of sources, particularly Islamic stone inscriptions and contemporary historical accounts, Sita Ram Goel presents conclusive evidence that the destruction by Muslims of non-Muslim places of worship has been held as a duty since the inception of Islam. It was not done for economic or political reasons, but because the ideology demanded it.

In more recent years, one can observe the treatment of the Bahai under Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. This group was persecuted and killed for their religious beliefs. Or consider the case of Salman Rushdie. Born to a Muslim family, his book "Satanic Verses" merely doubted the authenticity of Islam. He has been living for three years in hiding and under a death threat both because of the book and for having strayed from the faithful.

Sita Ram Goel lists many temples that have been converted into mosques or built over by mosques, explaining in detail the case of Rudramahalaya in Sidhpur, the ruins of which are now concealed by a Jama Masjid. Goel's book is part of a larger campaign that has been, up till now, focused on the Ayodhya dispute. It is a campaign that seeks to restore Hindu temples that have been converted into mosques, and not only in the Ayodhya district. To do this he first establishes that such conversions took place and that the motives were religious and not other. Second, he states that the motives are still current within the Muslim community and therefore liable to be reactivated. The implication of this is to spread suspicion and fear.

Goel certainly proves that the destruction and conversion of temples was for religious reasons, however his tone is communalist. Islam, he says, has provided a justification, "for some of the basest motives in human nature and attracted to its standards some of the worst hoodlums and gangsters and blood thirsty bandits that the world has known." (p.276) The destruction by anyone of other people's sacred sites is indefensible. As it turns out, the spread of Islam is not always accompanied by such destruction.

In Indonesia and West Africa local animist beliefs have been incorporated into Islam. The local spirits are classed as forms of jinn. In Nigeria, there are trance-possession cults which perform ritual possession at weddings, naming ceremonies and the Muslim festivals of Id al-fitr and Id al-Kabir. (See Besmer, "Horses, Musicians & Gods"). Africans have discovered that they can Islamicize indigenous magical spells by simply adding the name of God. (See Trimmingham, "Islam in the Sudan").

That, given the chance, Muslims are liable to start smashing temples again in India (p. 103) is not necessarily true. It does not occur in Africa and Indonesia. Under the fundamentalist Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran though, the bahai were persecuted. What is important is the character of the local population and the governing regime. Fundamentalism breeds fundamentalism; revenge, further revenge.

Sita Ram Goel also claims that no Buddhist temples have been converted into Hindu ones, or built over by Hindu

temples. I suggest he check up on the Ayyappa temple at Sabarimalai which I believe, was Buddhist. There is also a Buddhist cave outside Kargil, famous for its hand and foot prints of Padmasambhava, currently occupied by Sikhs who now claim it as a cave of one of their gurus.

While restoring old temples that have been converted to mosques, or which lie beneath mosques, may be emotionally satisfying, it is also a cause of war, as the Ayodhya dispute has shown. War is not supposed to be the purpose of religion, which is for the benefit of humanity. It is not very well known that nearly the entire village of Bodhgaya, including a modern Hindu temple, is built on a mound of Buddhist ruins. Under the village are statues and parts of temples waiting to be excavated. For this, the whole village, including the Hindu temple, would need to be razed. Is it worth it?

-- Sūnyatā (D. Cousens)

SOME GUIDELINES TOWARDS THE GOAL SUPREME: by Swami Gokulānanda. Pub: Shri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore 600 004. pp. 160, Rs.10/-

The book is the outcome of a series of lectures that Swami Gokulānanda delivered in Delhi. The overall message is to go within by purifying the mind and senses through Jnana and Bhakti. "Why is it that we run after sense pleasures? Here is the answer Because of our identification with the body. As long as one has the feeling 'I am the body', the body's demand for sense gratification will be there....

"Through our discriminative powers, through Viveka, and also through Vairāgya (dispassion), we have to constantly distinguish between the real and the unreal.... We must turn away our mind from the world of objects.... then realisation is possible"

"We need inner purification.... No unfoldment is possible unless we practise purity in thought, word and deed.... Through Japa Sādhana or by the repetition of the holy Name, our body and mind become pure.... all kinds of impure vibrations will be neutralised.... superior consciousness can easily be awakened."

The author covers Viveka, Vairāgya, Ahamkār, Vāsanas, Self Control, Meditation, Japa, Surrender, Prayer and many other topics. Quotations from Vivekachūdāmani, Bhagavad Gīta and other sources are deftly interwoven into the lectures. The author empathises with some of the problems faced by aspirants, and has words of encouragement, and a few helpful tips concerning practices. Though the lectures flow easily from one point to another, sometimes returning to the first point at a later lecture and many subjects and guidelines are touched upon, one may finally be left with a sense of vagueness owing to the loose organisation of ideas.

