

the
Mountain
path



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

vol. 10, no. ii, april 1973

Thou didst display Thy
prowess once, and, the
perils ended, return to Thy
repose, Oh Arunachala!

—The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 38

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1.

Vol. 10 APRIL 1973 No. 2

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| EDITORIAL : | |
| Effort and Effortlessness .. | 55 |
| Garland of Guru's Sayings — Sri Muruganar .. | 58 |
| Effort, Grace and Destiny — Arthur Osborne .. | 59 |
| Spirituality in Russia — Gladys Dehm .. | 62 |
| Monastic Prayer .. | 66 |
| Right Knowledge and its Implications — Brahmachari Mohan Chaitanya .. | 67 |
| How I Came to Bhagavan — Muhammad Abdulla .. | 70 |
| A Note on Integral Yoga Linked with Modern Psychology — Prof. U. A. Asrani .. | 72 |
| The Limits of One's Effort — 'Sein' .. | 75 |
| Arunachala Ashtaka and Siddha Purusha — Dr. M. Anantanarayana Rao .. | 76 |
| Vichara — Alexander Paul Hixon, Jr. .. | 81 |
| Sanatsujatiya .. | 83 |
| The Absolute of The Buddha — Dr. P. J. Saher .. | 86 |
| Bhagavan's Solitude for Devotees — Kunju Swami .. | 87 |
| Glory of Arunachala .. | 89 |
| Tat Twam Asi—It Just Is — Apa B. Pant .. | 91 |
| The Investigation — M. M. Ismail .. | 92 |
| Guidelines for the Pilgrimage — Sylvan Levey .. | 93 |
| Bhrigu Nadi Version of Sri Bhagavan's Horoscope — K. K. Nambiar .. | 95 |
| Sadhana : Effort or Grace — Dr. K. A. Shah .. | 96 |
| Vivekachudamani or The Crest Jewel of Wisdom .. | 99 |

CONTENTS—(Contd.)

| | |
|--|------|
| | Page |
| Karmic Responsibility — <i>Cornelia Bagarotti</i> .. | 100 |
| Why We Come to Thee — <i>Dilip Kumar Roy</i> .. | 101 |
| Book Reviews .. | 102 |
| Ashram Bulletin .. | 110 |
| Introducing | |
| — <i>C. Somasundaram Pillai</i> .. | 119 |
| Letters to the Editor .. | 121 |

Contributors are requested to give the exact data as far as possible for quotations used, i.e. source and page number, and also the meaning if from another language. It would simplify matters. Articles should not exceed 10 pages.

— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

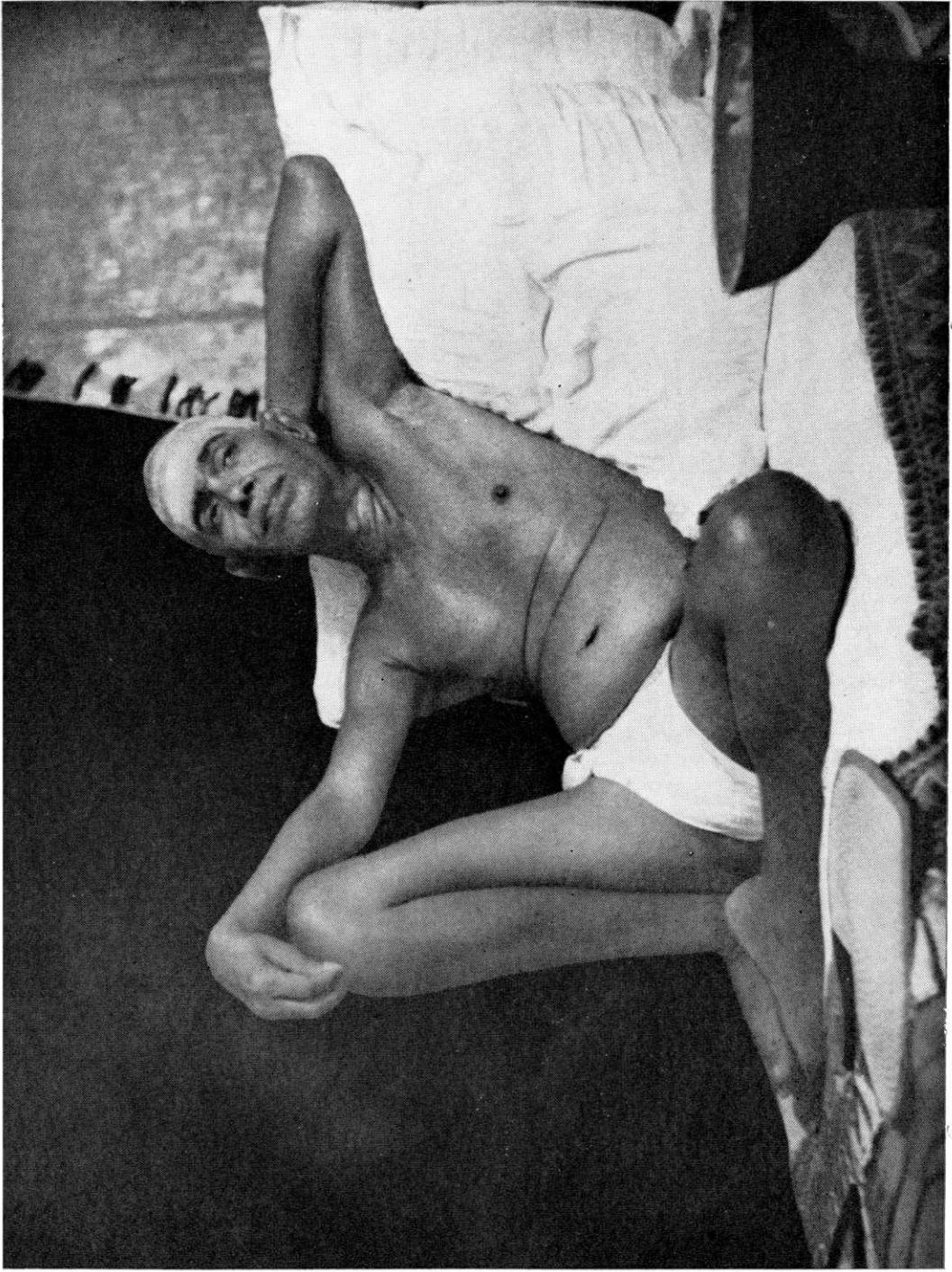
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

Vol. 10. No. II, April 1973

Editor : LUCIA OSBORNE

Editorial

EFFORT AND EFFORTLESSNESS

50

THROUGHOUT the ages the necessity of spiritual effort has been stressed emphatically by sages, widely separated in time and space, in various traditions and races, though their essential teaching is that we have never ceased to be the Self, that there are no sentient beings to be liberated and that there is no attaining the Self anew, as this would imply that the Self is impermanent. Then, why this emphasis on practice and effort?

The fact is, as Sri Bhagavan explains in conformity with other sages, that we are ignorant of our blissful state. "Attempts are directed only to remove the ignorance veiling the pure Bliss. This ignorance consists in the false identification of the Self with the body, the mind, etc. When the illusory veil of ignorance is removed the ever-present Truth stands revealed as IT IS. To achieve this practice is necessary." Practice means removal of age-old predispositions (*samskaras*) which form, so to speak, grooves on the mind. So long as they are not smoothed out and their roots cut, illusion and suffering will prevail, as this pertains to embodied life in ignorance of the Truth. "The ego is synonymous with illusion. To know that there never was ignorance is the goal of all spiritual teaching." The Guru leaves it to the efforts of the seeker to render the predispositions ineffective by spiritual practice and meditation as prescribed according to the aptitude of the seeker so that he might himself find out and become experientially aware that there never was ignorance.

"You yourself must make the effort
Buddhas only point the way . . ."

- *Dhammapada*.

Everything depends on the practice which removes the predispositions veiling the Truth. Thus the seeker should be determined and be able to undertake all the arduous demands that the quest entails. "In truth man is God and in truth God is man . . . but this is concealed . . . time has hidden this treasure of the divine realm . . . man knows everything else but not himself", says Meister Eckhart. Hence the necessity of effort.

The enlightened Hui Neng, who has written in his famous *gatha* (verse) on the wall that all things are unreal and their perception as real is entirely false, exhorted seekers of the truth to learn how to exert themselves, and that they will be in accord with his meaning and not err if they practise.

Jesus Christ affirmed that not even a sparrow can fall without the will of God, just as the Quran affirms that all knowledge and power are with God and yet both Christ and the Quran exhort men to right effort. Bhagavan was quite categorical about it. To illustrate this He used to quote Saint Thayumana-var: "Bliss will ensue if you keep still, but however much you tell your mind this truth it will not keep still. Though all the scriptures have said it and though we hear it from the great ones and even from our Guru we are never quiet but stray into the world of Maya and sense objects. That is why conscious, deliberate effort is needed to attain that effortless state of stillness."

"Until the effortless state is attained everyone makes effort in one way or another", Bhagavan asserts. It is impossible for one not to make effort, but when one goes deeper all effort ceases and the Self takes over as if lying in wait for the drop of effort to be overwhelmed by the limitless sea of Grace. A lifetime of effort and suffering, or lifetimes of it, are as nothing in comparison. So incredibly, wonderfully magnanimous is Grace when a seeker's mind is humble or pure enough to surrender to IT! Such is the feeling and testimony of those who directly experienced this, even if only in a glimpse of Eternity.

After such a glimpse of Eternity a seeker has only the memory of it. So long as the

mind is not steady enough to retain this experience the greatest effort and perseverance are essential. From this point, *sadhana* may start in all earnest knowing what one is aiming at and that nothing short of it will satisfy the heart. On the other hand if the ego asserts itself, even such an experience may be forgotten or become an expedient leading to pride and self-delusion.

Meditation that leads to Self-realisation is neither idle reverie nor vacant inaction but an intense inner struggle to gain control over the mind. "Just as we have to acquire knowledge of spiritual reality (*al-baqiyah*) so do we have to acquire the practice of it", counsels Ibn Ata-illah. Having been under the sway of thoughts for so long it is not easy to reverse the process but 'earnest effort never fails', Bhagavan repeatedly assured us; and the editor repeats that this assurance cannot be repeated too often. There will be waves of ups and downs. Yet from the lowest ebb a seeker can rise highest with the oncoming wave. Grace is ever-present. It is up to us to leave the shade and see that the sun shines impartially on all. In performing one's plain duty selflessly, to the best of one's ability, one can also mount spiritually to peace and great heights, say the wise ones.

Dogen in his *Shobogenzo* classic takes to task those who would identify themselves with the highest ideals of the Buddha yet shirk the effort required to put them into practice. To dismiss spiritual effort as unnecessary is at bottom nothing more than an intellectual rationalisation to explain away one's unwillingness to exert oneself for the sake of truth. He explains further that every man is an instrument of the Buddha law. "Never once should one think oneself not so. By practice assuredly will one have direct experience of it."

Practice and perseverance are bound to bring results. The old masters all had a hard time with it . . . It is a fight when "after (losing and) winning a hundred battles one attains the great peace". "All comes back to the practice of meditation", says Hakuin, in his *Song of Meditation*.

We have to throw our whole life into practice to disperse the imaginary clouds. If

someone attained success easily, Bhagavan said: "You may take it that he has made all the necessary effort in a previous incarnation."

There is a correspondence between the physical universe and the spiritual reality. The world is only a reflection. That is the meaning of the Hermetic dictum 'as above so below'. Origen also held that according to the patterns and shadows of the heavenly things 'what is above is also below'. We have to make great sustained effort to achieve effortlessness in sports, music, arts, crafts, etc. If this applies to achieving limited objectives why should it not apply when the aim is Infinity? Or, as Bhagavan says: 'Until the effortless state is attained, everyone makes effort in one way or another, so why not direct it towards attaining the Self?' Has ever anyone climbed Everest without practice or a guide? And this is more than Everest! Sankara says that prior to the realisation of Brahman, as the Self of all, all transactions of the phenomenal world for the time being are real enough. Once Brahman is realised all other orders of knowledge are *avidya* (ignorance), but until then the lower hierarchy of knowledge as knowledge holds good in their own phenomenal spheres. When we feel hungry in a dream it is only dream food that will appease it. This applies also to illusory effort in an illusory world till realised as such in direct living experience.

Milarepa after succeeding in his almost superhuman spiritual efforts was told by his guru, Marpa, that the future generation of degenerate beings will not be capable of making great effort and will shirk effort. Such was also the tenor of Sri Krishna's last words. Various scriptures describe graphically the general decline of mankind in this age.

One who rests satisfied at the stage of intellectual understanding is far from the goal and is likely to fall into the illusion of 'having arrived without arriving'. There are a number of teachers nowadays, so to speak, arm-chair gurus, who in the spirit of this age, teach that no effort is necessary; that one should have a still mind to start with; that all that is required is to see our own absence; or realisation is assured in a few weeks of transcen-

dental meditation, etc., etc. No wonder that such teaching attracts many followers in this age! To be precise, all spiritual effort aims at stilling the mind so as to overcome the illusion of our own psychic weaving, 'the illusion made up of *gunas* so hard to overcome', says Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

A still mind implies that one has broken through the illusory confines of egohood to Infinity and does not apply to beginners or those still seeking. "The three worlds will vanish if you can reach the state beyond thoughts." (The Wan Ling Record of the Zen Master Huang Po).

Who sees his own absence? The one who sees is not absent. Moreover, 'absence' is also a concept implying presence.

Transcendental meditation cannot be practised without *a priori* knowledge. Actually it means that one has transcended thought or conquered the mind and in such a state where is the need to seek more? Teaching should be suited to the seeker as medicine to the patient. It is not difficult to quote scriptures and Advaita and give *mantras* but this will not be effective if it lacks the transforming power coming from the Guru, who is greater than the teaching.

What it amounts to is that some modern teachers presume the effortless, transcendental state without or almost without effort, by negating relative phenomenality, whereas *Jnanis*, in Oneness of Being, and speaking from the highest plane recognize the relative validity of the embodied state in its own sphere and teach the various paths to Enlightenment with emphasis on effort. In the Upanishads Brahman is described as "He who is both high and low".

The world is given to self-indulgence, pleasures and ease culminating more often than not in boredom according to the law of diminishing returns. Through effort and perseverance alone can self-indulgence be transmuted into self-mastery leading to supreme happiness and bliss.

To sum up, effortlessness can be achieved through earnest effort, which never fails. Thus say the sages.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

SRI MURUGANAR

226.

Quickly giving up attachment
To perverse talkers with their wicked ways,
Follow, my friend, and walk with
Steadfast knowers whose peace can still
The movements of the mind.

227.

Since every vice proceeds from false pleasures
Of swerving from the Self, the plenitude
of virtue
Is the perfect peace of pure awareness
following
The end of the ego by such false pleasures
fed.

228.

The truly virtuous are those alone
Who abide in flawless awareness,
All others are but base.
Hence gain new life by living
In the company of those who free from
falschod
Live in the purity of true awareness.

229.

Ripened by the incomparable power
Of Self-knowledge, the guru has been
transformed
Into transcendent Being.
He who through penance done becomes
The target of his glance of grace
Attains greatness beyond the reach of speech.

230.

Well pleased to intermingle
With his secr-servants, Shiva enters
Among the saintly throng
Of those whose faith is strong,
Conceals His form, assumes another
And with love enraptured sports.

231.

Immeasurable is the greatness
Of His servants ; they are greater
Than Hara and Hari both, for they
Themselves serve these servants
Whose glory even the Vedas sing.

232.

Those who have known the hard-won Truth
Speak of *Brabma-vidya* -
The only science worth our learning -
As knowledge, not of the world we see
But of ourselves who see it.

233.

Knowing what survives
When the illusion of the world and its
beholder -
Like the vision of cool water in the mirage -
Is destroyed without a vestige,
This knowledge, nothing else, is *vidya*.

EFFORT, GRACE AND DESTINY

By Arthur Osborne

One of the paradoxes of Self-Realization is that the Self is already realized and yet effort is required to realize this. Another paradox is that Self-Realization cannot be forced and that the Self reveals itself. The part played by the Guru's or God's Grace is another important point. The late Mr. Osborne has discussed all these in his inimitable way in one of his articles (*April, 1967 issue*) which is reproduced here.

IT is said in scriptures and by gurus that an aspirant must make effort on the path but that Grace also is necessary and that in the end Realization is bestowed by Grace, not achieved by effort. It is said in the Upanishad that the Atma chooses whom it will.

This is a hard saying. Those in whom the spiritual urge is powerful do not worry their heads over it but strive because they must, because they are drawn to it without any thought of reward. Those, however, in whom the mind is too active and the Spirit too weak are apt to be puzzled and ask why they should make any effort if the final achievement is not to be won by effort but bestowed by Grace. They also ask why the Atma should choose one rather than another. For such people I will try to clarify the saying.

Who is the 'you' that has to make effort, and who is the 'God' or 'Atma' that chooses and that bestows Grace on one rather than on another?

The essence of a man is pure Spirit or, which comes to the same, pure Being or pure universal Consciousness. This Spirit prowls in the lion, spreads in the tree, endures in the stone; in man alone it not only lives but knows that it lives. The difference between man and other animals is not that man has greater ability (in many ways he has less), but that he knows that he is man; he is self-consciously man. This is through the human mind which, looking outward, knows and dominates the world, looking inward knows and reflects Being as the Essence and Source of the world. However, the ability to do this implies also the ability not to do it, to regard oneself as a complete autonomous individual and forget the inner Reality.

The various religions express this simple truth through myth, allegory and doctrine and are apt to be puzzling. In the Quran it is said that Allah offered the trust to the heavens and earth and the mountains but all declined it; only man accepted and was untrue to it. Religions assert that God gave man free will, which implies the freedom to rebel. In Christianity it is said that man is fallen on account of original sin. The Book of Genesis gives the story of how man fell into the domain of opposites, the differentiation of good and evil.

A Jnanin has completely broken the shackles of karma. That he is reaping the result of fructifying karma is only a statement from the empirical standpoint.

Knowledge of Atman is the knowledge that one has ever been the supreme Self devoid of body and action. That an enlightened person is spoken of as experiencing the effects of fructifying karma, is based on the apparent continuance of the semblance of the body even after it has been sublated by knowledge of the truth, and it is only an accommodation to the empirical view. This may be compared to the expression "The sky is blue" used by persons who know that the sky has actually no colour whatever. An enlightened man would never look upon the possession of a body as a real fact.

— SANKARACHARYA

All these are allegories of the simple truth stated above.

The mind creates an ego, a seemingly complete, autonomous individual self, which, although illusory, seems to be the reality of one. This is the state known in Hinduism as *ajnana* or ignorance, in Christianity as 'original sin', in Islam in its more violent form as *kufr* or 'denial' in its milder form recognising the Spirit as real but believing the ego also to be real, as *shirk* or 'association' (of other with God).

This is the obstruction to Self-Realization. Therefore it has to be removed. That is why the Masters say that Self-Realization is not something new to be achieved but an eternally existent state to be discovered or revealed. Therefore they compare it to an overcast sky — the clear sky does not have to be created, only the clouds covering it to be blown away; or to a pond overgrown with water-lilies — the water is there all the time and only has to be revealed by clearing away the plants that have overgrown it.

To do this constitutes the effort of which the teachers and scriptures speak. The mind

has created the obstruction: the mind has to remove it. But merely to recognise this, to recognise, that is to say, that the ego is (according to the Advaitin) an illusory self or (according to the dualist) a creation of the spirit, to which it should be submitted and totally passive, is far from constituting the full effort required. Indeed, it increases the obligation for total effort and therefore, so to speak, the guilt in not making effort.

The effort involves the will and emotions as well as the understanding and therefore has to be persistent, determined and skilful. The ego has put out tentacles which cling to the world, and either these have to be lopped off or the ego itself killed. It craves the admiration or submission of other egos, and therefore humility is enjoined. It craves enjoyment of creation in its own right instead of being a mere channel through which the Spirit perceives and enjoys, and therefore celibacy and asceticism are sometimes prescribed and self-indulgence is always, in all religions, forbidden. The attempt to lop off the tentacles of the ego has been compared in mythology to a battle with a many-headed giant who grew two new heads for each one lopped off. The only way to dispose of him was to strike at the heart and kill the entire being, not deal with the heads individually. The campaign must be skilful and intelligently planned as well as ruthless. What wonder if different Masters in different religions have prescribed different ways of conducting it. The goal in all cases is the same: the taming or destruction of the ego or the discovery that it never really existed.

Methods such as I have been alluding to consist largely in curtailing the ego's outer manifestations so as to induce the mind to turn inwards to the Self or Spirit behind it. It is also possible to proceed in the opposite direction by turning inward to the Spirit and thence deriving strength to renounce the outer manifestations. This is the path of love and devotion, worshipping God, submitting to Him, calling upon His Name, striving to serve and remember Him with one's whole life; either path can be followed, or both together. A third path is that of questioning the very existence of the ego by Self-enquiry.

All this is effort. Then what about Grace? Grace is the natural flow of the Spirit into and

through the mind and faculties. There is nothing capricious or erratic about it. Bhagavan said: "Grace is always there; it is only you who have to make yourself receptive to it." It is likened traditionally to the sunlight falling on a flower-garden: if one bud opens and not another it is not due to any partiality on the side of the sun but only to the maturity or immaturity of the buds. Or if the sunlight penetrates one room but not another it is simply because the doors and windows are open in one and in the other shut.

Why then is it said that the Atma chooses whom It will and that the final Realization comes by Grace, not by effort? In order to remove the insidious idea that the ego-self can continue to exist and attain something called 'Realization', whereas all it can do is to immolate itself and be replaced by the realized state of the Spirit, which is ever-present Grace. The mind makes efforts to remove obstructions; it is hard for it to understand that it is itself the final obstruction.

The very desire for Realization has to be carefully watched and can become an impediment, for it implies some one to achieve something. At the end all that the mind is called on to do is to keep still and allow Grace to flow unimpeded — but that is the hardest thing of all for it to do

Till in the end

All battles fought, all earthly loves abjured,
Dawn in the east, there is no other way
But to be still. In stillness then to find
The giants all were windmills, all the strife
Self-made, unreal; even he that strove
A fancied being, as when that good knight
Woke from delirium and with a loud cry
Rendered his soul to God.

On the devotional path this danger of supposing that it is the ego who strives and attains, this warning against desires, even the desire to get Realization, is expressed in the attitude that true service of God must be for love alone with no thought of reward. He who asks for reward is a merchant, not a lover.

The impossibility of achieving when there is no one to achieve explains why a Guru will never answer the question 'When shall I

attain Realization?' It implies the false presumption: "There is an individual me; when will it cease to exist?" whereas the Guru realizes the ultimate truth that: "There is no being of the unreal and no not-being of the Real." Not that the unreal ego will cease to be at such and such a point in time, but that it is not now, never has been and never could be. Therefore the attitude of mind that questions when one can attain Realization or whether it is one's destiny to be realized in this lifetime is an obstruction sufficient to prevent Realization, being an assertion of the temporary existence of the unreal. Similarly, if you assert that you cannot attain Realization in this lifetime you are thereby preventing yourself from doing so by postulating the existence of a 'you' who cannot attain.