-- Suresh Jain

YOGIC ASANAS FOR GROUP TRAINING (Parts I & II): by P.P. Janārdan Swami. Pub: Yogābhyāsi Mandal, Ramnagar, Nagpur 440 010. pp. 58, Rs.2/-; pp.46, Rs.2/-

Paramahansa Parivrājakāchārya Śrī Janārdan Swāmi's birth centenary is being celebrated this year. He was a great

Vedic scholar, Sanskrit Pandit, adept in Yoga, and an exemplar Sannyāsīn established in Brahmacharya. Born in Kavathi of Sāwantwādi district, the Swāmi left home at the age of seven. In his wanderings he was not only to acquire a mastery of Vedas and Sanskrit, but also get initiated mysteriously into Yoga. In a jungle outside Siddhapur was a Siva temple where an anonymous Sādhu accosted him and then over a six-month period, initiated him into secrets of Yoga. The Guru left him as mysteriously but not before getting as Gurudakshina, a promise from the able pupil that he would give to others whatever he had received and in the same way. Sri Janārdan Swāmi who covered most of North India on foot, took Sannyāsa around the age of 40. He was a firm believer that knowledge and action should be based on capacity and need (*shakyata* and *āvashakyata*); that knowledge should never be traded. He never charged anybody anything. He dedicated his life to the spread of Yoga. He founded the YOGĀBHYĀSI MANDAL in Nagpur and was ever touring and conducting Yoga camps. He subscribed to the maxim that Āyurveda, Prosody and Yoga were the specifics for the disease of Body, Speech and Mind respectively. He attained Siddhi in 1979.

The Swami's books on Āsanās, Prānāyāma and the secrets of Yoga, all in Marāthi and Hindi, have sold in tens of thousands, running into several editions. The booklets under review and one on Prānāyāma are English translations. The two parts of *Yogic Āsanā* comprise three courses each, ascending in order of complexity. The Swami's instructions to teachers and students are brief, comprehensive and carry authority. The author's accent is on ordering and systematizing Yogic Āsanās in order to facilitate large-scale and effective group-training. Big and Bluff are beautiful today and one would be a sad loser if one were to overlook these books on the basis of their very modest size and price.

-- Vasant K. Kothari

JOURNEY INTO MIND: by Lawrence Ewels. Pub: Regency Press, 125 High Holborn, London WC1V 6QA. pp.182, \$5.95

Lawrence Ewels, in this book, shares with us his open-minded, life-long search regarding the interplay between mind and matter. During this search for Truth he read quite a lot of scientific and travel books - "to keep balance between gullibility and scepticism". After experiencing Rosicrucian, Martinist and other initiatory movements he came finally under the guidance of Buddhist monks of the Theravāda School. He started Insight meditation and as a result the quest began to depend more on himself and less on what others had said or written. All previous researches and efforts helped him now to verify his own practice. But nevertheless he writes that only the most detached contemplation could find answers that went beyond feelings and concepts.

For those interested in the powers of the mind there are delightful chapters on the lives and opinions of Paul Brunton, Joan Grant, Edgar Cayce, 'Cheiro' and others. There is also a long informative chapter on Buddhism. In tackling the wanderings of the individual soul, life after life, the author

himself wanders through Christian, Aboriginal, Egyptian, and Tibetan evidences. Case histories under hypnosis are also given.

The author is however quite aware of the ultimate truth regarding these phenomena for, he quotes at length Sri Ramana Maharshi: "There is no relation between the standard of time measurements of one state of consciousness and another. There is no such thing as transmigration of souls. What came and went were the mental activities of the individual and these made it appear that a person had returned. The ego-sense arises again with its burden of past tendencies and sometimes with a memory link. On whatever plane of consciousness the mind happens to act, it creates for itself a body, physical in the material world, dream-form in the dream world and so on. After the death of the physical body the mind becomes inactive for some time (in Earth terms) as in dreamless sleep. Then it again becomes active in a finer form known to some as the astral body, until, it returns to a new physical existence. But the self-realised man, whose mind has been brought under control and remains quiescent except when deliberately turned towards the world, is unaffected by death. The chain of illusions about separate existence is broken for all time. This is reality and it is timeless. Unless that freedom is persistently sought after and ultimately attained, the mind goes on creating restlessness and can never be satisfied for long."

-- Marie-Louise S. Baravalle

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO KNOW YOURSELF: Conversations with Sri Ramana Maharshi : compiled & ed. by A.R. Natarajan. Pub : Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning, Bangalore 560 003. pp 218+44, Rs. 75/-.

After *Ramana's Muruganār* and *Unforgettable Years* here's one more lovely offering from the Ramana Maharshi Centre, Bangalore.

We spend much of life chased about by thoughts. We habitually, blindly reach out to thought as *the* means for knowing or resolving. It is indeed a blessed moment when conviction dawns that there is nothing really worthwhile, nothing truly lasting to be gained through thinking, and that all knowledge is already present in Silence. The attentive mind curious about everything around it, then becomes curious about 'attention' itself. One begins to see that one is forced to use an instrument in all perceptions and that the instrument itself has limitations and 'moods'. The owner of a car must first investigate and set right the moods of the drunken chauffeur. In a gross sense the instrument is mind. To be very specific the instrument is the sense of 'I' itself. It seems suicidal to suggest that all things are added to the one who abandons thinking. But it is true and therefore can and must be verified. Thought is the *sphurana* of 'I', and 'I' is the *sphurana* of Self. Revelling in ripple-free expanse, 'I' must find revelation in the Heart, as the Heart.

"Ah, the ease of it all!" sang the Maharshi. The practise of *vichāra*, like its brief theory, ought really to be over in

a few moments. Maharshi himself set an example when he was sixteen. He used a pointed pin and with just a touch burst a big balloon. It was principally a drama enacted for our welfare. We busy ourselves all our lives with our blunt, rounded, worn pins, and keep pushing the target around instead of piercing it. One reaches for food, masticates it and finally digests it for actual use by the cells. The acts of hearing and reading, mentation and meditation, and application and experience serve to sharpen the mind-pin. A one-pointed mind is one that is free from distraction. A mind surrendered to the moment, free of expectation and transient cravings, is one-pointed. Self-enquiry is not just another 'technique'. It is not one more choice among many exciting TV channels. It is a necessity. It is the Seer coming to terms with the Seen. Drg Drsyā Viveka.

Maharshi set an example in his life without saying so. Who to set an example to? The conversations of Bhagavān as available in *Ramana Gita*, *Talks*, *Day by Day* etc. are a beacon offering direction to doubt-tossed minds. But there are many gems among the short records of early devotees which lie scattered in booklets and *The Mountain Path*. Humphreys, Nāyana, Daivarāta, Kapāli, Narasimha Swāmi, Mādhavaīrtha, Brunton, Ramanānanda Swamagiri, the list is long. Sri A.R. Natarajan is to be congratulated for his excellent compilation of vital passages from these into a 'Practical Guide'. The conversations selected are mostly upto the mid-thirties. Select passages of later years from the well known sources have also been included. There is a very good Introduction and adequate notes precede each of the 32 chapters which cover facets of the Quest. The chapters, which carry headings, should have been numbered also; it is quite a job to link up with the References detailed at the end of the book. This is a practical guide and so could have been priced lower, to reach a larger public.

-- J. Jayaraman

BOOKS RECEIVED

EN ROUTE: On the Path: The Mother's Correspondence with Shyam Sundar. (tr. from French). VAK Bookshop, Pondicherry 605 002. pp.158, Rs.20/-

TO LIGHT A FIRE: Ven. W. Sayadaw, pp.29, \$0/80, **RADICAL THERAPY:** Lily deSilva, pp.21, \$0/80. **THE SCALE OF GOOD DEEDS (Velaama Sutta):** Susan E. Jootla, pp.32, \$1.50. **LOOKING INWARD:** Tan Acham Kor, pp.57, \$2.50. All published by Buddhist Publication Society, P.O.Box.61, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

ASHRAM BULLETIN

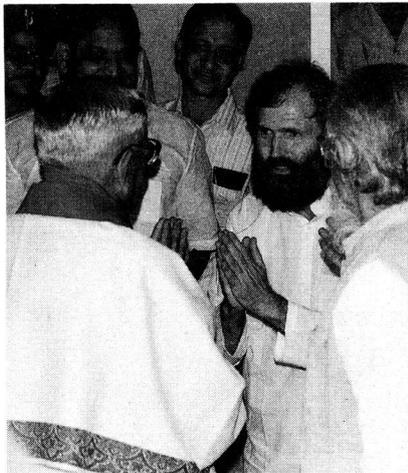
President of India, Hon'ble Sri R. Venkataraman visits Sri Ramanasramam on 6.1.92