And yet paradoxically, it is also an impediment to assert that no effort need be made, on the pretext that, as "there is no being of the unreal and no not-being of the Real", one is That now and has therefore no need to strive to become That. It sounds plausible, but it is an impediment because it is the pseudo-self, the illusory unreal, that is saying it. The Master can say that there is nothing to achieve because one is That already; the disciple can't. Bhagavan would sometimes say that asking the best way to Realization is like being at Tiruvannamalai and asking how to get there, but that could not be the attitude of the devotee. He expected the devotee to make effort, even while appreciating the paradox that there is no effort to make. In the same way He could say that for the Realized Man there is no Guru-disciple relationship but add that for the disciple the relationship is a reality and is of importance.

For the disciple effort is necessary, but it is also necessary to remember that effort can never attain the final goal, since he who makes the effort must dissolve, leaving only the Spirit. The Spirit, which is the true Self, replaces the illusory ego-self when the latter has removed the obstructions; and that is Grace. The Spirit flows into the vacuum which remains when the ego-self dissolves; doing so is the 'choice' which the Spirit makes. It is for the aspirant to create the vacuum by removing the obstructions.

SPIRITUALITY IN RUSSIA¹

By Gladys Dehm
(formerly Gladys de Meuter)

In this second and concluding part of her article Gladys Dehm describes the life of Seraphim the Mystic, a great ascetic, whose saintly life and wise sayings are of interest to all spiritual aspirants.

AMONG the other Saints of Russia is Seraphim the mystic.

It was in KURSK in 1759 that Prochor Moshnine was born. He grew up in a pious environment, acquiring a deep devotion to sacred literature. From an early age he displayed a sensitive, contemplative nature, and experienced celestial visitations. He entered the SAROV monastery as novice at the age of nineteen, when his name in religion became that of Seraphim.

A striking feature in the spiritual development of the extraordinary Saint is the fact that Seraphim had no Startzy, (elders) to guide him. His path was revealed to him directly by Grace, leading him to embrace years of severe asceticism where he dwelt alone in the virgin forests from the years 1794 to 1810 with the permission and blessing of his superior in the Monastery.

Living in complete isolation, Seraphim inflicted rigorous penance upon his body. Night after night he prayed kneeling on a stone which he had chosen for that purpose. His diet consisted of vegetables grown in his small garden, and also dry bread which kindly souls brought him regularly. He occupied himself with the work of a woodsman, studied the Scriptures and meditated, oblivious of passing time.

When, during the summer months Seraphim gathered moss in the marshlands nearby and mosquitoes plagued him, he accepted this with equanimity, remarking: 'The passions are brought under control by suffering and afflic-

tions, whether sent by Providence, or whether they are voluntary.'

During these fifteen years of complete seclusion, Seraphim had knowledge of the malefic forces at work when the ego is at bay. He struggled with the temptations of the flesh, inflicted mortifications upon himself, pursuing with determined zeal to overcome the frailty of human nature.

The years passed and animals came within range of this gentle hermit. These denizens of the woods approached him fearlessly, seeking food at his hands. The small hares and foxes placed their trust in him, as did the fierce wolves and bears.

Seraphim's love for the Blessed Mother, the 'Virgin of Tenderness' was ardent. She was ever with him, manifesting Her loving presence time and time again. Once, when brigands attacked Seraphim whilst he was at work in the forest, leaving him for dead, he found enough strength to drag himself to the monastery where he was given up for lost. Seraphim prayed, and his beloved Virgin showed herself to him, assuring him that he would be cured. When five months had passed, Seraphim returned to his hermitage, retaining as memento of his experience a bent back.

His zeal for prayer remained undiminished. Seraphim knelt on his stone three years, and in 1807 he took upon himself the vow of silence which he declared to be of inestimable value. He quoted the words of Saint Ambrose

¹ Continued from the last issue.

of Milan: 'Silence creates in our souls the most divers gifts of the Spirit: it draws us nearer to God, it makes us like the angels in our earthly life: when we keep silence evil has no longer dominion over us.'

Just as beauty lies hidden in the cocoon, so the spiritual glory of Seraphim became encased within the strength of Silence. Even those who brought the hermit bread were received and took their departure without eliciting a word from Seraphim. It was only in the year 1810 when the recluse sensed an increasing weakness in his limbs that he made his way to the Monastery where he shut himself up in his cell and continued his ascetic practices.

After twenty five years of severe self-discipline, Seraphim the angelic one now emerged from the Chrysalis of Silence. The fragile beauty of his inner splendour manifested itself in the tender glow of his deep blue eyes, and shone with star-like quality from a translucent skin. His regular features were settled in calm repose. Conscious of his mission, Seraphim now put away his life of seclusion to turn to a suffering humanity. He emerged as seer, spiritual guide, healer.

Clad in white linen smock, shoes made of birch bark, a woollen cap on his head, and a copper cross which had been given him by his mother, about his neck, Seraphim received the multitudes which flocked to see him. The Gospels were contained in a bag which Seraphim had fastened on to his shoulders. He was never separated from these holy books.

Those who were burdened with problems or infirmities came to Seraphim, seeking assuagement, wisdom, peace, liberation from the fetters of frustration and suffering. To each and every one, the Saint tenderly gave counsel, influencing them above all by the aura of holiness which shone about him.

Seraphim was well read in the ascetical literature of the Greek Fathers. He was thoroughly versed in the power of the Hesychast School of mystical prayer which was beautifully expounded in the *Philocalia*. Caring for his flock, Seraphim tendered to the ordinary layman the 'workable' beauty and efficacy of this mystical prayer in their everyday lives. He made it known that this spiritual treasure was accessible to them, and fur-

ther, stressed its paramount importance in opening up the channels of Grace.

Saint Seraphim did not expound a particular teaching. His inner fire was such that hearts which came into contact with him received according to their inner spiritual levels. For those who put out tentative fingers of intellect, seeking to apprehend through the media of their minds, Seraphim interpreted for them the aesthetic Way of Knowledge, thereby satisfying the 'individual seeking' rather than laying down a didactic formula to inner unfoldment.

Mystical prayer consumed Seraphim completely, and in this Sacred Flame of Compassion the Saint was able to embrace the hearts of all men in the unity of God's infinite Love.

His words which are handed down to posterity through oral tradition are truly beautiful: 'God,' Seraphim tells us, 'is a Fire which burns our hearts. We call to Him and He comes to warm us with the perfect love that we shall feel not only for Him but also for our neighbour . . . True hope seeks only the kingdom of God, and the heart cannot find peace without this hope . . . The spirit of a man who can be alert is the sentry, the watchful, sleepless guardian who is placed at the entrance to the interior Jerusalem.'

Among the many who loved him was a shop-keeper Nicholas Motovilov who recorded the teaching given him by Saint Seraphim.

'Vigils, fasting, prayer and all other good works, excellent as they are, do not represent the purpose of our Christian life, although they do serve as the indispensable means to attain this end. The true purpose of our existence is to acquire the Spirit of God. To acquire is the same thing as to earn. You know what is meant by earning money. To acquire the Holy Spirit is exactly the same thing. Ordinary people in life, have the purpose of earning money; the nobility wish only to earn honours, distinctions and other rewards for the services they render the State. The acquisition of the Spirit of God is just like obtaining capital, but it confers grace and eternal life, and it is earned in similar ways, just like worldly capital. Naturally, every virtuous action performed in the name of Christ gives us the grace of the Holy Spirit, but it is given

us especially through prayers. Prayer is for everyone whether they be rich or poor, of high or humble an estate, strong or weak, healthy or sick, a virtuous one or a sinner. To obtain the grace of the Holy Spirit, by all the virtues of Christ, is the most profitable form of business of all. Amass the capital of divine mercy; deposit it in the external bank of God; it will not bring you a return of just four or six per cent but of a hundred per cent, for every coin of spiritual money, and even infinitely more.

'When a man repents of his sins, seeking his salvation, by his virtuous actions he can acquire the Holy Spirit who works in us and who establishes us in the kingdom of God. Notwithstanding our repeated falls, despite the darkness which surrounds our souls, the grace of the Holy Spirit, given us at baptism, continues to illumine our hearts with the light of repentance; this Christ-Light erases every trace of our former sins and clothes us with an incorruptible garment woven by Grace.'

Motovilov enquired: 'How is it possible for me to know if I possess the grace of the Holy Spirit. How will it manifest itself?'

The Saint told him: 'When the Spirit of God descends upon a man and fills him with its fullness, the human soul overflows with an ineffable joy because the Spirit of God turns into joy everything that it touches.'

This 'Joy' of which Saint Seraphim spoke to the sincere shop-keeper, was always present with the Secr. His welcome to visitors was: 'Christ, my joy, is risen.'

With a countenance transfigured by a wonderful light, the Saint would stress the healing, the balm of joy. 'If you only knew,' he once said, 'what joy and sweetness await the soul of the just man in heaven! You would be determined to bear with gratitude during this earthly span of life every sadness, every persecution, every calumny. Even should our cells be full of worms which devoured our bodies during our whole lives we should consent to it with all our strength in order not to be deprived of this celestial joy which God has prepared for those who love Him. . . . But what human tongue is capable of expressing this heavenly glory and the glory of the land of righteousness and blessedness.'

Seraphim the mystic preached the loftiness of his vision in the teaching that each believer possessed an interior Jerusalem in which the Sacred Nativity takes place in eternal majesty. He did not isolate the human from the divine, but fused the two natures into a heavenly transfiguration where the 'Resurrection' is Truth, and where the bleak, austere darkness fraught with temptations to be overcome is but the 'growing pains' of the travailing soul.

Although Saint Seraphim himself had espoused the highest form of the hermetical life, that of the recluse, he would discourage others to do so, saying quietly that he who wishes to be a hermit may be likened to a man having to do battle against lions and tigers.

The severity of Saint Seraphim's life recalls the marriage of Saint Francis of Assisi with Lady Poverty, for Seraphim the hermit kept nothing in his cell except an icon with a lamp lit before it, and the stump of a tree. He did not however, have recourse to a hair shirt, chains of whatever other painful object, in order to mortify the flesh.

The mystic having left isolation, he now turned his compassionate gaze in the direction of suffering mortals. There came to him a landowner Michail Vasilievich Manturov who suffered from a severe ailment where the bones of his feet splintered. Carried by his scrfs he came into the presence of the *Staretz* who greeted him with the words: 'What, you come to look upon poor Seraphim.'

The man begged to be cured of his terrible affliction.

Three times the sick man was gently asked: 'Do you believe in God?'

Receiving the affirmation, Seraphim said: 'My Joy! If you so firmly believe, then believe also that for one who has faith everything is possible from God. Have faith therefore, that you too, will be healed by God; as for me, poor Seraphim, I will pray.'

Withdrawing into his cell, the Saint prayed. When he emerged he asked for holy oil and told the sufferer to uncover his feet. This being done, the *Staretz* told Manturov: 'With the grace bestowed on me by God, you are my first patient.'

He then proceeded to anoint the sick man's feet with the oil, drawing a pair of hemp stockings over them when he had finished. He gave Manturov crusts of dry bread which he told him to take to the Monastery guest-house, himself. Anxious but obedient, Manturov did as requested, and discovered to his great happiness that he was well. Overjoyed he fell at Seraphim's feet, thanking him for his cure, but the Staretz said: 'How now, good father! Is it the task of Seraphim to inflict death or grant life? To send a man to hell or raise him out of hell? This is the work of the One God, who fulfils the wishes of those who fear Him and who listens to their prayers. Offer your gratitude to God the all-powerful, and to his Immaculate Mother.'

Some time later Manturov, conscious of the grace which had been accorded him, came to the great Staretz to give thanks to God, whereupon he was told to sell all his possessions and liberate his serfs. This he obediently did, settling on some portion of land which he was bidden retain to be bequeathed to Seraphim's Monastery. To the end of his days this beloved disciple of Seraphim obeyed his spiritual father in all things.

In 1780 a small community of nuns had been founded by Alexandra Melgunova. Upon her deathbed she placed it in the care of the monk Pachomius of Sarov, who in his turn requested that Seraphim take charge. So it was that the Seer became the spiritual guide to the nuns of Divciev. To his daughters in spirit Seraphim warned them especially against the malicious influence of spiritual melancholy. 'There is no worse transgression,' he once said. 'Nothing more terrifying and destructive, than the spirit of accidie. Put a piece of bread into your pocket; when you are tired and faint, do not allow yourselves to be depressed. Eat some bread, and on to work again. If despondency and thoughts of a perturbing nature come to you at night take your bread from under your pillow and eat it; your melancholy will leave you. Bread will cast it from you, and will give you a good sleep.'

Whenever necessary, Seraphim emphasized the importance of gladness as an effective means of combating the dark forces encountered in the spiritual warfare.

To the Reverend Mother in charge of her lambs he would gently counsel: 'Gaiety is no sin, good mother. It drives away fatigue, and fatigue breeds accidie; now, as I have told you there is nothing worse than accidie, it brings everything else along with it.'

The inner vision of Saint Seraphim enabled him to pierce the veil of men's hearts, and correct their erring steps. On one occasion a pilgrim came to him, and the Saint made known the secrets of his heart to this man from Kiev, pointing out to him that his decision to forsake hearth and family had been an erroneous one, as it was God's will that he return to his duties as householder and pursue the business of grain merchant. This the pilgrim hastened to do.

Healings took place. A blind child received the blessing of sight. A man bedridden from crippling rheumatism was able to resume a normal life; but these and other cures were allotted scant importance by the great Staretz, for all 'good things' were gifts of God, he, poor Seraphim, was but the servant of his Lord.

Aware that his earthly span was drawing to a close, Saint Seraphim hollowed out a coffin with his own hands which he placed in his cell. To those who loved him, he bade them come to his tomb after his demise and there converse with him as though he were among them still in the flesh, for to their grieving hearts he gave the comforting knowledge that he would never forsake them, though his body be consigned to burial.

In beautiful words he assuaged their sorrow, telling them: 'Confide to me the secrets of your hearts for I shall remain alive for all eternity.'

The Saint died on the 13th of January 1833, alone in his cell, his face turned towards his beloved 'Virgin of Tenderness.'

In simple words this gentle mystic expressed his limitless compassion for humanity: 'The Lord is merciful to all.'

The crown of Russian spirituality sparkles with extraordinary splendour, containing the precious jewel of Seraphim the Saint, the chosen 'Joy of Divine Love'.

MONASTIC PRAYER

By Father Thomas Merton

**True prayer consists of silence,
simplicity, unity and deep personal
introspection in the depths of one's being.**

... **T**HE kind of prayer we here speak of as properly 'monastic' is a prayer of silence, simplicity, contemplative and meditative unity, a deep personal integration in an attentive, watchful listening of 'the heart'. The response such prayer calls forth is not usually one of jubilation or audible witness: it is a wordless and total surrender of the heart in silence.

The inseparable unity of silence and monastic prayer was well described by a Syrian monk, Isaac of Niniveh:

"Many are avidly seeking but they alone find who remain in continual silence Every man who delights in a multitude of words, even though he says admirable things, is empty within. If you love truth, be a lover of silence. Silence like the sunlight will illuminate you in God and will deliver you from the phantoms of ignorance. Silence will unite you to God Himself."

"More than all things love silence: it brings you a fruit that tongue cannot describe. In the beginning we have to force ourselves to be silent. But then there is born something that draws us to silence. May God give you an experience of this 'something' that is born of silence. If only you practise this, untold

light will dawn on you in consequence after a while a certain sweetness is born in the heart of this exercise and the body is drawn almost by force to remain in silence."

It must be observed that the term mental prayer is totally misleading in the monastic context. We rarely pray with the "mind" alone. Monastic meditation, prayer, oratio, contemplation and reading involve the whole man, and proceed from the "centre" of man's being, his "heart" renewed in the Holy Spirit, totally submissive to the grace of Christ. Monastic prayer begins not so much with "considerations" as with a "return to the heart", finding one's deepest centre, awakening the profound depths of our being in the presence of God who is the source of our being and our life.

In these pages, then, meditation will be used as more or less equivalent to what mystics of the Eastern Church have called "prayer of the heart" — at least in the general sense of a prayer that seeks its roots in the very ground of our being, not merely in our mind or our affections. By "prayer of the heart" we seek God himself present in the depths of our being and meet him there by invoking the name of Jesus in faith, wonder and love.

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

By **Brahmachari Mohan Chaitanya**

**Knowledge which we derive through
the aid of the senses, the mind and the
intellect is mediate and unreliable. True
knowledge is knowing by being. To know
the Self is to be the Self.**

ONE of the basic problems in spiritual lore is the theory of right knowledge. In this brief article we shall try to arrive at a reliable answer. What constitutes right knowledge? Surely that which reveals to us the true nature of a thing or being. Ordinarily we know an object through the faculties of sense perceptions, mind and understanding. These three constitute the means or the reporting agencies which supply us with the knowledge of an object. They form the intervening medii between the subject (the knower) and the object (the known). So we see that our knowledge is not direct and immediate but indirect and mediate. We know a thing or a being, not as it really exists in itself, but as it is reported to us by the intervening medii of the organs of perception, mind and the intellect. Whether they supply us with valid knowledge is open to grave doubts as can be seen by examining their merits and demerits.

In order that they may furnish us with correct and accurate information they should be free from all defects and limitations. Are they free? Take for example sense organs. Like a wiring system they function as carriers of sensations to the brain. According to modern scientific theory, objects continuously emit waves or vibrations which are converted into sensations as they pass through the sense

ONLY TO REMEMBER

By Kavana

As the turning of the Wheel,
The moment is spun through Time,
in a journey to remember the first
response.....
Life.....
...to mirror the galaxies breathing
the fission and fusion of ALL
from the elementary.
Infinity... in a point...
...shall we call that point "I" !

organs. But the organs of perception do not permit vibrations of all frequencies. They like a filter admit vibrations that specially lie within a certain permissible range, the rest being left out. So we see that organs offer resistance to their free and unconditional flow. An object is seen to suffer its first distortion at the hands of sense organs.

Let us come to the mind. It is a faculty which, with its categories of time and space, converts sensations into perception. Mind is a co-ordinating factor, a substratum, where different sensations of sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste are codified and given the form of perception and simultaneously extended in space as perceptible objects. Mind is further a seat of emotions and lower animal passions like greed, anger, lust, fear, hatred, jealousies, likes and dislikes etc. which cast their impressions on the perceptible object. Mind, it is thus observed, conditions and colours the object with its own content (*vasanas*). The object, then finds its second distortion through the mind.

Perceptual knowledge is converted into conceptual knowledge by the faculty of understanding, which with its special categories of notions, judgements, conclusions and preconceived ideas, further modifies the object and gives a final shape in the form of a concept.

We therefore find that the sense organs resist the flow of knowledge, mind changes its contents by superimposing its own attributes and conditionings and intellect gives a final distorting touch to the knowledge by injecting its own conclusions and opinions. These three limiting adjuncts are therefore observed to be found inadequate. They do not report to us correctly and accurately. We must therefore seek some other source which does not offer any resistance to the free flow of knowledge.

Logically the other alternative will be to bypass imperfect and distorting medii and approach the object directly. In other words subject should have a direct access to the object. It should merge with the object as it were. This is called "Knowing by being". I know a thing most intimately when I myself assume the form of the object. In *Mundakopanishad* it is stated: "Indeed he who knows the supreme truth becomes the truth himself." Here the subject-object relationship vanishes and becomes pure absolute knowledge. This knowing by being is direct and immediate, certain and beyond all doubts, free from all limitations and conditionings, intuitive but not instinctive. It alone gives valid knowledge.

Science is chiefly concerned with perceptual and conceptual knowledge. It arrives at the new knowledge through the process of observations, inference and experimentation. Its method of arriving at the knowledge is not final and its theories and conclusions often undergo many changes. Its assumptions are exploded and theories superseded by better theories, as can be verified from the past history, through which science has progressed.

Religion and philosophy on the other hand have already experimented with these methods and found them wanting. They looked for some other source which could give them sure and certain knowledge. The means is "knowing by being" as already stated. How is one to acquire this oldest, unique and new mode of knowing? This is made possible when one has succeeded in transcending distorting factors - i.e. sense perceptions, mind and intellect, - through a systematic process of intense and prolonged meditation on the lines suggested by scriptures and sayings of the men of wisdom.

For a seeker after truth, pursuing the path of knowledge, listening to scriptural declarations from a worthy teacher is made obligatory or else he is likely to be misled by his own wishes and wishful thinking. After listening, a *sadbaka* is expected to reflect on what he has already heard from his teacher and scriptures. This is the stage of exploration when a seeker is advised to confine himself within the framework of subject matter, keeping aloof from idle and meaningless discussions on matters pertaining to allied subjects, as Shankara very rightly states: "Explore the meanings of vedanta mantras. Take refuge in the views extolled by the vedas. Keep out of useless discussions. Think over the logical conclusion accepted by the vedas."

The second stage of exploration is to be continued until it matures into steady conviction. Thereafter a seeker gradually steps into the third stage – the stage of intense and rigorous meditation. In *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* Sage Yagnavalkya, while initiating his wife Maitreyi into Knowledge of the Self, clearly points out the way as follows: 'Verily O Maitreyi, it is the Self that should be seen, heard of, reflected on and understood – all then becomes known.'

In the third stage, the *sadbaka* has to discard his dependance on the Guru, scriptures, institutions etc., which were until now found useful. Thereafter he has to traverse uncharted regions alone. No guru, no institution will hand over the final beatitude to the *sadbaka*. It is a matter of direct realization. Only great souls endowed with strength and determination, with infinite patience and perseverance, can take to this path. In the *Mundakopanishad* it is stated: "The Self cannot be gained by one who is devoid of strength, who is without earnestness and without the right kind of austerity."

In meditation, a single idea – the identity of seer and seen – is taken up and reflected upon with concentration without allowing any other idea to intervene. The entire range of consciousness is pervaded and permeated by this single idea. One's whole being, as it were, participates in the venture. The *sadbaka* should harbour no other thought except this purifying thought of Truth. All other distract-

"If some one attained success easily you may take it that he has made all the necessary effort in a previous incarnation.....Meditation itself starts with effort and those who meditate experience it at first as a fight because other thoughts seem to rise up with greater force to overwhelm the single thought to which they try to hold on to the exclusion of all other thoughts. This strengthens our concentration with repeated practice till other thoughts subside. No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not our birthright. The few who succeed owe their success to their greater perseverance. Up to the state of spontaneity or effortlessness there must be effort to gain it. Until the effortless state is attained everyone makes effort in one way or another. It is impossible for him not to make effort, but when we go deeper all effort ceases."

— SRI BHAGAVAN

ing thoughts have to be discarded. Seclusion in a solitary place is helpful. What happens thereafter is not the personal responsibility of the *Sadhaka*. Effortless, spontaneous illumination through Grace takes place when waves of thought have ceased to rise.

Thought is a mental activity and veils the Truth; it is a partition wall between subject and object, knower and known, and prevents complete merging of the two (knower and known). When the mind is still, we rise beyond sense perceptions, mind and intellect and enter into a transcendental state of consciousness where thought cannot penetrate – a state of choiceless, effortless and thought-free awareness which crowns all our efforts. Our ancient rishis have poetically described it as a state "from which the mind together with speech turn away baffled."

In the *Isbopanishad* it is stated: "When the Self has become everything to a person who knows, what sorrow, what delusion can overtake him, who has perceived this Oneness?"

HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By Muhammad Abdulla

I WAS brought up in rather religious surroundings and grew up a religious man. Later when I went to college and abroad my outlook changed. I became an agnostic if not a downright atheist. This condition lasted till my late thirties. All this time, off and on, I tried to regain my faith but to no avail. Somehow the idea of an anthropomorphic God did not appeal to me. I could not see any reason why God created the world. If He wanted to prove Himself to Himself, it seemed rather a poor reason. To create the world as a puppet show and enjoy as a spectator also seemed ungodly and rather cruel.

Many questions troubled me. What is God? What is life? What is it all about? Scriptures did not satisfy me for they demanded faith to begin with, which I did not have. I studied psychology but there was nothing beyond the unconscious mind. I turned to dialectical materialism but then again I found that its adherents were at loggerheads on trivialities. Turning to existentialism, I found it too morbid and depressing. Finally I turned to metaphysics and mysticism and that is where luck favoured me.

While I was searching for a clue to my problem, by chance I got hold of a book from the library shelf. It was an old edition of *Day By Day With Bhagavan*. I was not particularly interested when I started reading it, but as I progressed my indifference gave way to astonishment. Well, here at last there was someone who was reaching me. I read on with great enthusiasm and finished the book with thirst for more. I placed an order to the Ashram Book Depot for all the books about Bhagavan. I had never waited more eagerly



A life-size portrait of Sri Bhagavan now rests on the couch in the 'Old Hall', where He sat for more than twenty years with devotees.

for anything than the book parcel. When it came I studied everything from cover to cover drinking deep from this source of true wisdom.

For a couple of months, I was immersed heart and soul in the teachings of Bhagavan. Here at last, all my questions were answered, all my doubts cleared. When I imbibed His teaching, I planned a visit to the Ashram.

Now I must say a word or two about the visits to the Ashram. There is something in coming to and going from this place. Some mysterious force takes charge of you the moment you decide to go there. I met by chance an old devotee, Prof. K. Swaminathan, who is in charge of Ramana Kendra in New Delhi. He encouraged me to make the visit. I left New Delhi and arrived at the Ashram two days later. It was 2-30 p.m. I sat in the meditation hall facing Bhagavan's picture. He seemed so much alive. Such a kind and benevolent smile! I could not move my eyes

away from him. I had no idea of the time when suddenly the dinner gong was sounded! (7. 30 p.m.)

I lived in the Ashram for a month, and meditated morning and evening. I found to my surprise that the problems which seemed monumental gradually receded to the background. The past became shadowy. Yesterday's desires made no sense and made me laugh. Apprehension for the future dwindled to nothing. I felt happy.

A month was quickly over and I travelled back with a heavy heart. I had only one prayer when I took leave of Bhagavan. I wanted to come again. I also prayed to Bhagavan to help me maintain the peace I had found for a long time. Both my prayers were answered. I came again and again. Bhagavan never forsook me in my hours of trials. I never let go of Bhagavan nor does he let go of me!

A Note on
INTEGRAL
YOGA
linked with
MODERN
PSYCHOLOGY

By Prof. U. A. Asrani

**Yoga in its widest sense will, says the
 writer, enable one to attain ideal mental
 health in our modern strife-torn world of
 tensions and frustrations.**

THE Communist countries as well as the 'free' democratic countries have all become by now hedonistic; pleasure being regarded as the only aim in life. Selfishness of the individual at some places and of the nation or one's pet political creed at others engrosses man's whole attention. The entire world culture, even that of under-developed countries like India, is being poisoned by this narrow, selfish and short-sighted vision. The transcendental or philosophical or religious presentations of Yoga (or mysticism in general) do not appeal any longer to modern man. He is not terrified by the unending cycle of births and deaths.

Now the modern world culture is far from healthy. A number of top thinkers in the west itself realize this with remorse and piquancy. A huge host of psycho-somatic diseases - called 'functional' euphemistically - caused by individual mental tensions have no permanent cure; wealth and comforts may increase instead of decreasing with them. Then there are racial, communal and national tensions. Finally there may be a World War III due to global tensions along with a nuclear holocaust of unprecedented and unpredictable dimensions. Our entire civilization and even the survival of the human species, is in serious danger. Heaven and hell may or may not be after death; but thinkers all the world over realize that a veritable hell is with us here already and within us in the form of those nervous and emotional tensions. It may explosively blow up the entire human race any day.

Many thinkers even in the west, particularly in the U.S.A., feel that in yoga or mysticism rests the key by which a man can eliminate his tensions and yet live an ordinary active life even more efficiently. But such yoga or mysticism is no more acceptable to modern man in transcendental, philosophic or religious terms. It must now be dressed up in the language of modern psychology and science.

Besides that schools of yoga or mysticism are legion ; this variety is confusing. Some sort of unification, a sort of integral yoga, has to be discovered. The writer thinks that both these things are possible.

2. By a very large consensus of opinion of mystics and mystic texts, mysticism of all types – that is in all religions – has a common final target state for man in this life. It is the *jivan mukta* state or the *stitha prajna* state or the *sahaja avastha* or the *sahaja samadhi* or the *dharma megha samadhi* (Hindu) ; *arabat* or *arabant* (Buddhist-Jain), *baquiquat* (Sufi) and unitive life (Christian). Final target mystic state has distinct characteristics. It is not so mysterious as people presume. It is in fact from the psychological point of view nothing more than ideal mental health – miles ahead of course of what is termed 'normal' mental health – highly efficient, highly self-actualizing, free from complexes and hence from all persistent tensions. It is a mind perfectly integrated within itself as well as with the universe around it. Compared with it the target of some emotional schools appears to be only a sublimation. This *jivan mukta* state is definitely like a heaven within us, a cure for the hell of tensions enveloping our modern culture.

3. There is also a common key technique in all mystic schools, namely turning the mind inwards by stilling thoughts from outside towards inside which are bound up with emotions and the ego. The withdrawal only takes different forms or routes in different schools to suit different minds. It is given different names – *nirvikalpa*, *asamprajnata*, *sunyata*, quietude, silence, *baqua*, *fana-der-fana*, to call it *samadhi* mystifies it ; it is total relaxation.

4. The common, or almost common, final target state referred to in paragraph 2 above has two principal facets : (a) The miraculous powers it yields. These powers are not the target but only a by-product, accruing more by some techniques than by others. Their purposeful acquisition and exhibition has been denounced by all great mystic masters including the Buddha. That enhances the ego. (b) Intuitions of a philosophic nature indicating unity is the apparent multiplicity of the universe. But the value of these intuitions

The final aim of Vedanta is to point out that all talk of Jiva as the ego endowed with a body in which the senses and the mind inhere, pre-supposes a primary ignorance, and to draw our attention to the witnessing consciousness which is the real Self of us all. That over and above the sensuous perception and mental activity there is a source of universal experience to be recognized as the innermost intuition, is a fact which it is absolutely necessary to bear in mind.

— SANKARACHARYA

has been considerably undermined by recent research psychedelic drugs like L.S.D. These drugs have of course their defects but it is a fact that some subjects of these drugs get mystic-like insights. The insights leave their memories behind. The question arises : Can Reality be seen so easily and through bare chemicals? It appears more plausible that these insights of the drug-subject quite as well as the intuitions of the mystic are only an alternative view of Reality, not the rock-bottom Reality yet. That alternative view is very useful no doubt : it relaxes while the ordinary multiple view distracts ; but whether it is Reality must be proved by other independent methods. The highest mystic *samadhis* are conceptless -- i.e. beyond concepts -- many, one, two, etc. Even the electron and the time-space continuum of the physicist cannot be described in ordinary language and its categories. How then can we expect the Reality at the base of the whole cosmos to be confined within the cage of language, its categories and logic? Very probably it transcends them all. The Hindu Vedas confirm this. (c) The only important facet of mysticism and its target state -- the *jivan mukta* state -- that is left, is its psychological facet, namely, the elimination of all persistent tensions including the ego which causes them, the freedom from all anxieties, frustrations, etc. and the attainment of persistent bliss.

5. We can agree to this psychological facet as being the only one worth considering and to the *jivan mukta* as the ultimate -- or at

least the penultimate — acme of all mystic schools. Then a vast vista of research, psychological and physiological, gets opened up in the hitherto mysterious subject of mysticism or yoga. For example, (i) We can examine all old mystic or yogic techniques and their results physiologically and psychologically. This is already being done in the west as well as in India. Psychology has now stepped out of its old frontier of the study of external behaviour or mental patients only. The American Association for Humanistic psychology is conducting research on higher human possibilities, on the making of supermen. A journal of trans-personal psychology has been started. A. H. Maslow (President of the American Psychological Association, 1968) has been insisting that in the subject of human psychology a study of subjective experience must be combined with the experimental observation of external behaviour. This is actually being done in several areas of psychological research. Again nervous and emotional tensions are being physiologically studied. Electrical waves in the brain are being recorded in order to find whether thoughts and emotions have been actually relaxed in any mystic state. (ii) We can evolve new techniques or modifications of old ones taking help from modern physiological and psychological knowledge, educational devices and electronic technology. This is also being done in a few psychological laboratories in the U.S.A. as well as in India.

6. Let us not be terrified by the word 'Science' and regard it as too objective or materialistic to be linked with yoga. Science is only a body of knowledge. The way we use that knowledge depends on our own wishes or folly. Modern physics is more abstract than philosophy. Astro-physics may not have proved a personal God but it indicates a common cosmic matter-energy (both being convertible) and a common set of laws (though statistical in nature). Biology points to a homogeneous and holistic cosmic evolutionary drive (which we may call *sat-chit-ananda*). Biology also shows the possibility of a universal and inviolable humanistic ethics with experimental tests and priorities neatly built into it. Parascology makes the assumption of a cosmic

psychic field (*chidakasa*) constantly acting on all individual minds and reacting to them absolutely unavoidable.

7. Nor need we be frightened by stories of long years of secluded mystic *sadbana* (effort) required for reaching the mystic top. Highly evolved mystic personalities have lived and are living in India as well as abroad even in this materialistic age. The Buddha denounced the practice of extravagant austerities as many as twenty five centuries back. Cases have been known of ordinary men getting their realization by mere devoted service of an adept master. Sri Krishna suggests in the Gita a very easy and simple technique: 'Do your duty according to your lights but leave the fruits to God.'

There are no doubt some hard and protracted techniques which can be safely learnt only from adept Gurus, e.g., *asana* (sitting posture), *pranayama* (breath-control), awakening the *Kundalini* (the Serpent Power), etc. Such techniques have of course their merits.

But nobody needs get disheartened if he has not met an adept Guru. He can begin with a prayer to God if he believes in Him — concentrated and without any guilt complex in it. Pray not for material goods but for light and life. Or repeat the name of some prophet or god that sounds sweet to you. Or simply admire the beauty of nature and meditate on the unity within this diversity — a unity that includes your own little self in it. Such a meditation expands consciousness beyond the narrow self; concentrated repetition probably empties the mind to a point of relaxation or silence; and self-surrender in prayer directly involves relaxation. A very good beginning can be made by any such easy technique; a Guru will also come to lend further light to any one who is really tired of the so-called 'normal' extraverted life of mere selfish sense enjoyments. Just half an hour every morning of such simple technique combined with the reading of some spiritual book or the singing of spiritual hymns would suffice to considerably decrease the level of personal tensions. And if this practice becomes the norm in society, then the elimination of the social, national and global tensions will be an easy affair.

THE LIMITS OF ONE'S EFFORT

By 'Sein'

THE attitude of spiritual seekers could be broadly summarized under two categories : (i) those who postulate ignorance and insist upon the necessity to overcome it ; and, (ii) those who refuse to accept either ignorance or the necessity of effort to overcome it, admitting only the Eternal Being. Actually there is no such division. Knowers of Truth assert that we are already the Self and never ceased to be the Self but in Oneness of Being they recognise also the relative plane of ignorance which has to be transcended through spiritual striving. It is irrelevant to say we are already on the top of a mountain and that there is no need to climb it when experientially we are still at the base ! From the Absolute point of view we have never ceased to be the Self and there are no others ; but it is not enough to understand this intellectually alone. Such assertions must stand the test of experience under all circumstances, that is, to retain one's equanimity under the greatest stress and danger, even in the face of death, etc.

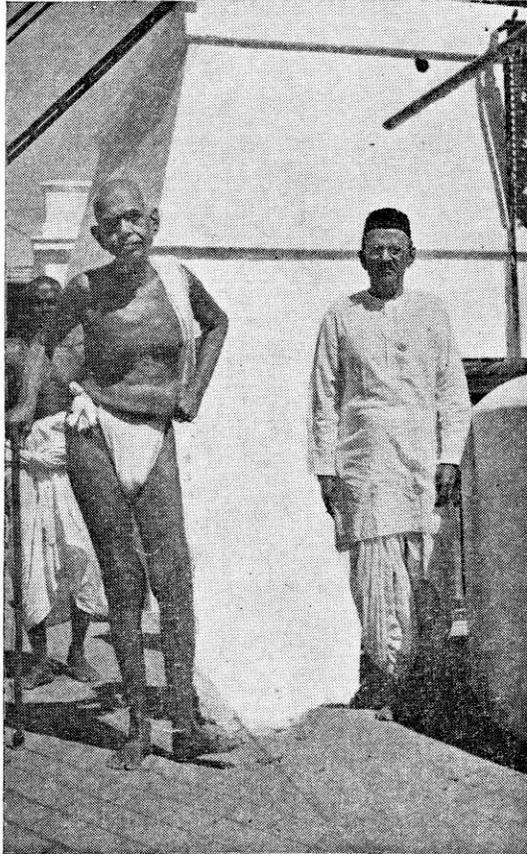
A humble admission of one's ignorance is the first step on the spiritual path. All traditions lay great emphasis on humility and *sraddha* (sincerity of approach) on the part of the aspirant. It is futile to assert the transcendental state before having purified or stilled the mind and transcended one's limitations experientially. Here a Guru's guidance is essential to take the aspirant beyond the stage of mere intellectual conviction and help him to transcend intellect which cannot reach beyond itself. Paradoxically the

highest stage it reaches is when it recognizes its own limits and impotence !

The greatest scientists feel great humility before the majesty and mystery of existence. Newton is reported to have said shortly before his death : 'I know not what I may appear to the world but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore and diverting myself now and then in finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of Truth lay all undiscovered before me.' Einstein also said that with all the tremendous discoveries of modern science we have not touched even the fringe of that great mystery of Existence !

There is no mastery without effort. This everybody experiences in practice. It is effort which leads to effortlessness. Even finding a Guru in this life is the result of great spiritual effort done now or taken in previous lives, says our tradition. The Guru appears when we are ready and have prepared ourselves spiritually. The scriptures also say that we need not make any further effort if we can surrender to the Guru. Only those pure in heart can take the path of surrender. Purity of heart does not come of itself but only through preliminary one-pointedness and intense striving and perseverance as testified to by the sages and saints.

The Guru's pregnant words : "You are already the Self" or "The feeling, 'I have not realised', is the only obstacle to realisation", have the fullest impact only when the aspirant has come to the limit of his efforts or has been able to totally surrender to the Guru.



Dr. Anantanarayana Rao with Bhagavan

By Dr. M. Anantanarayana Rao

Legends say that there is an invisible *Siddha Purusha* on the slope of the Arunachala Hill and Bhagavan often confirmed this. The writer of this article, a staunch devotee who was in close contact with, and doing personal service to, Sri Bhagavan in the last days of His illness, concludes that Bhagavan Himself is the *Siddha Purusha*.

Arunachala

Ashtaka

and

Siddha

Purusha

WE see the light of the sun, stars and galaxies and the rays of light from them help an astronomer to measure the colossal distances between stars and galaxies, their speed of travel and so on. We are told how fast light travels per second and that if a body travels at that speed, time and space do not exist for it. We understand and believe all that, it being at the mental level. We do not know exactly what light is, yet we know some of its qualities. When a scientist tells us something which we cannot ordinarily perceive with our senses, for example radio-active waves, we believe him. But when a saint or sage tells us that there is a spiritual entity in us, something not of the mind and beyond our senses, something which is not of time and therefore immortal, we hardly believe him. Just as a scientist gives us relative knowledge, the realised person or Sage gives us information which leads us to spiritual knowledge, but the ways of expression employed by the latter are different. Words cannot directly describe a spiritual entity because it is beyond the mental level, therefore analogies are employed. Analogies have their limitations and therefore are not perfect in giving us a correct knowledge of the Spirit or *Atman*. The sage tells us that man is a combination of body, mind and *Atman*. The body and mind are described as *upadhis* or vehicles of the *Atman* or Spirit. The body is inert and the mind makes it act

in the way it wants it to. Mind is a very complex thing according to psychologists, but Sri Bhagavan Ramana makes the study of the mind simple enough for us to follow his teachings. He divides the mind into three parts -- *manas*, *abankara* and *buddhi*. *Manas* is a bundle of thoughts and memory is also included in it; *abankara* or ego is the dominating principle which takes hold of thoughts and makes the body act; and *buddhi* is the discriminating principle which has the power to damp or curb the ego. The ego can be likened to the powerful secondary current or high-tension current which can only become apparent under the influence of a primary current of electricity. The high-tension current derives its power from the primary current and is also a reflection of the latter, so to say. Similarly the ego can be likened to the high-tension current drawing its power from and is a reflection of the primary called the *Atman*, or Spirit. From what has been described above it should be easy to understand that man is an 'embodied soul'. Soul is a synonym for *Atman* or Spirit. If so, can there be a 'disembodied soul'? A disembodied soul should be limitless as opposed to an embodied soul which is limited by the body. The disembodied soul, being limitless, therefore infinite, has the same qualities or nature of God. *Arunachala Purana* and some poet saints have mentioned the existence of a disembodied soul whom they name *Siddha Purusha*, under a banyan tree somewhere on the north-east peak of the Arunachala hill. If such an entity exists, how does it contact men or *jivas* like us? *Arunachala Ashtaka* composed by Sri Ramana Bhagavan seems to contain the answer and an attempt is made here to explain the same. The verses often have a double meaning -- autobiographic and deeply *advaitic*.

In the first verse of the *Ashtaka* Sri Bhagavan says :--

"Hearken! It stands as an insentient hill. Its action is mysterious and past understanding. From the age of innocence, It had shone in my mind that Arunachala was something very sublime and grand, but even when I came to know through another that it was the

**BE STILL
AND
KNOW
THAT I AM GOD**

By Wei Wu Wei

'We' seek relative stillness
in order to sleep,
but it is only when Absolute stillness
supervenes
that we can Awaken

same as Tiruvannamalai, I did not realise its meaning. When It drew me up to It, stilling my mind, and I came close, I saw It stand unmoving or as Absolute Silence".

The pronoun 'It', at the very beginning of the verse, clearly refers to an Entity. Later in the verse it is seen that Sri Bhagavan has had deep down in his memory even at the age of innocence that It or Arunachala was something grand and transcendental. As a child he could not have known what a hill meant or what it was like and the reasons for this are obvious. Therefore his memory of something sublime not in the shape of a hill at that tender age, suggests that it was brought forward from a previous birth or incarnation. A hint about a previous birth or births can be deduced from the latter part of the 25th verse in the *Akshara-mana-malai*. It reads :-- "What austerities left incomplete in previous births have won me Thy special favour, O Arunachala?" The same idea can also be got from the third verse in *Sri Arunachala Padikam* composed by Sri Bhagavan. He says : "Drawing me with the cords of Thy grace, although I had not even dimly thought of Thee, Thou didst decide to kill me (ego) outright. How then has one so weak as I offended Thee that Thou leave the task unfinished? Why dost Thou torture me thus, keeping me suspended between life and death? O Arunachala, fulfil Thy wish and long survive me all alone, O Lord."

Erratum

The Guru of Thayumanavar was Mauna Guru and not Arulnandi Sivachariar as mistakenly stated in the article on 'Thayumanavar', published in our issue of July, 1972, p. 172. Ed.

'A *Nitbha Siddha*,' says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna is an ever-perfect one, who from his very birth seeks God or *Atman* and an *Ishwara-koti* is one who always remains in the highest plane of consciousness and can return to the plane of relative consciousness whenever he wishes to do so. This he does in order to help mankind (*jivakotis*) on the path towards perfection. A *jivakoti* may obtain *samadhi* through spiritual discipline and merge with Brahman in the end and once that happens he cannot return to the relative plane. An *Isvarakoti*, on the other hand is an incarnation of God and has with him the power to be born as man as often as is necessary and this he does by retaining the ego of knowledge.'

Sri Bhagavan Ramana was an *Isvarakoti*, as defined by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a *Nitbha* (eternal) *Siddha* also. He therefore had the power to take birth in a human body.

In the second verse of the *Ashtaka* Sri Ramana says :--

"Who is the seer? When I sought within I watched the disappearance of the seer and what survived it. No thought arose to say 'I saw', how then could the thought 'I did not see' arise? Who has the power to convey this in words when even Thou (appearing as Dakshinamurti) couldst do so in ancient days, by silence only? Only to convey by silence Thy (transcendental) State Thou standest as a Hill, shining from heaven to earth."

In this verse it is clear that 'Hill' represents the Entity presiding over it. That Entity is known as Dakshinamurti, or the *Siddha Purusha* mentioned in the *Purana*. References to :-- 'previous births', 'kill me outright', 'suspended between life and death', 'long

survive me alone' and 'ancient days' -- when considered together, suggest the possibility of Bhagavan Sri Ramana having taken births many times for helping *jivakotis* to reach their goal rapidly.

In the third verse he says :--

"When I approach regarding Thee as having form, Thou standest as a Hill on earth. When I came to realise who I am, what else is this identity of mine (but Thee), O Thou who standest as the towering Aruna Hill?" In this verse there is a definite hint as regards his identity. Vedantists say that Brahman associated with *upadhi* (adjunct) is *Isvara* or *Saguna-Brahman* (Brahman with attributes) who corresponds to what may be called the Personal God of various religions. Dakshinamurti is an aspect of *Isvara* and therefore He is endowed with the qualities of *Isvara* such as universal lordship, unlimited powers etc.

In the fourth verse Sri Bhagavan says :--

"To look for God ignoring Thee who art Being and Consciousness is like going with a lamp to look for darkness. Only to make Thyself known as Being and Consciousness Thou dwellest in different religions under different (names and) forms. If (yet) men do not (come to) know Thee they are indeed the blind who do not know the sun. O Arunachala the Great, Thou peerless Gem, abide and shine Thou as my Self, One without a second." This verse is important. Here Sri Bhagavan definitely says that one has to look upon Arunachala as the Self. In the previous verse Sri Bhagavan has identified himself with That -- as no other than Dakshinamurti.

Let us now go back to the early life of Sri Bhagavan. In his early boyhood he often felt a sort of *mayakkam*, a Tamil word which means fainting. His sleep was deep and heavy and it was only with some effort one could wake him up. The so-called *mayakkam*, the deep sleep etc., seem to show that Sri Bhagavan, Venkataraman as he was then called, was going into *samadhi* without himself knowing about it. It is during one of such *mayakkams* perhaps that he was seized with the idea or fear that he was going to die and the conscious rehearsal of death put him into

a conscious samadhi in which he realised that he was not the body and that only the Atman is eternal and deathless. At that time and until his first attendant Palaniswami brought him some books on philosophy, he was not aware of the technical terms like Brahman, *koshas* (sheaths) and the like. When he read the books he understood that he had already experienced all that was named and classified therein. Sri Bhagavan had not read about a *Siddha Purusha* (Realized Being) under a banyan tree on the hill, but he had only the memory of something great and sublime attached to the hill.

One day he saw a very large leaf of a banyan tree at the bottom of a dry waterway running down the hill. He wondered at the large size of the leaf. Some time later when he was going up the hill he saw from a distance a large banyan tree growing on a very big rock. He drew nearer to the tree after a precipitous climb, but his further progress was halted by hornets which stung him and he had to return giving up his quest. He narrated the incident to the devotees who were anxiously awaiting his return. Some days after the event, he happened to read in some books about the existence of a *Siddha Purusha* under a banyan tree on the north-east peak of the hill. (In passing it may be said here that some of the devotees wanted to find out the place where the tree stood and told Sri Bhagavan about their intention, but they were not encouraged by him to do so. In spite of it they climbed the hill and, after undergoing very great hardships, returned with cuts and bruises without finding the location of the tree.)

Every great teacher has told us that he who succeeds in getting rid of his ego or individuality immediately experiences Atman. A *jiva*, after great effort or *sadhana*, obtains the experience of Atman. His individuality then disappears and he merges in Brahman. That union is likened to a river flowing into the sea or ocean in which the river loses its identity. When the ego of the *jiva* is destroyed, the *jiva* becomes Siva. In that condition there is no seer or the seen, enjoyer and the enjoyed, speaker and the hearer -- no duality. That condition is also described as 'One without a second'. If egoless *jivas* are absorbed in

Brahman, how then can a *Siddha Purusha* be identified and remain as an entity under the banyan tree on the top of Arunachala Hill? Here is a poser which I could not understand. I had to clear my doubt and only Sri Bhagavan could do so. On the evening of June 6, 1949, I went to Sri Bhagavan as usual after his evening meal and, in the course of conversation, said: "I have read Sri Shankaracharya's *Atmabodha*. In the 53rd verse of that book it is stated that the contemplative one, on the destruction of the *upadhis*, is totally absorbed in the all-pervading Brahman like water in water, space in space, and light in light. If that were so, how can I believe in the existence of a *Siddha Purusha* under a banyan tree on this hill? I can fully believe in the existence of a banyan tree because such a thing is common on a hill and further you saw it and told us." Sri Bhagavan had a hearty laugh in which I also joined. There was silence for a while and then Sri Bhagavan said: "A *Siddha Purusha* does exist." He explained that a *jnani* is like a red-hot ball of iron. That ball has the qualities of fire, but the fire is limited to the size of the ball. Similarly a *jnani* is Spirit but is limited by his *upadhi*. A *Siddha Purusha* also has an *upadhi* but it is extremely subtle and pure and does not limit him. His *upadhi* can be likened to a line drawn on water. The *Siddha Purusha* is Consciousness Itself and whatever he has to do simply happens, not by any desire or will of his own. Even if miracles happen they happen as a matter of course.

These words were followed by silence during which very many thoughts crossed my mind. Two of the important ones are noted here. Some years ago, when Sri Bhagavan was sitting with the devotees in the old hall in the Ashram, he described a vision he once had. He saw that Arunachala hill was hollow and that in it stood a beautiful town with tanks and gardens. In one of the gardens he saw a big gathering of *sadhans* and *sannyasis*. It was a conclave presided over by a *sannyasi*. He recognised in the gathering many familiar faces of the devotees who were then sitting in the hall. When he looked at the person presiding over the conclave he recognised him as himself. At that stage of the narrative, he was interrupted by one of the devotees sitting

"So long as the ego lasts, effort is necessary. When the ego ceases to exist, actions become spontaneous."

— Talks, p. 467.

in front who said that visions are like dreams hence untrue. This ended the narrative. The information that Sri Bhagavan himself was presiding over the conclave is important. It connotes that Sri Bhagavan is the *Siddha Purusha*.

About the end of May 1949 Sri T. P. Ramachandran and Dr. Padmanabhan went into the temple hall where Sri Bhagavan was sitting. It was fairly late in the evening and the writer also went there for some work he had to do. The two devotees went behind the stone sofa on which Sri Bhagavan was sitting. There they were sobbing as they had come to know that the tumour on Sri Bhagavan's arm was a type of cancer. Sri Bhagavan called them and asked them why they were weeping. When they gave the reason Sri Bhagavan said: "Where can I go? Where is it possible for me to go?" The upsurge of thoughts in my mind brought in their wake the strong conviction that Sri Bhagavan was no other than the *Siddha Purusha* on the hill but limited by his body or *upadhi* which we saw before us. He also felt that most of his words and writings had in them hints about his identity. I broke the silence and addressed Sri Bhagavan thus: "Bhagavan, you had from your childhood the memory of Arunachala which brought you here. Ever since you came here you have not left the precincts of the Hill, nor even gone beyond the shadow of the Hill. You were drawn mysteriously to the vicinity of the banyan tree somewhere on the top of this hill. When you attempted to go near the tree you were attacked by hornets and you had to return giving up the attempt to reach the tree. I strongly feel that if you had gone there you would have left your body there and you would not have returned to us. You are to me no other than the *Siddha Purusha*. Tell me please." Sri Bhagavan was listening with a smile but suddenly he

became stiff and silent with an awe-inspiring face. I stood there for some time and as minutes passed by the conviction I had in my mind grew stronger. I, therefore, felt that no answer was needed. I then prostrated before Sri Bhagavan and stood up and found Sri Bhagavan looking at me with His usual smile beaming with benevolence!

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna said: "The manifestation of God is through His incarnation. The devotees should worship and serve an incarnation as long as he lives in a human body . . . Not all, by any means, can recognise an incarnation of God. Assuming a human body, the incarnation falls a victim to disease, hunger, thirst and all such things like ordinary mortals . . . However great the infinite God may be, his essence can and does manifest itself through man by his mere will. God's incarnation as man cannot be explained away by analogy. One must feel it by direct perception. An analogy can give us only a small glimpse . . . We see God Himself when we see His incarnation. Suppose a man goes to the Ganges and touches its water. He will then say: 'Yes, I have seen and touched the Ganges'. To say this it is not necessary for him to touch the whole length of the river from Hardwar to Gangasagar." These words of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa tell us positively the greatness of an incarnation. Sri Swami Vivekananda, Mahendranath Gupta and many other devotees of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa looked upon him as an incarnation and he is worshipped as such. The devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana also do likewise and it is hoped that the writer of this article has made it clear that Sri Bhagavan is an incarnation of the *Siddha Purusha* presiding over the Arunachala Hill. The writer feels that he is not able to understand the attributeless Absolute, but he can understand and fully believe that Sri Bhagavan came to us as an incarnation of the *Siddha Purusha*.

Sri Bhagavan has shown us the way. Let every one of us who came in contact with Him, either in person or through His teachings, walk determinedly on that path and thus obtain His Grace to reach His Lotus Feet. So help us Sri Arunachala Ramana!

VICHARA

By Alexander Paul Hixon Jr.

The aim of Self-Enquiry is to realize that the ego does not exist and that the Self alone exists. The method of Self-Enquiry taught by Bhagavan forms the subject of this article.

THE technique of ego-dissolution, or thought-dissolution, elaborated by Sri Ramana Maharshi is an excellent opportunity for study, for high-order holy men seldom make so unambiguously clear and public as Bhagavan did their most potent methods of spiritual discipline with which they shape the spiritual lives of their intimate disciples, but remain content with preaching at large (if they preach at all) more general instructions, moral precepts and metaphysical or cosmogonic pictures. This is not from lack of generosity, but because, in the Indian view, spiritual life is such that it demands a living, personal transmission. What is transmitted is not so much an item of doctrine as the very spark of spiritual awareness itself. Scriptures alone are insufficient.

Vichara has its whole purpose and meaning in ego-dissolution. Sri Maharshi explains: "Between Pure Consciousness and the inert physical body, there arises mysteriously the ego-sense or I-notion, the hybrid which is neither of them, and this flourishes as an individual being. This ego or individual being is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore it is to be destroyed by any possible means; then that which is ever alone remains resplendent." The destruction of ego, however, cannot be undertaken directly, for this would dialectically reinvolve the ego itself which is, as Ramana often joked, like the thief acting as policeman in order to catch himself. Rather

than battling the ego, "if you would deny the ego and scorch it by ignoring it you would be free." One 'scorches' it by, in Buddhist terms, 'seeing into its emptiness': "instead of setting about saying 'there is a mind (or ego, Bhagavan uses the terms interchangeably) and I want to kill it,' you must begin to seek its source and find that it does not exist at all." This 'scorching' is the path or process of *vichara* (investigation): "When the mind unceasingly investigates its own nature, it transpires that there is no such thing as mind. This is the direct path for all." Paradoxical as it may seem, Bhagavan insists that the mind itself cannot be used to strike at its own root. . . .

"You can never find the mind through the mind. Pass beyond it in order to find it non-existent." "It is foolish to attempt to kill the mind by the mind. The fact is that the mind is only a bundle of thoughts. Find its source and hold on to it. The mind will fade away of its own accord." Perhaps this process could be compared to that of slowly and persistently walking towards a mirage which at first seems to recede intact, as it were, and then simply fades away. In any case *vichara* contrasts with any method by which the mind does violence to itself; such violence, such as severe mental or physical fasting, Sri Ramana considered counter-productive: "the more you prune a plant the more vigorously it grows," He says. We should note here that Sri Ramana most often used for 'mind' the Samkhya term *antahkarana* (inner instrument), which refers to the co-operation of *manas* (technical reason), *buddhi* (intuitive reason), *chitta* (memory-bank), and *abankara* ('ego' proper or empirical I-consciousness).

Maharshi's technique of *vichara* bypasses the traditional Vedantic techniques of '*neti, neti*' and '*sobam*' (the *Mahavakya*, 'I am He'), in short: discrimination (*viveka*) and identification. Bhagavan explains: "in order to be able to say I-am-not-this (*i.e.*, discrimination) or I-am-That (*i.e.* identification), there must be the 'I' to say it. This 'I' is only the I-thought or ego. After the rising up of this I-thought, all other thoughts arise. The I-thought is the root thought. If the root is

pulled out, all the rest is at the same time uprooted. Therefore question yourself *Who am I?*"

It is important that we be clear on the distinction between *vichara* and various techniques of analysis. Visitor: "Suppose I have the thought 'horse' and try to trace its source; I find that it is due to memory and the memory in its turn is due to prior perception of the object 'horse'." Maharshi: "Who asked you to think about all that? All those are also thoughts. What good will it do you to go on thinking about memory and perception? That 'I' which has the perception and memory, whence does it arise? Find out that." As noted above, Sri Ramana classes '*neti, neti*' as analysis and distinguishes it clearly from *vichara*: "Self-enquiry does not mean reasoning which goes on when you say, 'I am not the body, I am not the senses, and so forth'; all that may help, but it is not the enquiry." All forms of analysis move within thought; enquiry, as Bhagavan saw it, strikes at the root of thought: "Give up thoughts. You need not give up anything else." "All thoughts are inconsistent with realization." The striking parallel between this outlook and the dialectic of Madhyamika will be obvious.

Casual students of Sri Ramana's teaching might conclude that *vichara* isolates an 'I'. This is completely wrong. There is indeed a stage of meditation in which all other thoughts are reduced to the root I-thought, but this root is pulled up and then the source of this primal thought shines forth. There is then emphatically no 'I'. This is why the English translation of Sri Ramana's usage of *atmavichara* as Self-investigation, though correct, may be misleading. For can we conceive of a 'self' which is not an 'I'? At this point Buddhist *anatma*-terminology might be more expressive, but we must stress that this is simply a question of semantic emphasis. Seekers may indeed stop at the penultimate point of insight, which appears to those Vedantically conditioned as *Atman* and to those Buddhistically conditioned as *Sunyata*. But, whether Self or Emptiness, both these concepts must be uprooted for illumination to be total. What remains is necessarily not only 'beyond words' but beyond syntax itself.

SANATSUJATIYA

This is the first instalment of a famous and important dialogue between King Dhritarashtra and the Sage Sanatsujata, occurring in the Mahabharata and proving the superiority of Knowledge over karma (action).

SOME time ago we serialised an episode from the *Mahabharata* known as *Yaksha Prasna*¹, dealing mostly with *dharma* or right conduct. We now serialise another episode from the same epic known as the *Sanatsujatiya* or the teachings of Sanatsujata, one of the four sons begotten by Brahma, the Creator of the universe, by his power of thought. It is also called the *Dhritarashtra-Sanatkumara Samvada*, that is, the dialogue between Dhritarashtra and Sanatkumara (another name of Sanatsujata). This episode deals with *jñana* (Knowledge).

The blind and aged king Dhritarashtra was beset with fear as the clouds of war were gathering on the horizon. He could not dissuade the Pandavas from fighting for their rights. And his partiality for his own sons, the Kauravas, stood in the way of his forcing them to yield to the Pandavas what was due to them. He spent anxious days and sleepless nights. It then occurred to him to send for his half-brother, the wise Vidura, whose words, he hoped might comfort him. But they failed to remove his fear and anxiety.² The episode begins here :

Dhritarashtra : "Vidura, your words are wonderful. If there is anything more, please tell me. I am eager to know."

Upon this Vidura said : "I am born of a Sudra woman and cannot therefore speak to you about certain matters. I am prohibited from speaking about them." Still he wished to enlighten Dhritarashtra with the Knowledge of Brahman. So, with the help of his yogic power, he made Sanatsujata appear before them. After duly honouring the sage, Vidura said : "Bhagavan ! Dhritarashtra has

some doubts which I cannot clear. Kindly, therefore, speak to him. On hearing your words he will transcend the cause of all misery like gain and loss, love and hatred, old age and death, poison-like pride and delusion, hunger and thirst, fear and fearlessness, unhappiness and inertia, desire and anger, growth and decay."

THE TEXT

1. The learned and noble king, Dhritarashtra, wishing to attain the Supreme State, approved of the words spoken by Vidura and, taking Sanatsujata to a secluded place, asked him :

2. "O Sanatkumara ! I hear that according to your teaching there is no death. But it is said that the *devas* (celestial beings) and the *asuras* (demons) led a life of *brahmacharya*³ with the object of transcending death. Which of these is true ?"

3. Sanatsujata replied :

Some believe that one can attain the state of deathlessness by means of religious ceremonies. Others say that there is no death at all. O King ! Listen to my words. Do not doubt them.

4. O Kshatriya ! Seers say (*lit.* admit) that ignorance (or delusion) and death have existed from the very beginning. I tell you forgetfulness (of our true nature) is death and constant mindfulness immortality.

5. It is on account of their forgetfulness that the *asuras* were defeated. The *suras*

¹ See *The Mountain Path* issues from October, 1967 to October, 1968.

² See *The Mountain Path*, January, 1968 issue for "Vidura's advice to Dhritarashtra".

³ Living with a sage observing celibacy.

(*devas*) became Brahman⁴ by being mindful (of their true nature). Death does not actually devour beings like a tiger, for no one has seen even its shape.

6. Some say that death is not what I say but Yama⁵ the immortal being who dwells in the Self and inheres in Brahman.⁶ This god (Yama), they say, rules over his kingdom in the world of the *pitrs* (manes) and that he is gracious to the good and stern to the wicked.

7. This death⁷ comes out of the egos of men in the form of anger, ignorance, and delusion. Following evil ways, as men generally do, under the impulse of the ego. (*lit.* in the wake of the ego), hardly anyone attains union with the Self.

8. Being deluded and under its sway (of death) they again (repeatedly) go there (*i.e.* Yama's world) when they depart from this world. But they come back to this world (when their merits are exhausted). Their senses follow them. Thus they go from death to death.

9. Action produces attachment to the fruits of action. And those who are enamoured (*lit.* go after them) of it never transcend death. Not knowing how to attain union with Reality embodied beings work purely for the sake of sense enjoyments.

10. This (working for sense enjoyments) is the delusion of the sense organs which makes one perpetually attached to unreal objects. And one who is overcome by his attachment to unreal objects always thinks of them and is devoted to them.

11. A man is first overpowered by hankering after sense enjoyments. Desire and anger possess him next. These lead foolish men to death. But men of discrimination transcend death.

12. He who discriminates deeply and rejects these transitory pleasures, treating them with contempt and never giving a thought to them, becomes as it were, a slayer of death. A wise man overcomes his desires in this manner.

13. He who submits to his desires perishes along with them. But he who turns his back on them expiates his sins, if any.

14. This inert body is a hell for all beings. Those who are enamoured of it and pamper it are like the blind who walk into places full of pits, thorns, etc.

15. O Kshatriya! Not knowing anything else (*i.e.* anything better) one does not learn (what should be learnt). One's life then becomes worthless like a tiger made of straw. Deluded and terrified by anger and greed one experiences death in one's own body.

16. One who knows thus the origin of death and is established in wisdom does not fear death. He annihilates death even as death annihilates one who is in its grip.

17. Dhritarashtra asked :

The Vedas say that the happy, eternal and meritorious worlds gained by sacrifices performed by the twice-born (Brahmins) constitute the highest good. How then can an intelligent man abstain from such work ?

18. Sanatsujata replied :

Only an ignorant man resorts to them. The Vedas describe the rewards gained from them. A wise man does not care for them. He follows the right path, turning aside from wrong paths.

19. Dhritarashtra asked :

If it is true that the unborn and ancient Being creates all this and enters into it, who compels Him to do so? What is His object? In what way is He imperfect? O wise man! Kindly explain everything fully.

20. Sanatsujata replied :

There is great objection to accepting another agency (besides Brahman). When (the unborn and ancient) Being unites with what is beginningless (*maya*) beings come into existence perpetually.

21. Or it may be that the Eternal (Lord) creates the universe because of His ability to transform Himself (*vikara yoga*) which is regarded as His power. The Vedas support this view also.

⁴ *i.e.*, realized that they were Brahman.

⁵ The God of Death.

⁶ The first half of this stanza in the original does not make much sense; the text seems to be imperfect.

⁷ *i.e.*, forgetfulness of our true nature as defined by him.

22. Dhritarashtra asked :

As some persons follow dharma and others what is not dharma, is dharma vanquished by what is not dharma or does dharma vanquish what is not dharma ?

23. Sanatsujata replied :

It is well-known that even while engaged in activity a wise man transcends both of them (i.e., dharma and adharma, or, good and evil) with his wisdom. It is also known that in regard to others merit is acquired by following dharma and demerit by doing evil.

24. He who does both good and bad deeds reaps their transient rewards in the other world. But the intelligent man expiates his demerit by dharma. You must know that this is the better way.

25. Those Brahmins who vie with one another in doing acts of dharma, become, when they die, bright beings in heaven (*swarga*).

26. But in the case of Brahmins who do not vie with one another in doing acts of dharma, their acts become the means of acquiring wisdom. When they leave this world they go to the heaven which is beyond the three worlds (or states -- *trivishvata*).

27. Those who are well-versed in the Vedas consider the conduct of such a person good, although his relations and others may not esteem him much.

28. A true Brahmin (*lit.* one who is like Indra among Brahmins) should live where food and drink are plentiful like water and grass in the rainy season. He should be free from anxiety.

29. As he does not make himself known he may meet with threats and ill-treatment in some places. But he should not do anything to reveal his greatness. Such a man is truly great, not others.

30. The food offered by one who does not ill-treat the unobtrusive (Sage) or rob a Brahmin of his belongings, is regarded as pure (*lit.* acceptable) by the pious.

31. A true (Brahmin) should think : "Let me always remain unknown." When he lives with his relatives he should not take (excessive) interest in anything.

32. Which Brahmin can conceive of the inner Self devoid of all attributes, immutable, pure and free from all traces of duality ?

33. He who regards the Self as other than what it really is, is a thief who robs himself and commits sin.

34. A (true) Brahmin should not be overactive. Nor should he accept gifts. His conduct should be irreproachable and acceptable (to the wise). Although learned he should not display his learning. Such a person is a knower of Brahman, a seer.

35. Those who live by displaying their accomplishments are like dogs which devour their own vomit and thereby do harm to themselves.

36. Those Brahmins who are poor materially but rich in Vedic lore are invincible and unshakable. Know that they are Brahman personified.

37. Even a person who knows how to offer sacrifices to all the gods is not the equal of such a Brahmin. To him the gods themselves make offerings.

38. If the serene (Brahmin) is honoured, he should not feel flattered. Nor should he be perturbed if he is scorned.

39. When he is honoured he should think thus : "Learned men honour me as it is their nature like the opening and the shutting of the eyes."

40. When dishonoured he should think thus : "Foolish people who have not studied the scriptures do not know what is right conduct and therefore do not honour one who is worthy of honour."

41. (The desire for) honour (*māna*) and serenity (*mauna*) -- *lit.* silence, i.e., silent quietude -- do not go together. The former pertains to this world while the latter relates to the other world.

42. O Kshatriya ! As material prosperity is based on meritorious acts, it is an obstacle to spiritual well-being which is rarely attained by one who is not truly wise.

43. The wise point out several difficult entrances (to spiritual well-being) -- truth, straightforwardness, modesty, sense-control, purity and learning. These six are inimical to delusion and pride.

(To be continued)

THE ABSOLUTE OF THE BUDDHA

By Dr. P. J. Saher

THE Latin word '*absolutus*' is the past participle of '*absolvere*', which means 'to loosen, to detach'. Therefore 'absolute' literally means 'detached', and so the Absolute is the 'loosened, the detached'. In Pali, the language of the Buddhist Canon, the word '*vimutta*', as the past participle of '*vimuncati*' has exactly the same meaning, for the verb also means 'to release, to detach'. '*Vimutta*' is, therefore, identical with Absolute. Now this very word is regularly used by the Buddha when he speaks of a monk who has become holy, of a Tathagata, of a 'Perfect One'.

"A Perfect One, released (*vimutta*) from bodily form, from sensation, from perception, from activities of the mind, from concepts, is deep, immeasurable and unfathomable as the ocean."

Accordingly, the Buddha has proclaimed as the ultimate goal of the holy course of life (*brahmachariya*) taught by him that we attain deliverance or release (*vimokkha*) and thus become absolute (*vimutta*).

To this Absolute of the Buddha the concept of being no longer applies,¹ a concept which Western philosophers attribute to their 'Absolute'. Concepts relating to the absolute are purely empirical and for this reason apply only to the realities that are accessible to our senses. The Buddha calls the substratum of the phenomenal world, and hence what is termed the absolute reality, the 'realm of *Nibbana*, free from all attributes' (*anupadisesanibbanadhatu*). Of this realm he states merely that, however many monks may have become absolute and extinct in it, one cannot detect either a reduction or an increase in it:

"Just as, monks, all rivers in the world enter the great ocean and all the waters of the atmosphere are discharged into it, and one cannot detect thereby either a reduction or an increase in the great ocean, so also, however many monks may have become extinct in the realm of *Nibbana* that is free from all attributes, one cannot thereby detect either a reduction or an increase in this realm". (*Udana* V. 5).

¹ See Grimm's *Doctrine of the Buddha*, p. 133.

BHAGAVAN'S SOLICITUDE FOR DEVOTEES

By Kunju Swami

An old and well-known devotee of Bhagavan describes some instances of Bhagavan's solicitude for His devotees, especially for women and old people.