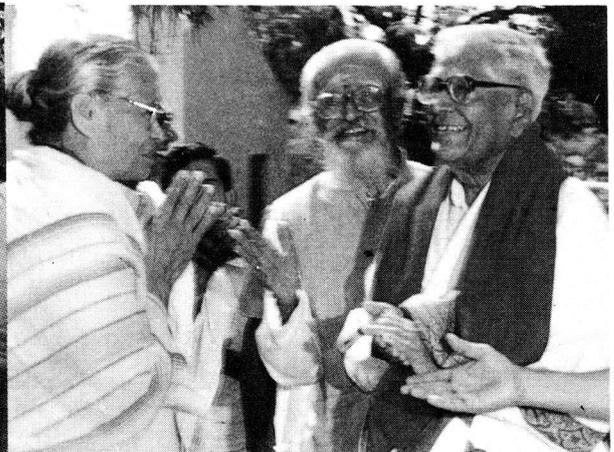
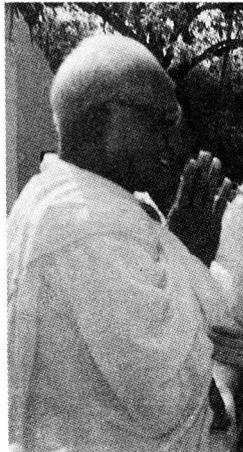
"Old friends" — Hon'ble Sri R. Venkataraman, President of India and Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President of Sri Ramanasramam!



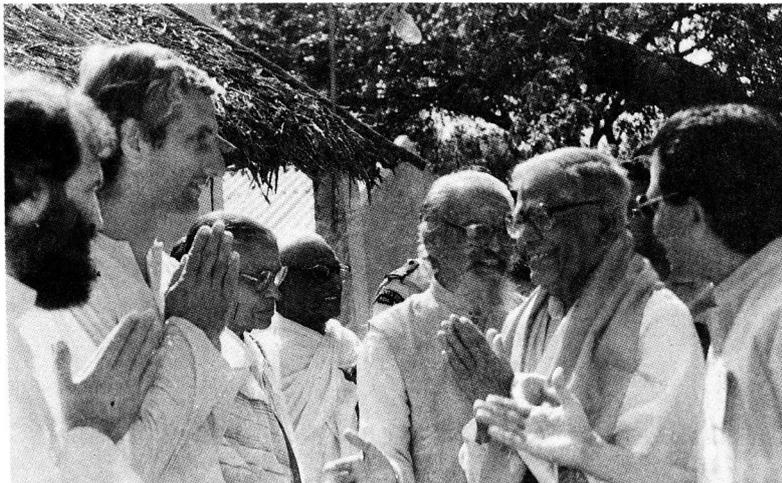
The traditional *puorna-kumba* reception by purohits offered to the President of India



"Dear Indian President! The people of USSR greet you, Sir!" says **Oleg Mogilever** who is the translator into Russian of Sri Bhagavan's original works.

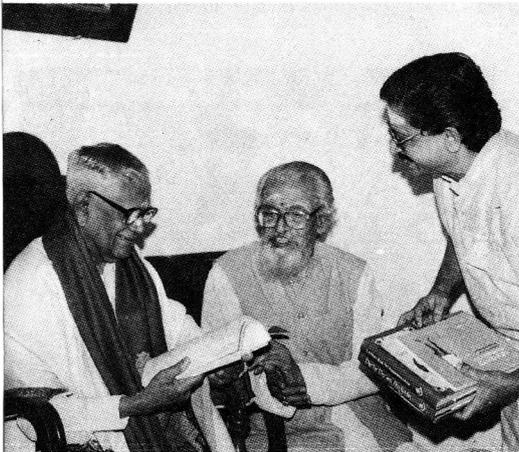


Old devotees, **Sri N. Balarama Reddiar** and **Smt. Kanakamma** are being introduced to the President



Mr. David Godman, author of *Be As You Are* greets the Indian President.
(l to r) **Oleg Mogilever**, **David Godman**, **Smt. Kanakamma**, **N. Balarama Reddiar**, **T.N. Venkataraman**, **Hon'ble Sri R. Venkataraman** and our Editor, **V. Ganesan**.