BHAGAVAN was always very considerate towards his devotees in all matters. When He was living at Skandashram on the eastern slopes of the Hill, He used to wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning. He would not get up immediately but recline on the bed. We too would wake up at the same time and sit in meditation near Him. Bhagavan's mother used to sing some devotional songs from within. Bhagavan's routine was to go out at half past four and return by five. We would then begin to recite the *Aksharamana Malai* (*The Marital Garland of Letters*). That was the only song which Bhagavan had composed at that time. I learned it by heart by merely listening to the chanting of the other devotees. The recitation was over by six o'clock which was the time for Bhagavan to go for His bath.

There was a large flat stone at the spot where now there is the low wall on the eastern side. Tooth powder and water were kept on it for Bhagavan's use. In all



• Sri Kunju Swami with Sri Bhagavan

weathers He used to sit on it facing the east and clean His teeth. His body was glowing in the rays of the rising sun. If there was heavy dew we tried to dissuade Him from sitting there, but without any success. Nor did He tell us the reason for sitting there always. It was some time afterwards that we came to know of it.

An old woman named Saubhagyathammal, living in a house near the foot of the Hill, and some of her friends had made it a daily practice not to take any food until they had had *darshan* of Bhagavan and Sri Seshadri Swami. They used to come up to Skandashram every day for this purpose. One day Saubhagyathammal did not come. If any of His regular devotees were absent on any particular day Bhagavan never failed to make enquiries and find out the reason. So when the old woman came the next day He asked her why she did not come on the previous day. She replied: "I had Sri Bhagavan's *darshan* yesterday". "But you did not come

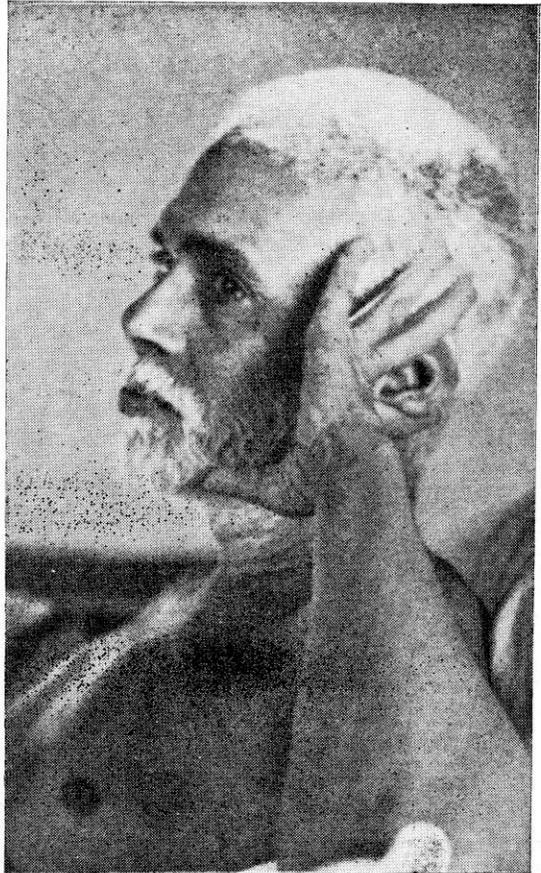
yesterday”, said Bhagavan. “Bhagavan knew that this humble devotee was too feeble to climb the Hill and so He made it possible for her to see Him from a place close to her house”, was the reply. She explained that she had seen Bhagavan while He was sitting on the stone and cleaning His teeth and said that she was henceforth going to have His *darshan* everyday in the same way. From that time onwards Bhagavan made it a practice to sit on that stone for nearly half an hour daily!

Later on when Bhagavan took up His abode at the foot of the Hill it was also chiefly out of consideration for His aged devotees who found it difficult to climb to Skandashram. After the passing away of His mother He occasionally came down to her samadhi. Aged devotees eagerly awaited these opportunities to see Him. And so when they begged Him to remain below He began to live there permanently.

It was the practice of Bhagavan’s devotees to take His permission before proceeding to circumambulate the Hill and to prostrate before Him on their return. Many came to the Ashram all the way from the town for this purpose even late in the evening and then proceeded immediately to their homes in the town. Bhagavan advised such devotees to break their circumambulation in town in the evening and to complete it on the following day when they came to the Ashram as usual.

When women devotees were ready to return to town at dusk He would always make certain that none of them went alone. If any of them found no company He would ask someone to go with her and leave her at her house.

There were some devotees employed in Madras who used to come every weekend to Tiruvannamalai and return to Madras in time to go to their offices on Monday morning. Sometimes some of them were so reluctant to part from Bhagavan that they continued to overstay their time. They would go as far as the railway station only to return to the Ashram on some pretext or other. Bhagavan, therefore, used in such cases to send someone with them to the railway station and see that



they actually got into the train and left for Madras. He did not like that anyone should neglect his duties!

When a devotee came late in the evening after every one had taken his meal and gone to bed he was not allowed to go hungry on this ground. Bhagavan always saw to it that some food was kept for such latecomers and they had their meal. When such a visitor arrived Bhagavan simply looked at some of us. That was enough for us to take him to the dining hall and give him his meal!

Bhagavan never started to eat before all these who were present were served. The beggars waiting at the gate are even now given their food before inmates and visitors are served. No exception is made to this rule even on crowded occasions like the *Jayanthi* and the *Aradhana*. All these instances will show how considerate Bhagavan was to others!

GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

CHAPTER IX

THE GLORY OF CIRCUMAMBULATION¹

ONE should never circumambulate the Hill in a conveyance. For it is contrary to the usage of *Saivites* and therefore not *dharmā*. Once upon a time a king named Dharmaketu who came from the world of Yama went round the Hill on horseback. In a moment his horse was transformed into a Gananatha. Amidst the praises sung by the Devas it left its master on earth and gained the abode of Siva. Seeing his mount change into a *Gananatha* the king also went round and joined the *Ganas*. Since then Indra and all the other *devas* as well as Vishnu go round Arunachala on foot. A *Siddha purusha* was thrown down from *Swarga* when the fruits of his austerities were exhausted. But he circumambulated the Hill and regained his former place (*Swarga*).

If the foot of one who circumambulates Arunachala bleeds it will be wiped with the *mandara* flowers worn on Devendra's head. The foot which happens to be injured while circumambulating will be strengthened by the *kumkum* (vermilion) from the body of Goddess *Sri* (Goddess of Prosperity). Those who circumambulate the Hill will always find themselves in the shade of the dense wish-fulfilling trees growing on the Mani Mountain.

On hearing all this Gauri said : O Austere One ! Kindly say what is the merit acquired by serving this Hill . Please say who are the persons who served this Hill with reverence

and how they attained the goal of their lives. Thereupon Gautama said : I shall describe to you the merit acquired by serving this Hill as described to me by Parameswara (Siva) on a former occasion. Listen. A spider wove its web on one of the slopes. This amounted to clothing the Hill. It was therefore able to remember its previous lives. Poisonous insects move about the slopes without causing injury to others. Those who arrange to burn even a single lamp constantly before Arunachala become self-effulgent. A parrot built its nest on a tree close to Arunachala and kept in it some fireflies which dispelled the darkness all around by their light. It therefore attained Liberation. When some cows which were grazing on the slopes remembered their calves milk dripped from their udders and drenched the ground. As a result of this they attained Liberation. When a crow flew in search of a prey its wings fanned the Hill. It therefore attained Liberation at once. A rat stirred the heaps of jewels lying in a cave on the slope of the Hill and dispelled the darkness. It therefore was Liberated. Even *Devas* and *Munis* dwell in the shape of shady trees close to Arunachala with the object of avoiding future births.

If one constructs a *gopura* (a kind of tower) or a *sikbara* (spire) or a road or a *mantapa* (pavilion) or digs a well in

¹ Continued from the last issue.

TRIAD OF ST. BERNARD¹

“Always bear in mind this triad :
 What were you ? An evil-smelling seed !
 What are you ? A vessel full of filth !
 What will you be ? Food for worms !
 If you consider carefully what comes
 out of your mouth, your nose and through
 the other outlets of your body, you have
 never seen a more loathsome muck-heap.
 At the side of the stone on which the corpses
 are washed, you must cultivate contempla-
 tion and zealously reflect on the ceremony
 of burial : how the bodies are laid now
 on their backs, and now on their faces ;
 how the head totters and shakes, the arms
 drop and the legs are stiff ; how they are
 laid out, sewn up and taken out for burial ;
 how they are lowered into the grave and
 covered over with earth ; how they are
 devoured by worms ; how they disintegrate
 like a rotting sack. The constant contem-
 plation is for you the highest philosophy !
 Carry it with you wherever you tarry and
 wherever you go, and in all eternity you will
 not sin. I hasten to them who have
 departed in the death of their body. If I
 behold their graves, I find therein nothing
 but dust and worms, stench and horror.
 What I am, they have been ; what they
 are, I shall be.”

¹ (See the Latin original in K. E. Neumann's
 'Langere Sammlung, note 694 to the 22nd
 discourse).

this place he will obtain what he desires. Let this Linga of Fire which cannot be approached by mortals be worshipped on earth. Unnamulai Ambika, the Supreme Power (*Shakti*), nourishes the entire world which has come out of her by her act of seeing or touching this Hill or meditating upon it. She, the Mother of the entire World, is eternally young. Let those who desire to

become eternally young worship her. Anything which is not obtained by those who live here does not exist here or anywhere else.

Worship the Lord of Sonadri, the repository of immeasurable virtues, the granter of boons, and the source of all joys. Your desires will be fulfilled and you will join Sambhu. Your penance is meant for the welfare of the world. There is nothing which you desire for yourself. Therefore do penance. Let Rishis flourish. *Devatas* do penance only with some particular object in view. Their motive can be understood only after seeing the power (acquired by them). The goal of our (Gautama's and his disciples') lives will be attained by living near you and observing your penance (*vrata*). O Queen of all celestial Beings ! Everything will be accomplished for us by your penance.

On hearing these meaningful words of the Muni, Goddess Gauri was extremely pleased. She praised him thus : What other penance is necessary ? I have seen you. I have also seen this Arunadri. I have listened to its glory. How wonderful ! The Earth is superior to *Swarga*. For the effulgent linga on it grants boons even to *Devas*. Siva can be attained only by His Grace. His abode has been revealed to me. I shall adore Him at this very place and propitiate the Guru of the World. I shall attain inseparable union with Siva. I shall, with your aid, attain the status of Siva's consort.

In this manner the Goddess decided to do penance devoutly in the presence of Gautama. She said : A hut of leaves (thatched hut) is necessary. Gautama agreed. The Goddess with her slender form, lotus-like eyes, single cloth, matted tresses and the brilliance of a carbuncle, looked like the embodiment of penance. By following the various scriptural injunctions, by doing penance in various ways and by practising the various yogic postures prescribed, she clearly demonstrated to the world all the paths of *dbarma* laid down in the *Vedas* and *Sastras*.

Even after doing various forms of penance her delicate body did not feel tired. Slender as a creeper she looked like a brilliant jewel.

(To be continued)

Tat Twam Asi

-It Just Is

By Apa B. Pant¹

Most of the time most of us are just drifting, tossed around by thoughts and feelings of the past or future, by anxieties, hopes or fears. We must seek the seeker, watch the watcher, says this writer.



Apa B. Pant

IT was December 1937. Maurice Frydman, Bharatananda, whom I had met earlier in Bangalore, took me to Tiruvannamalai-Ashram. Bhagavan was sitting in a large hall and there were a couple of hundred devotees, I sat in the farthest corner. Within a few minutes I felt the calm, gracious gaze of Bhagavan 'seeing all and seeing nothing' on me. Perhaps all of them in that room felt the same. Nothing else existed but the gaze --- the Grace.

Later I demonstrated before Bhagavan my father's version of the *Surya Namaskar* exercises. He watched with obvious interest and said these were good for the knees after sitting a long time in *Padmasana* for meditation. I never used to meditate then. I know now.

Does the Grace, the *ashirwada*, of a saint ever leave you? I think Grace always is. The problem is whether you are receiving it. If your receiver is switched on and *in tune* you experience the everpresent Grace. There is only Grace!

How do you switch it on? by *Vichara* --- Self-enquiry or simple awareness. Most of the time most of us are just drifting, tossed around by thought-feelings of past or future, by anxieties, hopes, fears, hate, anger. Then the receiver is not switched on. The moment one sees how transient, ever-changing and irrelevant thought-feelings are one starts disassociating oneself from them and turns to the *Vichara*.

How does one tune in? By seeking the seeker, by watching the watcher. Subject and object become one. No division, no separateness. Only Oneness; *ekam eva -- adwiteeyam*.

Then thought and action are in harmony, spontaneous without any residue on the mind.

What if others do not wake up, do not want even to wake up or tune in? On the relative plane we have bombs, violence, greed, corruption, exploitation. No receivers switched on in ignorance they think it is they who act, who are great experts, politicians, leaders, revolutionaries!

After twenty-five years of life in the diplomatic service (Diplomat --- "Yogi") in many parts of Asia, Africa, Mediterranean, Scandinavia, England; having lived through many revolutions, having sought to meet mystics, saints, philosophers from Tibet to Egypt, from Jakarta to Rome, it appears to me that the more inwardly silent one can be the more dynamic and effective action becomes from deep down, from the very source. Your effortless, joyful, spontaneous, compassionate action when the mind is silent has a tremendous impact on your environment. It revolutionises it in the right spirit aiming at fulfilment.

Tat Twam Asi. *It just is.*

¹ Ambassador of India in Rome.

The Investigation

By M. M. Ismail¹

THE realisation of the primordial 'I-I' follows the process of investigation and negation, *neti*. "I" is not the body or the mind. It is beyond all that is changeable and transient. In daily life, we cannot help thinking and acting in terms of duality and multiplicity. A little reflection is enough to convince us that the element of 'otherness' is only apparent and that the same animating power runs through all of us. We, in our ignorance, mistake the shadow for the substance, the appearance for Reality, and endow the Pure Being with attributes on account of its temporary conjunction with the body. Turning the search light deep within, we can reach the real 'I', the still centre which is all-embracing.

Sri Ramana, reckoning with human limitations, did not advise his devotees to escape from their responsibilities into ascetic seclusion. He counselled non-interference in the affairs of others, moderation in sense enjoyment and non-attached performance of our allotted work, combined with *sadhana*.

Our ignorance blinds us to the eternal presence of God within ourselves. The end of all yoga is the discovery of and identification with the single inherent universal power. The mind has to be alert to realise what is already in us. Self-enquiry requires effort nourished by faith. Divine grace does not fail the earnest seeker who reaches the limit of his effort or is able to surrender.

¹ This is a brief summary of his talk recently given at Ramana Jayanthi meeting in Madras.

Guidelines for the Pilgrimage

By Sylvan Levey

The *gunas* or modalities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in one's make up affect one's emotions and thoughts. How to increase the *sattva* is the problem discussed in this article.

THE spiritual path offers the way to the highest goal of man: realization of the Truth. To make oneself fit for the arduous journey to the truth it is necessary to keep improving oneself on all levels at every stage of the pilgrimage. Various spiritual teachers have offered guidelines for the sincere seeker to use in evaluating his efforts in this difficult activity -- from the eight-fold path of the Buddha to the three-word self-inquiry (*Who am I?*) of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Another useful guide is the categorization of ideas, emotions and foods in terms of the three *gunas* or qualities, which in varying mixtures make up all human personalities. They are called: *tamas*, the *guna* of inertia; *rajas*, the *guna* of energy; and *sattwa*, the *guna* of harmony.

Let us start our investigation of the application of the *gunas* with the physical body. The basic principle here is the sattvic diet. The most sattvic foods are those closest to the natural state: raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, honey etc. In these, the *prana* or cosmic energy (the basic source of all nourishment) has not been destroyed by baking, cooking, chemicals or storage. The use of the various methods of preparing foods breaks down the structure of the fibres and liberates the *prana*. Storage is almost as harmful to the life force as is processing by heat and chemical treatment, for every food contains enzymes which act to break down its structure as soon as the product is plucked from the ground, from the tree, or from the stem on which it grows. Thus, processing is tamasic in effect.

Tamasic foods are conducive to dullness and lifelessness. These include the "empty" foods which contain no *prana*: candies, pastries, carbonated drinks, ice cream, etc. It is noteworthy that all these foods cater to debased tastes which satisfy the childish urge for self-indulgence -- an obstacle to spiritual growth. Not only is the life-force destroyed by the manufacturing of these products, but toxic elements are added: preservatives, artificial flavourings, and synthetic colouring agents -- not to mention white sugar and flour, among the deadliest products of the food-processing industry.

Rajasic foods make for restlessness and passion. Flesh foods are the worst offenders here. Within the vegetarian diet there are several classes of rajasic foods: spices, foods with a very bitter or very sour taste, and stimulating drinks.

It is relatively easy to determine what constitutes a sattvic programme for the physical body.

The most sattvic emotions are love, courage, a desire to serve, humility and compassionate detachment. The rajasic emotions are the desires : greed and self-indulgence of all sorts -- whether in the areas of sex, eating or physical comfort.

The rajasic emotions usually arise from feelings of deprivation. They are frequently expressed in the eating of tasty but unsattvic food. These drives are often so subtle that one may not be aware of them as such. Here the spiritual aspirant must beware of two opposite dangers : self-indulgence on the one hand and making a fetish of the body (or asceticism) on the other. Self-indulgence seems to be the greatest danger in present-day society, and it most often leads to the breaking of the natural law in eating habits and the breaking of spiritual law in relationships with other people.

The tamasic emotions are those which lead to feelings of despondency, dependency, intolerance, despair, hostility, fear, depression, etc. -- a general attitude of saying "no" to the forces of growth and life.

How does one strengthen his sattvic emotions? Here the great need is courage, the courage to face oneself honestly at every moment of the day. When one is completely honest about the short-comings of his emotional patterns he has taken the first step on the way to eliminating. For the power of truth is so great that it can dissolve any negative force. But in this context the truth can only be brought to bear by complete consciousness of one's feelings and behaviour. For the concentrated attention which constitutes consciousness is the great tool of truth in the cleansing process. To know God, one must know oneself.

In orthodox western psychiatry, this process of self-analysis uses as the tool for self-study the instrument most responsible for creating the emotional distortions in the first place -- the mind. This amounts to setting in motion an endlessly revolving cycle in which the mind chases itself.

The only tool which is both illuminating and therapeutic is the divine element in man. The power of it is such that no distortion, error

or sickness can survive its steady application. It acts as an objective witness, without emotional reaction to what it observes.

Only a faculty which is capable of such detachment can be healing. This property is certainly not possessed by the mind, which is intimately involved with every personality trait. *Sadhana* (spiritual striving, meditation) is a therapeutic panacea for all ills.

LIFE IS A BUBBLE

The Buddha's Sermons

One should think of this world as a bubble or as a mirage. If a man thinks this way, he is free from death.

Come and see this personal world, which is the body. It is decorated to look beautiful like a king's chariot. The fool thinks a great deal of it and he is disillusioned, but the wise has no attachment for it.

A man who is free from heedlessness and is heedless no more, purifies himself and shines in this world like the moon which is freed from a cloud.

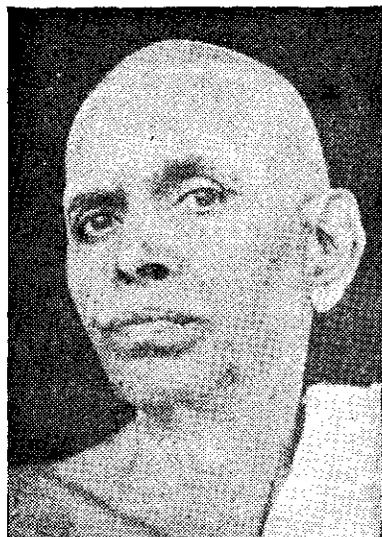
A man whose past evil deeds are covered by good deeds, shines in this world like the moon which is freed from a cloud.

This world is wrapped up in darkness. Few can see and escape. Few can go to heaven as birds escape from a net.

As swans can fly easily through the air, as those who persevere can perform wonders, a wise man can easily conquer death. If a man tells lies there is no evil deed that he cannot do.

Those who crave can never be born in a better place. Fools never praise charity. The wise man encourages charity and gets happiness always.

Those who realise the truth are the happiest of all beings.



Bhrigu Nadi
Version
of
SRI BHAGAVAN'S
HOROSCOPE

By K. K. Nambiar

IN April 1950, a few days before Sri Bhagavan attained Mahasamadhi, I mentioned that I had read in the Brighu Nadi version of Bhagavan's Horoscope that about the seventy-first year Bhagavan would fall seriously ill and unless he is cured by yoga, the future readings would not come to happen. It was therefore our prayer that he would cure himself with his spiritual power so that we might have him in our midst to guide us for many more years. Bhagavan simply laughed at this and said that he remembered having read some such thing years ago and would like to see it again. As I did not have the Nadi reading with me at the time, I could not take it to him and am sorry to say I forgot to get it and show him again as jocularly mentioned by him. The matter could not be pursued further as we got more and more deeply concerned with the aggravation of Bhagavan's illness ending with the Mahanirvana on the 14th of April 1950.

The passages which I had referred to are extracted below :--

"During his 67th, 68th and 69th years, this yogi of yogis, this knower of Brahman whose mind is unfettered may have illness which could be cured by the practice of yoga."

I must add that yoga, in this context, was not understood to mean practice of any yogic exercises, but spiritual powers which saints and sages could use for healing illnesses if they so chose.

I am not quoting the Nadi reading *in extenso* as there is an inhibition in a certain part of the text itself that "my words should be kept secret and should not be given to the bad, roguish and sinful people ; they should be divulged only to the calm, the devoted, the pure and the firm. In the Kali age, the sinful and wicked people will decry my words and call them false, imagining themselves to be wise."

SADHANA:

EFFORT OR GRACE?

By Dr. K. A. Shah

A GURU well-established in yoga guides many aspirants in their *sadhana*. His method consists chiefly of retreat, silence, meditation or *japa*. Having seen the method in practice I wrote to him once: "It seems to me that you look upon *sadhana* as something to be practised with girded loins and set teeth; that it is a path so long that unless we keep on walking we never reach the goal. I do not like this simile. *Sadhana* is a living process -- it is a growth. Just as a bud blossoms into a flower the *jiva* grows into Siva. When we think of *sadhana* as a path to traverse we are apt to conclude that it is something to be achieved by our *effort*; that it is a matter of *purusbartha* (personal effort). But by what effort of its own does the bud open out as a flower? All that it has to do is to turn towards light. Against this it can be argued that the *sadbaka* has to make an effort and turn Godward. In short one cannot turn even Godward without His Grace."

To this the Guru replied: "Let me tell you that you do not know even the A B C of *sadhana*. Your doubts will be dispelled if you read the *Gita*. *Sadhana* has to be practised every moment of one's life and that is why saints have proclaimed that one has to stake one's life in *sadhana*. Remember the Patanjali aphorism 'It stands on firm ground when practised without intermission and with perfect devotion.' It is impossible to awake to the inner Self unless *sadhana* is done in

Some lay emphasis on individual effort, others on Grace. Scriptures sometimes support one view, sometimes the other. The parts played by effort and grace, respectively, are considered in this article.

the mind and by the mind every moment of one's life. There is no place for idleness or sloth or ease in *sadhana*."

My friend has mentioned the *Gita*. When I think of the *Gita* the first verse that comes to my mind is *sarva dharman parityajya*, etc. Says the Lord: "Abandoning all duties come to me alone for shelter. Be not grieved for I shall release you from all evil." It is Sri Krishna who says: "I shall release." The release does not come by the effort of Arjuna (*sadbaka*) but by the grace of God (or Guru). It can be argued that Arjuna has, however, to surrender himself and that is his effort. But by what effort of his own had Arjuna come into contact with Krishna? When Krishna reveals his primal universal form to Arjuna he says: "Neither by the Vedas nor sacrifices nor by study nor by gifts nor by ceremonial rites nor by severe austerities can I with this form be seen in the world of men. By my Grace, through my divine power, O Arjuna, was shown to thee this supreme form."

In his treatise on *Bhakti* Narada says that loving devotion to God can be had primarily through the grace of saints or of God and enjoins on all, therefore, to seek the company of saints. But saints are not easy to find! And surely one will have to go out in search of them. May be. But according to Narada you meet them only through His Grace. Sri Sankara writes in his *Viveka Chudamani* that three things -- human life, desire for

Liberation and the company of saints -- are difficult to get and subject to God's grace.

Swami Ramdas says : " Guru Arjun Singh has pronounced that man comes by the highest beatitude of life, viz., spiritual illumination only through the grace of saints. He held that no *sadbana* or *tapasya* (austerities), even of the most severe type, could entitle the *sadbaka* to the attainment of this supreme state. The saint chooses to throw the light of his grace on any man who comes in touch with him and that instant the fortunate man attains *moksha* (Liberation). There is no such condition as fitness or otherwise of the aspirant to receive or not to receive the saint's grace. He rightly contends that if divine grace depended upon the condition of the aspirant it cannot be all-powerful. Since it is all-powerful no qualification of any kind for an aspirant is necessary for the reception of the divine grace. He concluded that the absolute power of grace rests entirely with the saint. Whomsoever he chooses, he elevates, blesses and liberates. This is the incontrovertible law of Grace." Narada, Arjuna Singh and Swami Ramdas are all exponents of *bhakti*.

But now let us hear Akhaji, the poet-saint of Gujarat, who is a *jnani par excellence*. Here is a free translation of his song :

"I am now immersed in Bliss,
For I have met my Beloved,
Through no effort of mine, nor through
any rites.
I left not home, nor changed my garb
Nor renounced the world ;
The sleeper has awakened, and ended
is the dream."

The word *sabaja* is used in the original and it means easily, effortlessly, naturally. This is important. *Sadbana* is growth, evolution. From one point of view life is nothing but the Yoga of nature. Every human soul gradually evolves. We have only to wake up from the dream as Akhaji puts it. Some wake early, others late. Some wake up when their sleep naturally ends or when another rouses them. This rousing by another is Grace.

But scriptures are many and they can be quoted in support of individual effort as I

have quoted them to support the doctrine of Grace. Even Swami Ramdas and Sri Aurobindo can also be so quoted. For example, says Sri Aurobindo : " . . . Divine Grace is essential for success in the *Sadbana* ; but it is the practice that prepares the descent of the Grace."

The desire to know God is in itself an act of Grace. This grace will bring a man in contact with his Guru. And once the Guru is found it is only a matter of time. One often feels that no growth is taking place in spite of the Guru's grace and one is overcome by disappointment and despair. But if one remembers that we have been evolving through many lives one has no cause to be disheartened if ten or twenty years of this one life appear to be barren and growth seems to be at a standstill. "If a piece of charcoal is put into fire it becomes hot and begins to burn no matter how long that piece was cold and out of fire."

Those who have realized God through the grace of the Guru attach great importance to *satsang* (company of wise men) and grace and minimise the necessity of ascetic practices and mental exercises like meditation. Those who have themselves passed through a period of rigorous *sadbana* always insist on strenuous effort and emphasise the difficulties that lie ahead.

It is difficult to be dogmatic on a subject like this. A Christian mystic says :

There are two paths that lead to
liberation,

Individual effort and the grace of God,

The first requires efforts, the second faith, *Sadbana*, in the first, proceeds with the help of the mind and the senses. In the second it proceeds with the help of Grace which descends as a result of faith. The teachings of saints, however, do appear to advocate individual effort. Stanzas could also be quoted from the Gita to this effect. Not only in the sixth discourse, wherein the process of meditation is described, but even in other places we find words supporting individual effort. In the seventh chapter the Lord says : "Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection and of those who strive and suc-

ceed scarcely one knows Me in truth." There are verses in the eighth chapter too which seem to lay stress on effort. Again, in the eighteenth chapter occur these words: "Endowed with a pure understanding, firmly restraining oneself, turning away from sound and other objects of sense and casting aside attraction and aversion, dwelling in solitude, eating but little, controlling body, mind and speech, and ever engaged in meditation and concentration and taking refuge in dispassion, and casting aside self-sense, force, arrogance, desire, anger, possession, egoless and tranquil in mind, he becomes worthy of becoming one with Brahman." These stanzas do not leave any doubt about the necessity of individual effort.

The Upanishads can also be quoted in support of individual effort. Says the *Mundaka* :

"The *Pranava* is the bow ; the arrow is the Self ;

Brahman is said to be the mark,

With heedfulness is it to be penetrated ;

One should become one with It as the arrow in the mark."

The question arises what is the potency of individual effort? I am reminded of the famous lines of Saint Surdas: "So long as the elephant relied on his own power his effort was in vain. Only when he realized his utter helplessness and called upon God did He come in an instant." A man can achieve some concentration by his effort, can control the mind to some extent and conquer his unruly passions. But all this is limited and there lurk many hidden enemies, weaknesses and passions which upset him when he least fears them. But when God's Grace or the Guru's Grace descends the whole life is transformed -- the physical, vital and mental impurities washed away. Grace is like a light dispelling all darkness.

Let us look at this problem from another point of view. What are the pitfalls which beset the path of a *sadbaka* who relies on his individual effort and of the *sadbaka* who solely depends on Grace? As I understand this problem the great danger to the former is egoism and to the latter idleness, or a false sense of security. When an aspirant is fol-

lowing a rigid and self-disciplined path he may have spiritual experiences which tempt him to believe that his achievement is great and this is likely to inflate his ego. That the ego-sense is so strengthened is shown beautifully by the author of the *Mahabharata* in the 'Kaushikakhyana' (story of Kaushika). On the other hand one whose progress has stopped on account of sloth can be roused by his Guru or a saint.

Saint Sagar has compared the Guru to a teacher. It is also customary to compare the Guru to a physician. But the power of a teacher is limited -- almost insignificant; and the physician can only prescribe a remedy. Beyond that the physician can do nothing. The Guru, on the other hand, is omnipotent because God works through him. The influence of the Guru works like deep X-rays -- what is technically called 'deep therapy'; the patient neither sees nor feels the rays, but tumours like cancer soon melt away. The disciple is, in like manner, transformed in due time by the Guru's Grace. If there is any individual effort in the matter it is the Guru's and not the disciple's. When a river is in spate travellers are taken across by professional swimmers with the help of a copper vessel. We have only to hold on to the vessel and the effort needed is made by the professional swimmer. *Sadguru* (the true Guru) also takes us across the river of *samsara* in the same manner. It might be argued that the traveller has at least to keep a tight grip on the vessel and that this is his effort.

Individual effort in *sadbana* should have been necessary if God were only just. But God is all mercy and all love. How merciful God is, is gracefully described by Sankaracharya. Says he: "O Goddess! If a devotee cries to Thee, saying 'Mother, I beseech Thy Grace', you do not allow him to finish the sentence, but bestowest salvation upon him as soon as he utters the word 'Mother'." So long as an aspirant relies on his own strength God permits him to struggle but does not interfere. God's Grace and aid to a *sadbaka* is swift when the latter realizes his utter helplessness and cries to Him for help.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI

OR THE CREST JEWEL OF WISDOM

Bhagavan once selected ten important stanzas from the famous work on Advaita philosophy known as the *Vivekachudamani* or the Crest Jewel of Wisdom by Sri Sankaracharya. The following is a free rendering of these stanzas. The numbers in brackets indicate the numbers of the stanzas in the original.

1. The best discipline for attaining Liberation is *Bhakti* which has been defined as the constant recollection of one's real nature. (31)
2. The Supreme (Being or Self) is constant and unbroken awareness. It is unique and cannot be described either as being or non-being (since it transcends all concepts). It is the witness of our faculty of understanding (*buddhi*), etc. It is what is implied when we speak of 'I'. It is constant and perfect bliss and exists within ourselves. (351)
3. The Supreme Self is distinct from *Prakriti* (primal world stuff) as well as its modifications. It is the pure awareness which makes all ideas of being and non-being possible. It clearly manifests itself in the form of 'I'-'I' during waking and other states (i.e. dream and deep sleep). It is the witness of our faculty of understanding (*buddhi*). (135)

4. The Self clearly manifests itself in the states of waking, dream and deep sleep as a continuous single inner awareness in the form of 'I', 'I'. It cognizes the ego, the intellect, etc., in all their various forms and changes. It is constant awareness and bliss. Realize this within your Heart. (217)
5. Realize your own Self directly as 'I am this' with the help of a controlled mind and clear intellect and, crossing over the boundless sea of *samsara* whose waves are births and deaths, abide as Brahman, the goal of your life attained. (136)
6. This self-luminous (Being), the witness of all, shines constantly in our intellect (*vijnanamaya kosa*). It is not non-being. Make it your goal and realize it as your own Self by thinking of it incessantly. (380)
7. It is very difficult to understand the nature of the Supreme Being. It cannot be conceived by the mind like sense objects. It can be known only by wise souls (*Aryas*) whose understanding is clear. They realize it in states of *Samadhi* when there are practically no mental concepts. (360)
8. When, in this manner, through constant practice, the mind becomes perfect and is merged in Brahman *Samadhi* ceases to be *savikalpa* (i.e., becomes *nirvikalpa* or entirely free from thoughts). In that state one experiences the pure bliss of the non-dual (Brahman). (362)
9. By practising this kind of *Samadhi* all one's knot-like desires come to an end and all one's actions leave no residue. One spontaneously knows oneself as existing everywhere. (363)
10. The Supreme Brahman, the sole Reality, cannot be described either as being or non-being. It exists in the cavern of the Heart (i.e., it can be realized within ourselves). One who inheres in It, my dear, will not be born again. (266)

Karmic Responsibility

By Cornelia Bagarotti

EXACTLY as an octopus throws off a cloud of black ink into the sea obscuring and fouling the waters around it, so man, by his hostile and fear-filled or depressed thoughts and actions, poisons and fouls the world around him. It is this disharmony he has created which he must transmute into harmony through spiritual striving.

Through such striving or *sadhana*, man tries to transcend his individual personality and reunite in Love with All Life. When that moment comes love towards all and awareness of the unity of all create serenity and peace, which are his constant state. For as Christ said in the *Gospel of St. John*, Ch. 14 v. 20 : "In that day you will know that I am with my Father and you are with me and I am with you".

Then what was once in past lives a selfish, separated, destructive individual unaware of his divine origin becomes a being who has reunited with his Source.

If one truly understands and believes that all life is One, it is not difficult to understand why the presence of illumined souls does make a difference on earth. Their very being heals, restores harmony, and helps man to regain his primordial state, pouring as it were a counter-acting balm into the atmosphere of the earth.

That is why illumined teachers even in retreat or in silence have a far-reaching effect on humanity, like a ray of light dispelling darkness. Such beings are not confined by the body and so are able to reach and guide us beyond the grave.

If the octopus creates darkness about him the illumined soul creates light — a light which restores Unity and conveys the presence of God.

**WHY
WE
COME
TO THEE¹**

(To Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi)



By Dilip Kumar Roy

Can we, Sage, ever give a name
To the Self that in our depths we want?
Can we, Fate's puppets, own to shame
Because we woo the ignorant?

Not knowing of life's goal supreme
We cherish Maya's fool displays,
With tongue deny our heart-lit gleam!
When have men worshipped wisdom's face?

In such an atheist haze didst thou
Come, sire, to heal us with thy Light
Inviolate which is thy plough
Wherewith thy Grace would cleave our Night

Of make-believes and vanities
And sow the seeds of summit-sight!
We shake our heads, yet bend our knees
To thee and, awed by thy lone height,

We sing: "Truth wins to victory
Through aspiration's hopeless climb;
The world's din melts in soul's symphony
Through disciplines which seldom rhyme

With Reason's barren yes and no
Of weakling safety's whisperings;
Only strong Faith can take in tow
The storm-tossed mind's imaginings."

We, life's dupes, tremble when comes thy
Unfaltering Voice to tell us this:
That the ego achieves His harmony
When it leaves cupidity for bliss.

For His golden bliss we cry when dark
Follies forge our shackles and bars
And then our gloom implores thy Spark
That rends the clouds, unveiling stars.

¹ Written on 31-10-1945 in Sri Ramanasramam.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WHEEL OF DEATH: By Phillip Kapleau.
Pub.: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.
Pp. 104. Price: £2.50.

This book consists of a collection of sayings of Masters and of philosophers from Zen, Buddhist and other sources on the subject of death and rebirth. The problem of death is of intrinsic general interest and has been baffling mankind from time immemorial. These selections help to allay the fear of death and to understand the process of incessant renewal and continuity to which nature bears witness.

Mr. Kapleau's own article among the contributions gives modified instructions to the dying and to those guiding the mind of the dying. All major traditions contain rites handed down to posterity by sages. They are in the nature of safeguarding *mantras* and have a subtle, intangible power greater than the meaning of the words which should be strictly adhered to. Competent guides are employed for the performance of these rites as prescribed with emphasis on correct pronunciation and intonation if chanting takes place. The words of *mantras* are never changed or modified in any way or their efficacy will suffer. If left as originally revealed they will be efficacious even if the meaning is too esoteric though it seldom is. In Hinduism a priest or competent guide whispers the *karna mantra* into the ear of the dying man, their heads under a shawl, so that others should not hear it as hearing it may bring about their death within three days.

Among other useful expedients Mr. Kapleau advises also a dying man to take the ten moral precepts:

- 'I resolve not to kill but cherish life.
- I resolve not to take what is not given.
- I resolve not to engage in improper sexuality etc. etc.'

Upholding these precepts while engaged in spiritual practices may eventually help to enlightenment, as Master Dogen asserts, but to ask a dying man to make such resolutions seems incongruous to say the least. Since the last thought of a dying man is of utmost importance would not the thought of God be enough? Apart from rites lay people or relatives could simply in ordinary parlance try to turn the mind of the dying to God, the Self, the one Life in all beings, remind him that the Name of God would be like a raft to cling to for safety through all the hazards of transition. 'Death pertains only to the body. . . . The life-current has passed through innumerable incarnations, births and deaths, pleasures and pains etc. just as the water-current in a river flows over rocks and pits and sands, elevations and depressions on its way, but still the current is unaffected', is a reminder from Ramana Maharshi. Believer or unbeliever in mortal danger or on the point of death the mind becomes one-pointed and either spontaneously turns to God with form or all-pervading depending on practice or can be reminded to do so. In any case the last thought of a dying man will be the outcome of his life.

The accounts of the way masters died are inspiring and sometimes quite amusing. Master Hakuin's reply to a question about the after-death state is very much to the point. 'Why ask me?' 'Because you are a Zen master.' 'Yes' said Hakuin, 'but not a dead one.'

L. O.

PSYCHOTHERAPY EAST AND WEST: By Alan W. Watts. Pub.: Pantheon Books Inc., 1961, New York. Pp. 160. Price: \$0.60.

The author's expressed purpose in this work is to describe the most fruitful way in which the Eastern and Western psychotherapies can help each other. This compact volume will be of particular interest for the student of psychotherapy.

The work deals directly with the question of man's emancipation from bondage, emphasising the psychological interpretation of *Samsara*.

The essence of the vicious cycle inflicted by social institutions, according to this essay, is the "double bind". This is defined as the predicament of all members of the social game who must play as if they are autonomous entities, but they are not to know that they are just playing *as if*.

Perhaps the most controversial proposition put forth by Mr. Watts is whether Liberation is from the physical world, or whether social institutions are in themselves the sum total of the *maya* from which the Buddha and other great teachers have intended to deliver us. Brought into question here also is the validity of the entire system of oriental cosmology. It is perhaps easy enough to agree that social institutions are *maya*, but to limit *maya* to social institutions is asking a great deal more, even if we define the "skin-encapsulated ego" as a social institution. It seems that there is at least a need to define more explicitly and precisely what are intended by the terms *maya*, *social institutions*, etc., and to explain more fully in what manner they are equated and the way oriental cosmology is thus rendered erroneous.

Alan Watt's psychological viewpoint tends to be rather overstressed. He owes it to his reading audience to deal more thoroughly and analytically with the interpretations which form the basis of his propositions, and which are in themselves highly intriguing and valuable subject matters of not merely academic interest. In entering into the realm proper to metaphysics, is it not essential that one support one's views in metaphysical terms? Or else is the author questioning the validity of philosophy and metaphysics outside psychology? Questions such as these arise. This is not in any way to suggest however, that there is not a great deal of fresh material of considerable worth here, for Mr. Watts writes with life and insight. He genuinely succeeds in creating a provocative essay.

ENTERING THE PATH OF ENLIGHTENMENT :

Trans. by Marion L. Matics. Pub. : George Allen & Unwin, London. Price : £4.50.

Entering the Path of Enlightenment is the first complete translation of the *Bodhicharyavatara*, the important Buddhist work by the eighth century Sanskrit poet Santideva. This and Santideva's other major work, the *Siksha Samuchaya* have been described by Prof. T. R. V. Murti as "the two most popular works in the entire Mahayana literature" which "well deserve their popularity." The *Bodhicharyavatara* has often been compared with the

Dhammapada and with the *Imitation of Christ*. Santideva's preoccupation is with spiritual discipline and the cultivation of the *bodhichitta* (thought of enlightenment). His two works are "our chief sources of the Madhyamika path of spiritual realization."

It will be very welcome to most Western Buddhists to find such a clear and astute presentation of this inspiring work. The Madhyamika can now be viewed through a prism other than the abstruse dialectic of Nagarjuna — the prism of *bhakti*. This is perhaps the essence of Santideva's originality — the ability to unite the abstruse metaphysical with a religious devotionalism which is pervaded by a high order of spiritual serenity and detachment and to likewise be able to apply the "*Prajna Paramita* vision to the moral problems of man's dilemma." (Matics, p. 28)

To readers who find themselves somewhat perplexed in general regarding the subject of the Mahayanist philosophy Professor Matics addresses some very clarifying material in her introduction. Santideva is important as a literary artist and "his special contribution to Mahayana thought is his summation of the concepts of the Bodhisattva." He is "the personification of the Thought of Enlightenment (*bodhichitta*) and, as such, he is the last remnant of individualization before enlightenment is achieved." (p. 29)

The book is divided into three parts: the first and largest is an introduction and guide, the second is the translation, and the third, the appendices. The translation is divided into ten chapters beginning with Praising the Thought of Enlightenment and ending with Consummation. All notes and references together with abbreviations and bibliography and a glossary of Sanskrit terms are placed in the end section and so in no way interfere with the reading of these immaculate stanzas. It should further be mentioned that it is rarely *necessary* to consult the notes although they do form quite a valuable appendix.

Of central importance are the *Dhyana* and *Prajna Paramitas*. However, as the translator so well understands, it is important to look at the work as a whole, and so to see how the liberating vision of *sunyata* (voidness) upon which the entire *Prajna Paramita* converges is related to the other *Paramitas*, and the other aspects of the *Bodhisattva's* daily living. In short, the guide in every way complements and elucidates the Text, and they will together undoubtedly form a uniquely valuable treatise for the Western *sadhaka*. It is to us all that Santideva recommends that "You who are accustomed

to dwelling abroad in the marketplaces of destiny seize firmly that highly priced jewel, the Thought of Enlightenment, so well attested by those of immeasurable thought, the unique leaders of the world's caravan." (L. 11)

THE TAO TE CHING : By Ch'u Ta-Kao. Pub. : George Allen & Unwin, London. Pp. 95. Price : £0.75.

George Allen and Unwin have now published Ch'u Ta-Kao's important translation of the *Tao Te Ching* in paperback. This is not a new translation, nor is it the only translation of this masterpiece of Chinese Wisdom into English by a Chinese, considering the very poetic rendering made for Penguin by Mr. D. C. Lau in 1963. However, these considerations aside, Ch'u Ta-Kao's translation does remain one of the most highly appraised and favoured by many perhaps because although it may be poetically rivalled by several other renderings, it seems that Ch'u Ta-Kao is nearest to the essential as well as the technical accuracy of the content (generally speaking). This does not purport to refer to the technical ability of translating archaic Chinese of course, but rather it is the profoundly enigmatic content which proves to be the stumbling block — Lao Tzu's *nemo me impune lacesset*. To this must be added the general disarray of the original text which has been corrupted through the course of centuries and the uncertainty of Chinese grammar.

The new format of the book will make it more accessible to readers in general. Nonetheless one hopes that the hardcover editions will continue to be made available. This is not to denounce the appearance of classics in paperback in general. However for those of us who see Lao Tzu as being a lifetime companion we would welcome the prerogative of enjoying his words (or rather, their approximation) properly bound. No one has ever complained about the bulk of the *Tao Te Ching*!

ALAN T. NICHOLS

THE CONCEPT OF THE VYAVAHARIKA IN ADVAITA VEDANTA : By Dr. T. P. Ramachandran. Pub. : The Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras-5. Pp. 192 + ix. Price not quoted.

This book is a slightly enlarged version of the doctoral thesis presented by the author in 1962. Besides a Foreword by the general editor of the series, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan and a Preface by the author, the book consists of eight chapters. Certain preliminary considerations are dealt with in

the first chapter. The significance of the *Vyavaharika* is clearly explained in the next chapter. The training, intellectual, ethical, religious and aesthetic, that one has to undergo to attain the highest end of human life, namely, *Moksha*, and for which the empirical world provides ample opportunities, is elaborately set forth in the four chapters which follow. The place of reason in Advaita Vedanta is discussed in the last chapter but one. The author's conclusion in regard to the attitude that we should adopt towards the *Vyavaharika* reality is stated in the final chapter.

There are several sub-sections under each chapter. The non-real as the gateway to the real, the advaitic scheme of discipline, the preliminary stage, the final stage, the transition from the preliminary to the final stage and the outline of the chapters which follow are the six subdivisions under chapter two. The chapter on religion has four subdivisions dealing with bhakti, the place of God in Advaita and with aesthetics.

On the whole we have a very exhaustive treatment of the all-round discipline that culminates in *Moksha*. The author very truly observes (p. 188): "There is no short-cut to the plenary experience. The only way to it is the long, hard way of all-round preparation, intellectual, moral and emotional."

The book effectively dispels the wrong notion that generally prevails that as the world based on distinctions is unreal according to Advaita Vedanta, there is no place in it for ethics or religion. Far from dismissing the empirical world as useless, the *advaitin* attaches the greatest importance to it as it provides the opportunities for the training without which one cannot hope to attain salvation. Since the sphere of the *vyavaharika* is "the Vale of soul-making", it cannot be lightly set aside. This truth is well emphasised by the author. Summing up the proper attitude that we should adopt towards the work-a-day world, the author very rightly remarks: "As the *vyavaharika* is not real we ought not to be unduly attached to it; at the same time, as it is not unreal we ought not to be indifferent to it. The art of life consists in being interested in it to the extent that we who are in it have necessarily to utilize it to get released from it."