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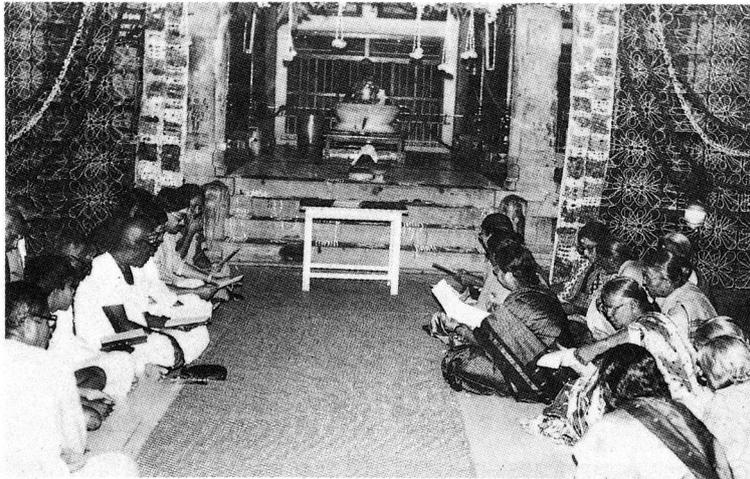
resentation of important Ashram publications



Hon'ble President offers his obeisance to the Shrine of Grace of Sri Bhagavan

Totally absorbed in silent meditation at the 'Old Hall', where Hon'ble **Sri R. Venkataraman** first had *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan in 1937. He was very happy to reveal that he was actually sitting at the exact place where Maharshi then directed him to be seated!

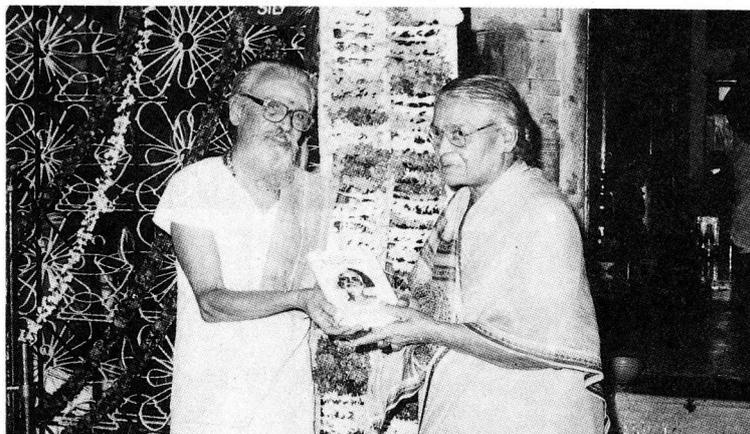




With Tamil *Parayanam* (hymns in Tamil by and on Sri Bhagavan) very early in the morning commenced the holy day's proceedings



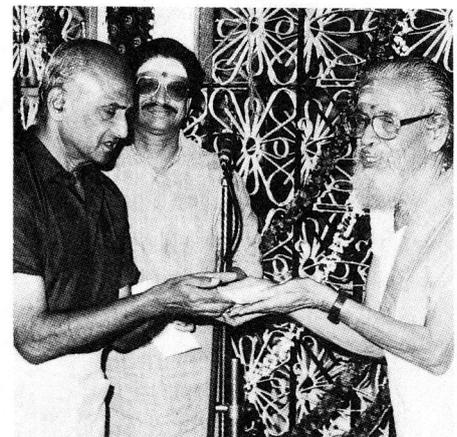
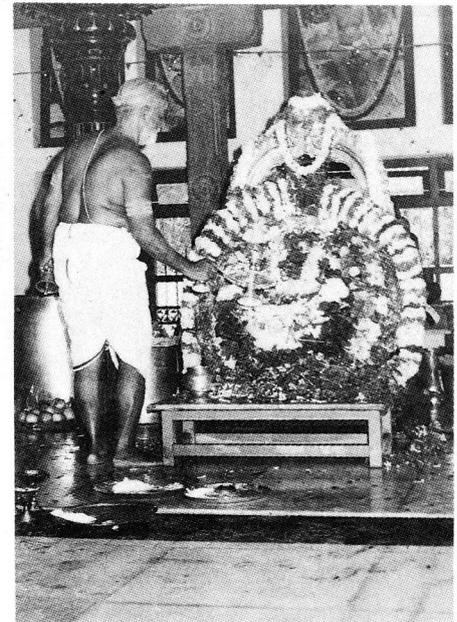
Yearning devotees absorbed in ecstasy in front of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace



Smt. Kanakamma receives the first copy of her commentaries in Tamil of Sri Bhagavan's original poetic works from the Ashram President

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*Sri Ramana
Jayanti
Celebrations
at
the Ashram*