We have in the book a closely reasoned exposition of almost every important tenet of Advaita Vedanta. *Sruti* is called in only to place the coping stone on the edifice.

We heartily recommend the book to all lovers of Advaita Vedanta. Its publication brings great credit to the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy attached to the Madras University.

THE VEDANTA PANCADASI OF BHARATI TIRTHA VIDYARANYA : AN INTERPRETATIVE EXPOSITION : By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan. Pub. : The Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras-5. Pp. 242 + xxviii. Price : Rs. 15.

The publication of this book meets a long-felt need. The *Vedanta Pancadasi* occupies a very important place in the Advaitic literature of the post-Sankara period. It gives a very lucid and authoritative exposition of the central tenets of Advaita Vedanta. Several abstruse points are very clearly explained. Familiar illustrations taken from common life drive the points home to the minds of readers.

The attributeless Brahman, the sole and only reality, characterised as *sat, chit* and *ananda*, that, it cannot even be spoken of as One or as Unity and other subsidiary topics are dealt with in fifteen chapters, each one being called a *Prakarana*. Hence the work is called *Vedanta Pancadasi Prakarana*.

Though mainly expository, the work is also argumentative. Rival theories like those of Buddhism, Vaiseshika and Mimamsa are examined from the purely rational standpoint and their deficiencies clearly pointed out.

As regards the authorship of the book, there is some doubt. Dr. Mahadevan refers to three views : (i) That the work was written by Vidyaranya (known as Madhavacharya in his *purvasrama*); (ii) That Vidyaranya and Bharati Tirtha were the joint authors; and (iii) That the work is to be attributed to Bharati Tirtha.

There is sufficient evidence to show that Madhavacharya, brother of Sayana, remained a house-holder throughout his life and never assumed orders. There is no question, therefore, of identifying him with Vidyaranya.

Bharati Tirtha and Vidyaranya were brothers in their *purvasrama*. Both hailed from Ekasilanagaram (now known as Warangal). Bharati Tirtha, though the younger of the two, was the first to receive initiation at the hands of Vidyasankara Tirtha, the tenth in the line of Pontiffs at Sringeri. Vidyaranya received initiation three years later. Bharati Tirtha was the eleventh Pontiff at Sringeri and Vidyaranya the twelfth. There is no question therefore of the two personages being the same. Dr. Mahadevan combines the two names with a hyphen in the middle and this is somewhat misleading. He adds, no doubt, 'that his suggestion is not that Vidyaranya formed part of Bharati Tirtha's *sannyasa* name, but only that it is an appellation meaning forest of learning, sometimes applied to him.' If this is all that is

Guidance to Visitors

Devotees and spiritual seekers who wish to stay at SRI RAMANASRAMAM should write to the President of the Asramam in advance, ascertain whether accommodation is available and for how long, and obtain his permission. Otherwise they are likely to be disappointed. Ordinarily visitors are permitted to stay for three days. An exception is made sometimes in the case of those who come from distant parts of India or from abroad for the purpose of carrying on their spiritual practices in the sacred precincts.

This Asramam is not a residential institution. It offers the visiting devotees the best it can by way of food and accommodation but it has its strict limitations.

There is now no spiritual head of the Asramam in human form. The Maharshi assured us that His guidance will continue. The Presence of the Maharshi is so powerful and pervading that it would be redundancy to have some person here as a guru. Instructions for meditation are given in His writings and sayings; spiritual support comes direct from Him; all that is needed is practice.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
Sri Ramanasramam,
April 1, 1973. President,
Board of Trustees.

meant, the two names need not be coupled with a hyphen between them. The more probable explanation for this coupling is that the *Vedanta Pancadasi* is a joint work of the two *sannyasins*.

After the discussion relating to the authorship of the work, Dr. Mahadevan gives a very succinct and lucid account of the main teaching. It is bound to prove a very useful introduction to students.

This is not a literal translation of the work but, as the author rightly calls it, an 'interpretative exposition'. Its publication is a distinct service to the general public whose knowledge of Sanskrit is not equal to reading the work in the original.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

HANDBOOK OF REASON : By Dagobrt D. Runes. (Price : \$ 6)

PHILOSOPHY FOR THE NEW AGE : By A. F. Markun (Price : \$ 7.50)

Both published by the Philosophical Library, New York.

Dr. Runes' book is an apt commentary on the present day world with its split conscience, when

nothing matters to most people but their own carefully guarded limits of opportunism. It is a form of blindness to the tragically dominant element in human society, current throughout the world's history, whether it be the educated Roman patrician enjoying a circus of wild beasts devouring captives of another race, or the rival super Powers supplying deadly booby traps and long distance missiles to the Middle Eastern or Asiatic nations. Speaking of the nice, educated men of today who are blind to the abominable misery around, he asks :

"Where were they, the gentle members of society, those in uniforms, in black cloth, in stylish dress, those on horses and those in carriages — where were they when nine-tenths of the population of Europe, Asia and the Americas lived in squalor and anguish? Where was their conscience? It was split near the edge and that little was dedicated not to man at large, but to their own social equals and interests."

This same note of bitterness and heartache is running all through the pages which finds its summation in the last sentence of the book :

"I wish I could return a thousand years hence and find out if the ancient Hebrew was right — that there will always be with us the stench of Satan, that nothing new can come to this world."

Hailed by Einstein and Schweitzer as their companion on the same path to bring to mankind a deeply ethical and spiritual consciousness, Dr. Runes gives bold expression of his views on a wide range of subjects ranging from Abstract Art to Zionism, alphabetically arranged. Many are his deft definitions, at once pithy and poignant, as his heart sighs to every cry of pain in any part of the world. (p. 160)

* * *

Alan Fletcher Markun seems to go a step further than Martin Luther in his attacks against ancient trends of thought, for while the latter's antagonism with the church was primarily over dogma and ritual, Markun's argument has been with these and with morals and ethics as well. His recent book is a sequel to *The New Revolution* published in 1963, which was acclaimed as an effective catalyst for changing the mind of man. It is a corrective to the Nietzschean concept of the Superman, and in this book the author stresses that the superman must be above the nature that we know upon this earth, by manifesting qualities that have been regarded as 'god-like'.

"The ways of the shark are in keeping with the eyes of nature on this earth; the ways of the Caesars were in keeping with the ways of nature, as were the ways of Attila, Tamerlane and Genghis Khan. But the ways of Jesus, of Buddha, of Gandhi, Socrates, Plato, Confucius — these were ways superior to the ways of nature — they transcended the nature of this earth, transcended life as we know it, transcended man."

Such is the basis of the philosophy for the new age, to implement which a great house-cleaning is needed. The author sees the beginnings of such a renovation in the Americans burning their draft cards, citizens becoming interested in equal rights for all, the churches denouncing war, members of congress speaking out against the armaments race, war veterans throwing away their medals, etc., etc.

It is gratifying to note that this new philosophy in the West is inclining toward belief in the theory of Reincarnation and Karma; for as Markun emphasises: "It is not only probably the most logical theory of life, but there is some very substantial evidence in its favour, a factor that most other theories lack."

THE FREE MIND: By Robert Powell. Pub.: The Julian Press, Inc., New York. Price: \$ 6.

Robert Powell, both in his earlier work *Zen and Reality* and in this latest one, advocates like J. Krishnamurti a total revolution, whereby man frees himself completely from the structure of society, which he himself has created psychologically "through ambition, greed, envy and brutality". This is a total revolution of the psyche itself, a revolution of the mind. To both, the scientist's approach to Reality is symptomatic of the world's ills, namely, the fragmented way in which man functions in his everyday life. The present human predicament, according to the author, can best be illustrated by the one word "fragmentation". This is to be noted in all levels of existence, for

"inwardly, it manifests itself with the mind of man being in a continuous state of conflict — different desires pulling him in different directions — and outwardly, in practically every sphere of activity." (p. 125)

After examining this subject in seventeen chapters, the author comes to the following conclusion :

"In the light of our discoveries the words of Ramana Maharshi acquire a new significance when he stated: 'All the actions that the body is to perform are already decided upon at the time it comes into existence; the only freedom you have is whether or not to identify yourself with the body.'"

In the course of his investigation into the nature of Reality, Powell analyses the significance of the Maharshi's persistent pursuit of the inquiry — "Who am I?" He points out that it is not because there is such a "Who" but that in the very search one shall discover its unreality, which alone can annihilate the prevailing ego-sense.

The author explains clearly the complicated and subtle processes by which thought weaves out its patterns and holds together the illusory parts "like

loose sand by a clenched fist", quoting Asvaghosha's words. His arguments remind the student of Nagarjuna (whom the author also quotes), whose vigorous sifting of the contents of experience are not to be found in either the subjectivists or realists of today.

ARGUS

BHAKTIYOGA : By Aswini Kumar Datta. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 222. Price : Rs. 3.

Woven round the classic on *Bhakti, the Aphorisms of Narada*, this well-known work gives a systematic exposition of the traditional yoga of Devotion in all its phases. Bhakti, in this context, is not a mere emotional effervescence, but a detailed culture of the affective being of man raising it from the human to a divine status.

What exactly is Devotion? In what way is Love its fruition? What are the grades of Devotion? What are the requirements of Bhakti and what are the obstacles in its way? What are the aids and what are the stages of Devotion? The author discusses these pertinent questions with a wealth of illustrations from scriptures and anecdotes from his own life.

Analysing the purificatory effect of Bhakti, the writer observes :

"You grow in purity as you grow in devotion to God. Love begets a desire to imitate the beloved one. God gradually reveals Himself to one that is devoted to Him, and grows dearer as time wears on. God is Immaculate, and he that has learnt to love the Immaculate can he suffer himself to be polluted by sin? Human nature will always imitate the object of its choice, and it follows therefore that the more a man is devoted to God, the more will he aspire to assimilate His attributes. And the further you advance on the line, the keener will the desire grow upon you to imitate His virtues. The result is a gradual disappearance of all sinful tendencies and worldly desires. God is all Joy and Delight, and the moment you begin to love Him, your heart swells with joy, and all vicious propensities and worldly desires which are opposed to that joy, seem bitter and repulsive. As devotion grows, sin is bound to disappear." (p. 186)

Satsang, company of the Great — whether in person or through their writings — plays an important role in this path of Devotion. It helps man to breathe the purer atmosphere of the godly or the perfect ones and detach himself from involvement in pursuits of ignorance and falsehood.

THE RANGE OF ETHICS : By Harold H. Titus/Morris T. Kecton. Pub. : Affiliated East-West Press Private Limited, New Delhi. Pp. 418. Price : Rs. 7-50.

This collection of readings is designed to help students understand the range of Ethics, both in its theory and practice. Morality, human nature, standards, happiness, truthfulness, individual vs. State, freedom vs. determinism, are some of the topics dwelt upon. Most of the pages are from Western writings though a few pages are devoted to oriental authorities.

It is agreed that Ethics is a necessary step in the education of man and its standards vary with the state of evolution of the society. They help man in controlling and leaving behind the legacy of his animal past and arriving at his full manhood. There is no fixity about the rules of morality once the individual soul-consciousness is awakened and functions as the leader of life. Ethics has a role to play as long as man is subject to the dualities of good and evil, pleasure and pain. The discussion in these papers touches upon these points in several places.

There are several interesting entries viz. from Confucius :

"There are three things which the superior man guards against. In youth, when the physical powers are not yet settled, he guards against lust. When he is strong and the physical powers are in full vigour, he guards against quarrelsomeness. When he is old, and the animal powers are decayed, he guards against covetousness." (p. 382)

SEXUAL ENERGY AND YOGA : By Elisabeth Haich. Pub. : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 158.

Steering clear of the bugbear of sex so much exaggerated in certain traditions in the East and the fetish of libido overdone in Western psychology, the author, of this brilliant exposition presents sex-energy in its true, essential nature and discusses what it means and can mean to man in search of perfection. She draws upon legend, occult lore, Biblical texts and Yogic experiences to lay bare the secrets of the Divine Energy at work in this creation — both in the macrocosm and the microcosm — and the forms it assumes on the several levels of existence. It is the Tantric conception of *cit* pervading the universe, formulating itself in diverse forms and becoming at once the means of bondage and the means for liberation.

Sex-power, says the author, is the physical expression of the latent Power in the human body. This Power is at work on all the several planes of the being, organising itself at seven foci of consciousness — called centres or chakras — but normally we are aware of the lower workings only. Sex activity is the lowest. If this energy that is expended in sex-act is conserved and directed upwards, the Force begins to flow towards the higher centres

and awakens them. This opens up the path of Ascent, the steps of Jacob's ladder leading to Perfection.

"The secret of sexual energy, is not only that it is capable of begetting new generation, but that it has a second function of much greater importance for man : to lead his consciousness step by step up the great Jacob's ladder of consciousness of God. In so doing, sexual energy, which is the creative principle itself — *logos* — is transformed into its original primal state. This transformation of creative energy from its lowest form, sexual energy, into its very highest form, into spiritual-divine vitality, can be consciously accelerated by man with the help of sexual energy. This is because sexual energy alone can help him to increase the resilience of his higher nerve and brain centres, still resting in a latent condition, to such an extent that they can tolerate the highest frequencies of divine self-awareness without detrimental effects.

"Man experiences within himself the lowest form of creative power — called sexual energy — as an unconscious, physical-sexual urge for release ; at the very highest level, as a purely spiritual state, as divine-universal love and as divine all-consciousness." (p. 156)

How this can be attempted is described in the chapter on Practice. The uniqueness of the being of man, the fact that only in his consciousness the male and the female principles can merge, the harm done by the superstition regarding sin in sex, are some of the topics touched upon.

A bold, thorough and authentic exposition of the character and potentiality of sex-energy.

M. P. PANDIT

OUTLINES OF HINDUISM : By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan. Pub. : Chetana Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 312. Price : Rs. 10 (Indian edition), \$ 5.00 or £1.00 (export).

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan needs no introduction to the readers of *The Mountain Path*. His philosophical attainments and his contribution to the present revival of interest in Hinduism are well known. It is gratifying to note that his book, *Outlines of Hinduism* has gone into two editions and two reprints in the course of 15 years. This is proof not only of the growing interest in Hinduism but also the popularity of Dr. Mahadevan's book.

The book is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter deals with the concept of religion and the important part played by religion in a man's life. The second chapter, entitled 'What is Hinduism?' points out the distinguishing features of Hinduism. Hindu scriptures form the subject matter of the next chapter. The fourth chapter describes the rituals followed in Hindu households and temples and the part played by festivals in Hindu society. The

following chapters deal with the problem of ethics, spiritual disciplines and the paths of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* (disinterested service, devotion and knowledge) as well as the various systems of philosophy and the cults. The last chapter is devoted to Living Hinduism or Hinduism as exemplified in the lives of Hindus like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana Maharshi. The book concludes with two broadcasts on Hinduism and an article on 'Religion Today in India', followed by an excellent glossary of Sanskrit terms. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has contributed a foreword to the book.

The entire book is based on extensive study and research and contains a wealth of information on all important aspects of Hinduism conveyed in a language which is as simple as it is clear. We confidently recommend the book to those who wish to obtain a good idea of Hinduism.

SAINT YOGASWAMI and THE TESTAMENT OF TRUTH By Ratna Chelliah Navaratnam. Pub. : Thiru Kasipillai Navaratnam, "Tiruvadi", Columbuturai Road, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Pp. 449. Price : Not stated.

Saint Yogaswami who passed away eight years ago is a name which is perhaps not so well-known in India as in his native place of Jaffna and Sri Lanka. His numerous songs in Tamil collectively known as *Narchintanai* (Noble Thoughts or The Testament of Truth as the author of this book calls it) show his knowledge of *Saiva Siddhanta* and Advaita Vedanta. It is refreshing to note that, although the Swami lived almost all his life in Jaffna which is regarded as a stronghold of *Saiva Siddhanta*, he had no prejudice against Vedanta and the scriptures upon which it is based. In this respect he followed the tradition of Saint Tayumanavar who strove to achieve harmony between these two schools of thought.

In this birth centenary volume brought out by a close follower of the Swami his songs have been arranged under twenty broad heads. A few lines of the original songs found side by side with the English translation show that the translation is generally true to the original. The style is lucid and the reader will find no difficulty in following the meaning of the songs. The songs are accompanied by the author's commentaries which are often in the nature of parallel passages from the scriptures of *Saiva Siddhanta* and Vedanta. There is no regular account of the Swami's life and teachings, but notes of a biographical nature interspersed throughout the book give a general idea of his life and personality. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director,

Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, has written an interesting foreword and Sri F. P. Meenakshisundaram, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai University, an introduction under the title of 'The Miraculous Presence'.

GOD-REALIZATION : SADHANA AND EFFECTS :
Pub. : The Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum, Mysore State. Pp. 278.
Price : Rs. 7.

The Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum, founded in memory of the late Prof. R. D. Ranade (known as Gurudev Ranade among his admirers) has been holding seminars on religious or spiritual topics every year.

The book under review is a collection of the papers read at the Seminar held in 1971. Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jaina philosophy, Ramanuja's philosophy and Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, each forms the subject matter of one paper. The remaining papers relate to Bhakti Yoga or the Path of Devotion and lay particular emphasis on the importance of *mantra japa* or the repetition of a sacred *mantra* into which the aspirant is initiated by a guru who has realized God by this method. This is only natural since Gurudev Ranade firmly believed that it was impossible to attain God-realization except through this method. The paper on *Jnana Marga* read by Prof. L. C. Patil will be of particular interest to the followers of this path. The concluding address of Sri K. D. Sangoram who presided over the Seminar contains, besides a brief summary of the papers, a learned and masterly exposition of the various methods of God-realization followed by spiritual aspirants, supported by a wealth of quotations from the Vedas and other Hindu and Jaina scriptures. The book deserves a better get-up.

THE HARIDASAS OF KARNATAKA : By Dr. G. Srinivasan. Pub. : J. V. Parulekar, Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum, Mysore State. Pp. 47. Price : Rs. 1.50.

The God-intoxicated singers of the Karnataka country, known as Haridasas or the servants of Hari (Vishnu), who spread the cult of devotion to Vishnu all over the country for more than 500 years, form the subject matter of this book. Within the short compass of less than 50 pages the learned author has dealt with the lives and teachings of no less than ten Haridasas. He has also summed up their teachings succinctly in a concluding chapter. There are chapters on the origin of the Vishnu cult and the distinguishing features of the *dvaita* (dualist) philosophy of Sri Madhwacharya. All the chapters are completely free from narrow sectarian bias. Con-

An Announcement

Owing to the increase in foreign postage rates, which has been in force for some time, and the general upset in Foreign Exchange, we are very reluctantly raising our overseas subscriptions as under, with effect from April 1, 1973 :

ANNUAL : U.S. \$ 2.00 ; Sterling £ 0.75

LIFE SUBSCRIPTION will continue unchanged at U.S. \$ 30.00 and Sterling £ 12.50.

Those who have already sent their subscriptions will not be affected by this change.

We trust the subscribers who are all devotees of Sri Bhagavan will continue their patronage.

Managing Editor,
THE MOUNTAIN PATH.

April 1, 1973.

siderable study and research have gone into the making of this book which can be strongly recommended to all those who are interested in or follow the path of *bhakti* (devotion).

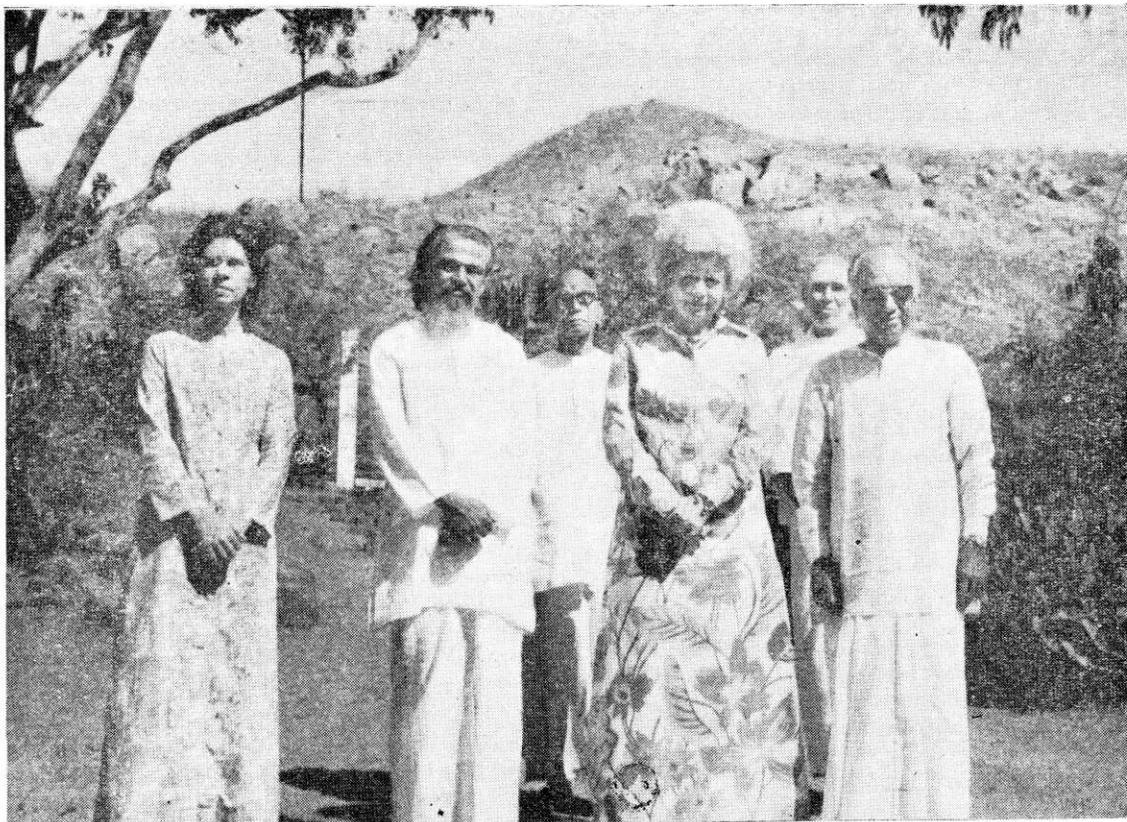
BHAGAVAN NITYANANDA : By Swami Muktananda, Shree Gurudev Ashram, Ganeshpuri. Pp. 80. Price : Rs. 4 (in India); \$ 1.50 (abroad).

This is a small book about Swami Nityananda who lived for a number of years at Ganeshpuri near Bombay and passed away about twelve years ago. Swami Muktananda, his chief disciple and the present head of the Ashram, has gathered in it all the information that is available about his master's early life before he came to Ganeshpuri and described the qualities which attracted people from all walks of life in such large numbers to his Ashram. There is also a small chapter on his teachings.

THE HOLY SCIENCE : By Swami Sri Yukteswar. Pub. : Self-Realization Fellowship, Los Angeles, California. Pp. 77. Price : not stated.