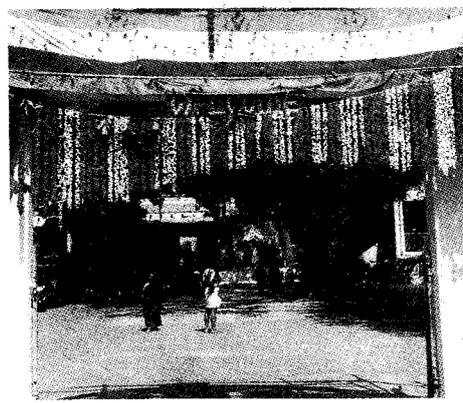
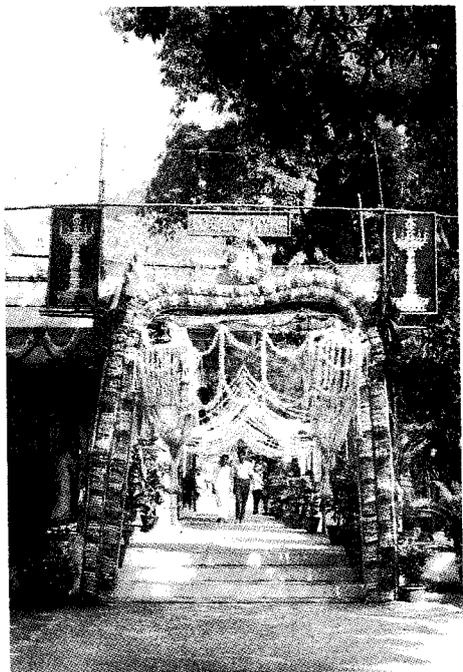


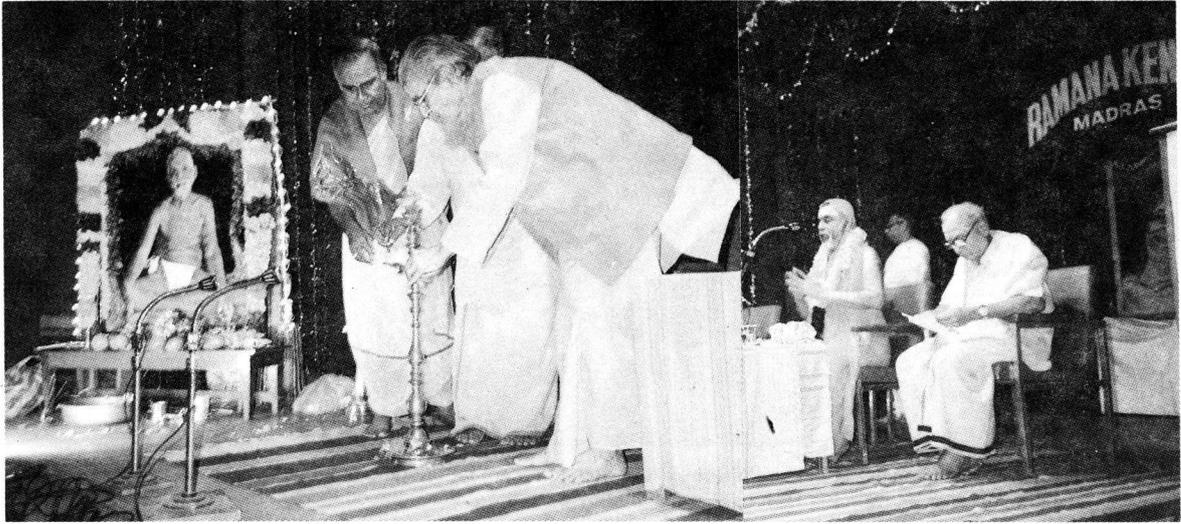
SRI V. DWARAKNATH REDDY presenting a cheque for Rs. 1,00,000/- on the occasion, as donation, to the Ashram President

**Flower garlands galore —
thanks to the generosity of
Sri Ramachandra Khoday of
Bangalore**



'Ramananjali' giving Ramana Music.
Feeding of the poor on a large scale





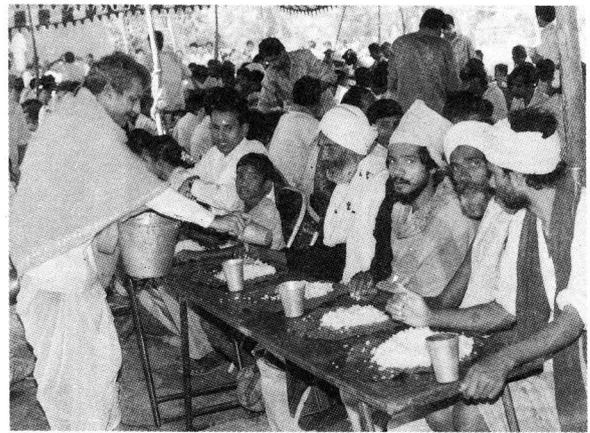
Sri Muruganar's Birth Centenary Celebrations in Madras: Sri T.N. Venkataraman inaugurating by lighting the *kuthuvilaku*. Sri Sadhuram Swami giving a musical discourse; to his right is Sri K.S. Venkataraman, Vice President of Ramana Kendra, Madras



Ramana Kendra, New Delhi: *Veda Parayana* on *Jayanti* morning; Sri Swami Bodhananda delivering the key-note address and Smt. Durga Balasubramanyan rendering the invocation song.



Sri Ramana Jayanti at Srungavruksham: Sri Nanagaru is seated at extreme left



At Tadpatri: A grand feeding of all, marked the *Jayanti* function. Sri Brahmam is serving.

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USSR lauds Sri Ramanasramam



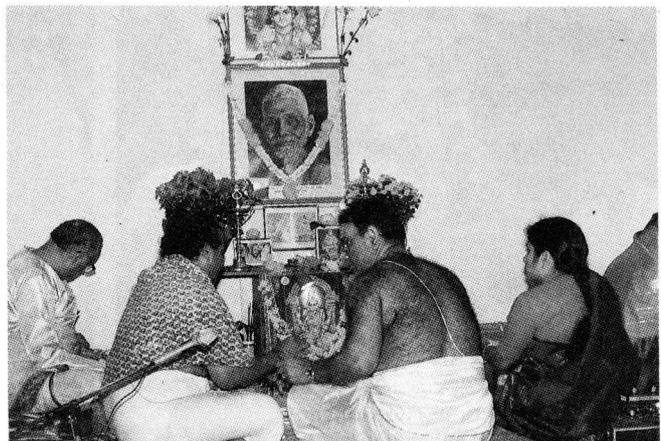
The Russian Consulate in Madras praised Sri Ramanasramam for bringing out a book in Russian on the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, translated by **Oleg Mogilever** and edited by **Nadhia Sutara**. At a special function held on March 25 at its Cultural Centre in Madras, our Editor expounds Maharshi's teaching of *Atma-Vichara*; (l - r) **Nadhia Sutara**, **Valentin N. Zagrebelny**, Russian Consul.



Ramana Jayanti at Ramana Maharshi Foundation London, (l to r) **Andrew Phillipou**, **Annie Elkins**, **Haus Heimer**, **Alan Jacob**, **Dr. Ratneswaran** and **Ellis Snitcher**



Ramana Jayanti at Arunachala Ashrama, New York: **Margo Martin** and **Arunachala Bhakta Bhagavata** chanting *Upadesa Saram*. **Geeta Bhatt** taking *aarti*.

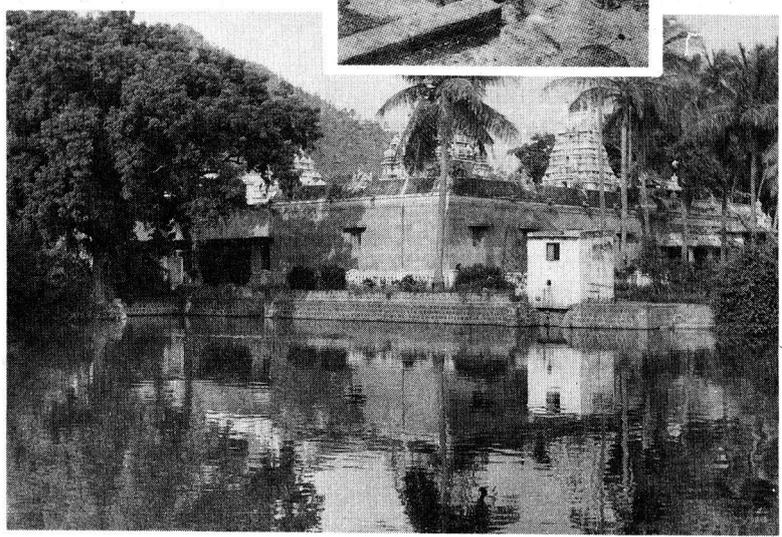
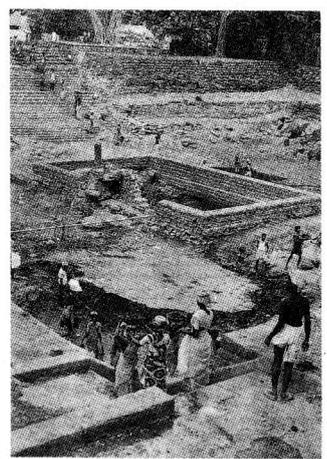


At Toronto: *Sri Ramana Sat Sangh* celebrating *Ramana Jayanti* at **Sri Krishna Sastri's** residence.

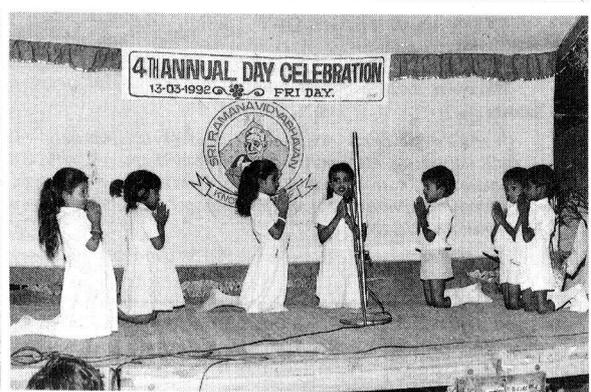
RAINS AT ARUNACHALA



Seven years of drought dispelled after unusually heavy rains at Arunachala. Palithirtham, deepened last year (inset) overflows. A small water-fall on Arunachala.



At Vengikkal: 4th Annual Day Celebration of "Sri Ramana Vidhyabhavanam" Nursery and Primary School: (*extreme right*) **M. Karunanidhi**, the founder of the school. **Smt. Mahalakshmi Suryanandam** is seen third from right.



Manager assumes office



Sri V. Sundara Ramanan

The eldest son of Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, took charge of the Ashram Office on March 3. He will be specially responsible for the care and service of visiting devotees. May the blessings of Sri Bhagavan's devotees grace his task!

RAMANA CENTRE IN BANGALORE

The 15th National Seminar and Cultural Festival on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was held on 28th and 29th March at Bangalore by the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning. There were talks on Maharshi's teachings by S.G. Subbaraya Sharma, A.S. Venugopala Rao, Swami Chidrupananda, B.S. Krishnamurthy, Dr. Sarada, Swami Anantananda and A.R. Natarajan. The evening cultural programmes included 'Ramananjali-305', Dance Fusion, Aruna Ramana and Karnatic Classical music based on Maharshi's compositions.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Devotees wishing to stay at Sri Ramanasramam are requested to write well in advance, giving full details of arrival date, number of persons, and expected duration of stay. Devotees are further requested to await our confirmation, which is essential for the Ashram to properly handle the numerous requests constantly being received. We regret that it will not be possible for us to provide accommodation or other facilities for those who do not follow this procedure. Devotees are, therefore, encouraged not to arrive unexpectedly.

President, Sri Ramanasramam

FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

SRI BHAGAVAN'S ARADHANA DAY	Thursday	30.4.1992
MATRUBUTHESWARA MAHA PUJA	Monday	25.5.1992
GURUPOORNIMA (VYASA PUJA)	Tuesday	14.7.1992
KRISHNA JAYANTHI (GOKULASHTAMI)	Friday	21.8.1992
VINAYAKA CHATHURTHI	Monday	31.8.1992
DAY OF BHAGAVAN'S ADVENT TO ARUNACHALA	Tuesday	1.9.1992
NAVARATRI FESTIVAL (COMMENCES ON)	Sunday	27.9.1992
SARASWATHI PUJA	Monday	5.10.1992
DEEPAVALI	Sunday	25.10.1992
SKANDA SHASTI	Saturday	31.10.1992
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (COMMENCES ON)	Sunday	29.11.1992
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM	Tuesday	8.12.1992
SRI BHAGAVAN'S JAYANTHI	Saturday	9.1.1993
PONGAL	Thursday	14.1.1993
CHINNASWAMIGAL ARADHANA	Saturday	6.2.1993
MAHA SIVARATRI	Friday	19.2.1993
SRI VIDYA HAVAN	Friday	19.3.1993
TELUGU NEW YEARS DAY	Wednesday	24.3.1993
TAMIL NEW YEARS DAY	Wednesday	14.4.1993

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

Date: 31.3.92

Signature of the Publisher: (SD) T.N. Venkataraman

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Editor: V. GANESAN.