Kaivalya Darsanam (the way of final liberation or beatitude) is another name of this book which is evidently meant for the use of Western readers and consists of *sutras* (aphorisms) in Sanskrit composed by the Swami based obviously on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Brahma Sutras of Badarayana, etc. The *Sutras* are followed by free renderings and commentaries in English. An attempt has been made to find parallel passages for some of the *sutras* in the Bible and to prove that the astrological calculations according to which the present age is placed in the Kali Yuga are wrong and that we are now in the third century of the Dvāpāra Yuga. This is controversial.

M. C. S.



The Queen Mother Frederika of Greece standing in front of Holy Hill Arunachala. (1 to r) Princess Irene, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, Sri T. P. Ramachandra Aiyer, the Queen Mother, Sri Viswanatha Swami, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.

ASHRAM BULLETIN

Queen Mother of Greece Visits the Ashram

QUEEN FREDERIKA, Queen Mother of Greece, and Princess Irene, who have become devotees of Sri Bhagavan and have visited the Ashram before, came to the Ashram this year also. They arrived on the evening of January 21, in the company of Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, and were received by the President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, and the inmates of the Ashram. They attended a puja specially performed on their behalf at the shrine of Grace of Sri Bhagavan and also partook of a special lunch with the inmates of the Ashram (*biksha* offered to the Ashramites by Dr. Mahadevan).

The Queen Mother felt strongly that she should visit Skandashram on the Hill. Hence, though not in good health Dr. Mahadevan, also joined the party, in addition to our *Managing Editor*. From Skandashram they came down and visited Virupaksha Cave also. They paid their homage at these sacred

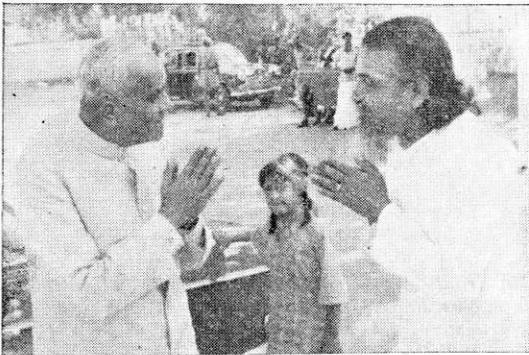
places where Sri Bhagavan lived for a number of years. Then they went to Sri Arunachaleswara Temple. In the night Princess Irene went round the Hill. The Queen Mother spent most of her time in the Ashram meditating near Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi and other places inside the Ashram.

The Queen Mother and Princess Irene also attended the *aradhana* (death anniversary) ceremony of Sri Swami Rajeswarananda which is regularly conducted by Dr. Mahadevan every year at the Swami's samadhi inside the Ashram.

The royal party together with Dr. Mahadevan, left the Ashram on the 22nd afternoon. We were very happy to have them amidst us!

* * *

Sri Cheddi Lal, the new Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, his wife and his grandchild, paid a visit to the Ashram on Jan. 22. They were received by the President and the inmates of the Ashram and



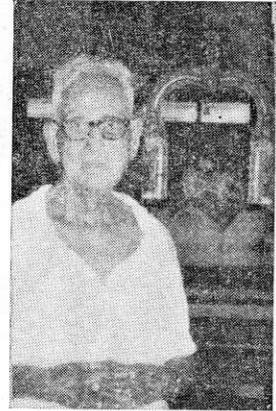
Sri Cheddi Lal is received by the Ashram President. The Lt. Governor's granddaughter is in the middle.

were taken round the Ashram. After paying their homage at the shrines and the Nirvana Room and seeing the Meditation Hall and the new Auditorium and receiving *prasad* they left for Pondicherry the same day.

Sri Cheddi Lal has written to us on reaching the Raj Nivas, the following: "I am sorry for the delay in acknowledging the kind and cordial reception you gave me during my visit to Maharshi's Ashram. I had long heard of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, but it was the first time that I saw the sacred abode where he attained self-realisation and where many were fortunate to sit at his feet and get his blessings. The place breathes his spirit and the moment one enters the area, one feels great solace and peace of mind. I hope I shall be able to repeat my visit before long."

* * *

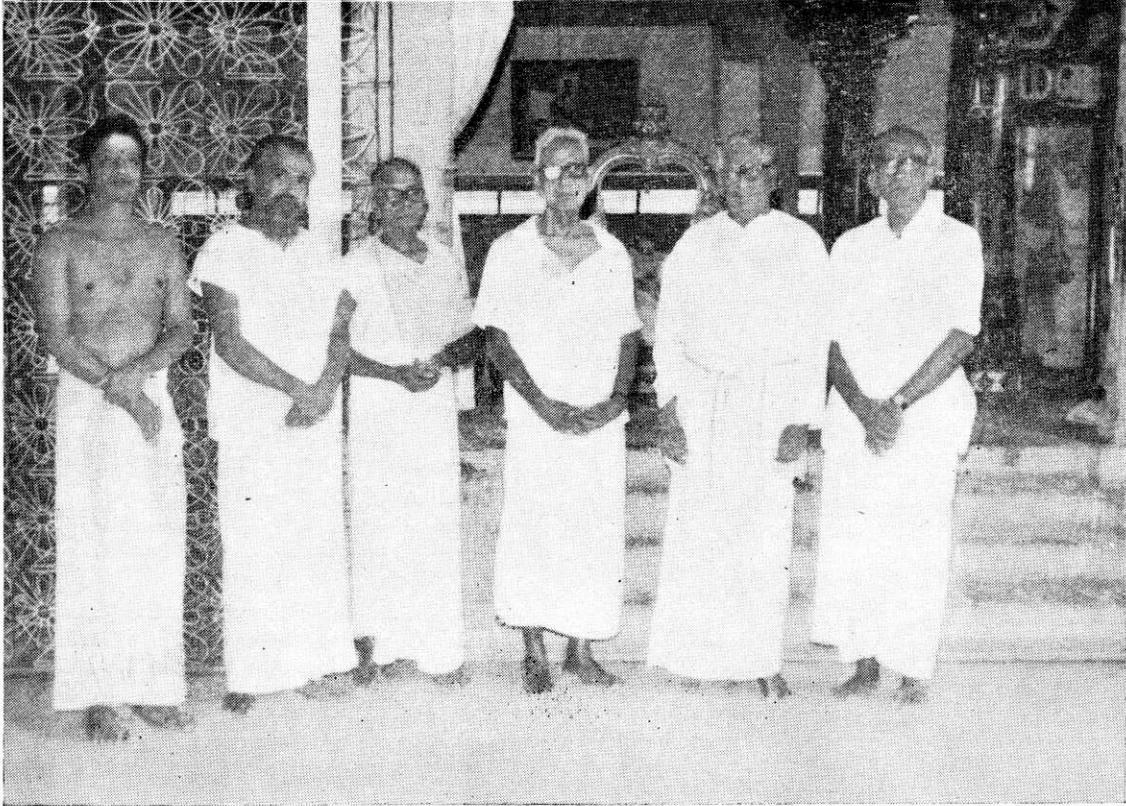
Sri S. Doraiswami Ayyar, perhaps the oldest devotee of Sri Bhagavan now living, who was introduced to the readers of *The Mountain Path* (p. 212, July 1969 issue), paid a surprise visit to the Ashram on Jan. 26. As he had not visited the Ashram for a very long time every one was glad to see him. He was brought to the Ashram from Pondicherry, where he permanently resides, by *Sri K. Rama Iyengar* of Madras, his junior — associate during his bar days.



Sri S. Doraiswami Ayyar

After paying his homage to Bhagavan at His Shrine of Grace and Nirvana Room he went round the Ashram inspecting the new additions like the Ramana Auditorium. He met all the old devotees — Sri Muruganar, Sri Viswanatha Swami, Sri Ramaswami Pillai, Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer, Mrs. Osborne, Mrs. Roda McIver — and spent a long time with them talking about old times. He is 93 years old and naturally not very robust; yet it was remarkable with what energy and enthusiasm he went around all the places in the Ashram where Sri Bhagavan spent his days. He was all the time reminiscing about Sri Bhagavan.

One of the stories is given here: "Once a snake appeared on the roof of the Old Hall. It was evening time when Sri Bhagavan and others came out of the Hall to sit near the well. Hearing a commotion inside the Hall Bhagavan asked what was the matter. When told of the snake he told them not to kill it, but to take it alive and leave it on the slope of the Hill. One of the devotees sitting there half-jokingly said that he daily goes for a walk at that place and whether Bhagavan had no consideration for him as the snake might bite him. Bhagavan retorted quickly: 'Is this the only snake that is going to frighten and attack you? There are a number of them at the place where you walk; one more will not matter so much. Moreover, the whole Ashram is their (snakes') home and we have driven them out for our convenience. They have thus given us shelter. Is this the way to show them gratitude?' Bhagavan's compassion was unique!"



Sri S. Doraiswamy Ayyar is seen (4th from left) in front of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace. Others are (l to r) Sri V. Ganesan, our MANAGING EDITOR, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, Sri T. P. Ramachandra Aiyar, Sri R. Venkataraman, Ex-Minister, and Sri K. Rama Iyengar,

Sri Doraiswami Ayyar returned to Pondicherry (via Madras) after receiving Bhagavan's *prasadam* and a set of photographs and some of the Ashram publications. We wish him many more years of a peaceful life with the Grace of Sri Bhagavan!

* * *

Sri R. Venkataraman, Ex-Minister of Madras, who has seen Sri Bhagavan during his college days, has been paying his homage to the Master as often as practicable and this year too he arrived at the Ashram on January 26, for a few days' stay. His visit happily coincided with that of Sri S. Doraiswami Ayyar, whose junior he was. Both of them spent some time together reminiscing. During his stay he devoted most of the time for meditation in the Ashram in Sri Bhagavan's Old Hall.

He writes: "The Spirit of Bhagavan pervades the Ashram. I recaptured the same concentration and

mental equilibrium in the Meditation Hall where I had the privilege of sitting in the presence of Bhagavan years ago. The management should be complemented on maintaining the sanctity associated with the place. May the Grace of Bhagavan lead all men and women to a nobler life!"

* * *

Sri T. A. Pai, Union Minister, and Mrs. Pai, who were on their way to Pondicherry, paid a surprise visit to the Ashram on Jan. 1. They were cordially received at the Ashram by Sri T. N. Venkataraman, the President, the Trustees, the inmates of the Ashram and some of the important citizens of Tiruvannamalai and shown round the Ashram. *Arati* was performed at Sri Bhagavan's shrine for them and they were presented with *prasadam* and some of the books about Sri Maharshi.

* * *

Mr. D. M. Ghia, Chairman, Agfa-Gevaert India Ltd., Bombay, and his wife, *Smt. Kamala Ghia*, paid a visit to the Ashram and stayed for a day. They showed keen interest in the photographic section of the Ashram. Sri Sai Das showed them some of the rare photos of Sri Bhagavan and also explained to them the requirements of this section of the Ashram. Mr. & Mrs. Ghia have kindly assured us to help as best they could. They also were taken to Skandashram by Hugo Maier whom they know well.

* * *



Sri A. R. Natarajan,
with his mother,
Smt. Mangalammal

Sri A. R. Natarajan, Secretary, Ramana Kendra, Delhi, was here amidst us on Jan. 22, along with his mother, *Smt. Mangalammal*. They stayed for two days. She insisted on the *pradakshina* round the Hill and the President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, himself accompanied them. Considering her frail body and weak health, it was surprising that she did the circumambulation in the usual course of 3 hours and did not feel tired afterwards! We hope to see them here more often.

* * *

Sri R. M. Patel, a devotee from East Africa, who was with us last year came again this year. He came on 24th Jan. and stayed for three weeks. Before his departure he wrote to us as follows: "I first heard of Bhagavan from my Guru Manuvariyaji when I came to Ahmedabad in 1954. I was impressed by what he told me and when I returned to East Africa I took with me some of the books containing Bhagavan's life and teachings and read them carefully. One day while I was thinking of Bhagavan I had a vision of him. He was sitting on my bed, his body glowing like a neon-light. I was not asleep at the time but widely awake.

There has been a regular flow of visitors during the whole of 1972 and it continues to be so till today. Some of them keep on returning and finding this abode of our Master, their HOME! We also have given in brackets the duration of their stay for kind information:—

- Mr. Christopher Pegler, England (12 months)
- Mr. Philip Pegler, England (8 months)
- Mr. Horst Rutkowski, W. Germany (5 months)
- Mme. Blanca Diez Gutierrez, Mexico (2 months)
- Miss Pamela Leah, London (3 months)
- Miss Jacqueline Leprince, France (3 months)
- Miss Yvonne Daughet, France (2 months)
- Miss Diane Sundin, France (4 months)
- Mr. Roger Henninger, France (2 months)
- Mrs. Gertrud Elsasser, W. Germany (6 weeks)
- Mr. Johannus de Reede, Italy (6 weeks)
- Mr. Albohair Jacques, Italy (6 weeks)
- Mr. Kurt Masser, W. Germany (1 month)
- Mr. Erich Wilzbach, W. Germany (1 month)
- Sister Gita, Keshavram International Spiritual Centre, Warranton, U.S.A. (1 week)
- Mr. Navratnam and Mrs. Ratna Navratnam, Ceylon (10 days)
- Miss Nancy Lay, U.S.A. (6 weeks)
- Mrs. Marleen Boers, Holland (3 weeks)
- Mrs. Nina Sabharwal, Bombay (10 days)

I felt very happy and peaceful. Thereafter I had experiences of other kinds. All these made me anxious to visit Bhagavan's Ashram. I prayed to Bhagavan repeatedly. Then suddenly and unexpectedly in 1959 my employers not only granted me leave but provided me with the funds required for my journey to India and arranged for my passage. During my first visit to the Ashram I experienced great peace. So I repeated my visits whenever possible. And every time I benefited by Bhagavan's grace and guidance which are clearly perceptible to me. I admire the Sri Chakra Puja which is performed at the Ashram and have derived great benefit from it. I am grateful to the Ashram management for making my stay here comfortable."

* * *

Mme. Jeanne Guerineau of France arrived at the Ashram in December 30 and left only



Mme. Jeanne Guerineau

in the fourth week of February. Though in her eighties she was very energetic and enthusiastically participated in the daily routine of the Ashram. She writes :

" At my advanced age, I had the good fortune for the third time, to come back here and make my pilgrimage, to what I consider to be 'The Source'. This is a privilege of which I am fully aware. The stay in the Ashram always fills me with a feeling

of profound peace and I am conscious of sharing with the others an especially blessed atmosphere here. I would like to express my thanks to the President and to all inmates and *sadhaks* for contributing a great deal to my spiritual as well as to my physical well-being. With Bhagavan's Grace I hope to return, although in my heart, I have never really left."

* * *

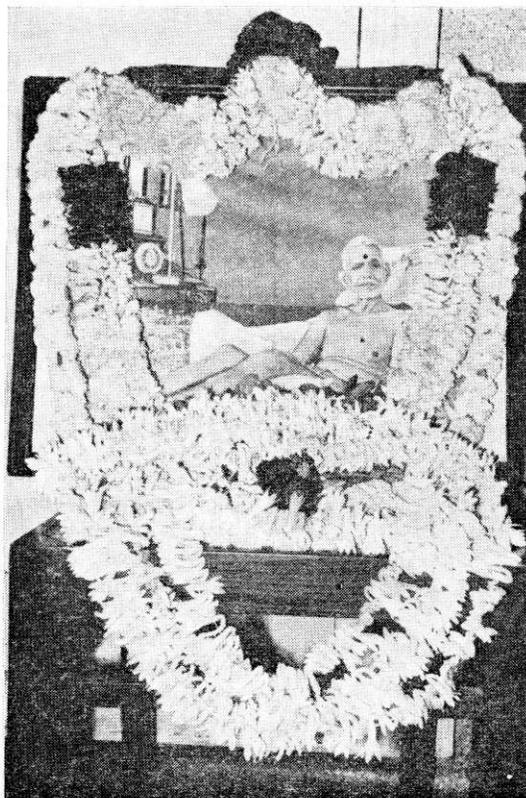
UPANAYANAM

On Sunday, March 11, Sri P. S. Easwaran, Secretary of Prem Sangh, Madras, celebrated the *upanayanam* (thread ceremony) of his two sons, Chi. Ganesan and Chi. Ramakrishnan, at the Ashram. Apart from Sri Easwaran's relatives many devotees of Sri Bhagavan attended the function and blessed the *vatus* (boys).

* * *

Dr. M. S. SWAMINATHAN HONOURED

Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, member of the governing body of Sri Ramana Kendra, Delhi, is a devotee of Sri Bhagavan, who, in 1972, was honoured by the Presidential Award of "Padma Bushan" (see, p. 148 of April, '72 issue) for distinguished services as the Director of the Indian Agricultural Institute. We are glad to note that he has now been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, London. He is the first Indian agricultural scientist to be thus honoured. We offer our felicitations to him!



Calcutta Ramana Kendra
Ramana Jayanthi Celebration

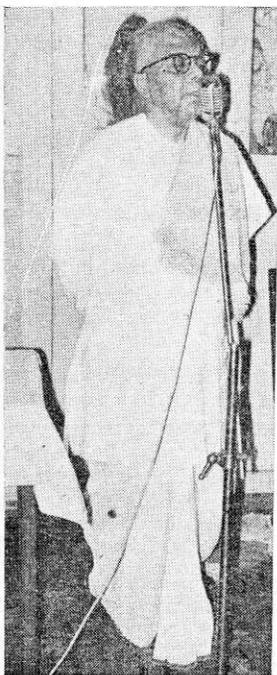
RAMANA JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS

AT CALCUTTA

The 93rd Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on two days this year, namely the 22nd and the 24th December 1972.

The celebrations on the first day started with an early morning procession carrying Bhagavan's portrait. It started from the Veda Bhavan and, after passing through the important streets of South Cal-

cutta, returned to the Veda Bhavan. This was followed by *Vedaparayana* and an elaborate *puja* to Bhagavan's portrait at the residence of Sri D. Viswanath in Sankaripara Road.



Chief Justice Mukerji speaking

On the 24th the celebrations began with the recitation of *Akshara Manamalai* and *Upadesa Saram*. This was followed by a special *puja*. At noon food was served to the poor.

There was a large gathering of devotees at 5-30 in the evening. Chief Justice Sri P. M. Mukerji, President, Calcutta Ramana Kendra, who presided, spoke about the path of Self-realization taught by Bhagavan and exhorted the audience to follow that path. Sri H. R. Chadha, Sri P. S. V. Iyer, Sri P. Subramanian (President of Sri Sankara Hall) and Sri S. C. Majumdar spoke about their visit to the Ashram and their spiritual experiences there. Sri V. R. Lakshminarayanan offered a vote of thanks.

The function concluded with a bhajan led by Smt. Lakshmi Lakshminarayanan.

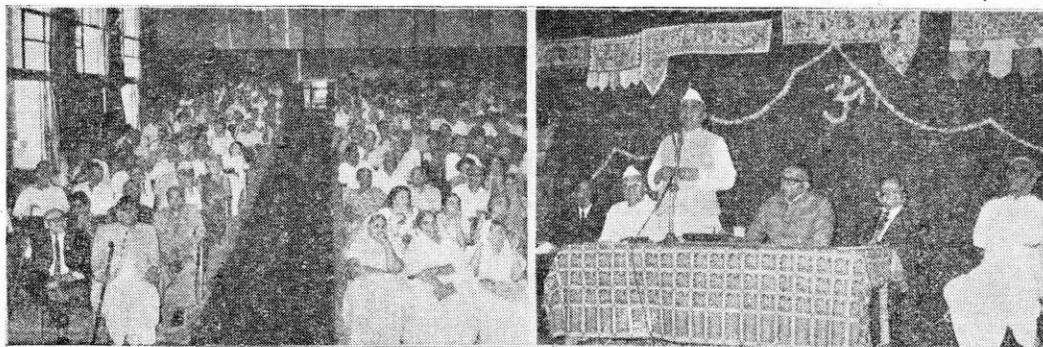
AT BOMBAY

The 93rd Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated in Bombay on Feb. 17, at Birla Kreedha Kendra in the midst of a large gathering of devotees.

Sri M. B. Popat, Minister, State of Maharashtra, presided over the celebrations. Sri Harilal Dresswalla explained, in his welcome address, the path of Self Enquiry taught by Sri Bhagavan. Sri V. S. Page, Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative Council, who was the chief guest, spoke about the life of Bhagavan and the suitability of His teachings in modern times.

Sri V. K. Narasimhan, Editor of *The Indian Express*, narrated his experiences in the presence of Sri Bhagavan and the remarkable way in which many who wanted to raise doubts had them cleared even before they placed them before Bhagavan. Sri Popat pointed out in his speech that the greatness of India lies in great souls like Bhagavan whom she has produced.

Sri P. V. Somasundaram offered a vote of thanks. The celebrations concluded with the screening of the film showing Sri Bhagavan, specially received from Sri Ramanasramam, with special permission from its President.



BOMBAY RAMANA JAYANTHI CELEBRATION: Sri V. S. Page, Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative Council, speaking. Others seated are (l to r): Sri P. V. Somasundaram, Sri Harilal Dresswalla, Sri M. B. Popat, Minister, Maharashtra State, Sri P. B. Kotak and Sri V. K. Narasimhan. A section of the devotees who attended the function.

AT MADRAS

Sri Ramana Jayanthi was celebrated on Jan. 7, 1973 at the Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Alwarpet, Madras. After *Vedaparayanam* there was chanting of *Upadesa Saram* and music. Mr. Justice M. M. Ismail¹ gave a lucid talk on Sri Bhagavan's philosophy and method of Self-enquiry.

* * *

The Prem Sangh, Mylapore, celebrated Bhagavan's Jayanthi with *pujas* and *archanas* on Dec. 22. Sri N. Subramania Ayyar (Anna) delivered a discourse in the evening. This was followed by *Veda parayana* and the recitation of *Upadesa Saram*.

AT TIRUCHULI

The Jayanthi of Bhagavan was celebrated in a fitting manner at 'Sri Sundara Mandiram', the birthplace of Bhagavan on Friday, Dec. 22, 1972, in the presence of a large gathering of devotees.

AT THANJAVUR

Sri Bhagavan's 93rd Jayanthi was celebrated on Dec. 22 at 'Janaki Nilayam' with special *abhishekam*, *Sahasranama archana* and *Veda parayana* in the midst of a large gathering of devotees. A number of poor people were also fed. In the evening there was a *bhajan* by the members of the Chinmaya Mission, Thanjavur, and chanting of *Akshara Manamalai* composed by Bhagavan.

AT NELLORE

Sri Ramana Jayanthi was celebrated by the Ramana Sat Sangh, Nellore, on Dec. 21 & 22 with *Rudra abhishekam* and special *puja* in the morning and a procession with Bhagavan's portrait in the evening. The celebrations included speeches of school boys and girls on the subject of Bhagavan's life and teachings.

¹ A gist of his speech is reproduced elsewhere in this issue.



H. H. Sri Santananda Swami is given a traditional (PURNAKUMBHA) reception at the entrance of the Ashram.

AT VIJAYAWADA

Bhagavan's Jayanthi was celebrated on Dec. 22 at 'Ramana Sadanam' in Maruthi Nagar in the presence of Smt. Suri Nagamma, author of *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, by the devotees of Bhagavan with an elaborate *puja* and discourses on Bhagavan's life and teachings.

AT BELGAUM

The Ramana Mandal, Belgaum, celebrated the 93rd Jayanthi of Bhagavan on Dec. 22 amidst a large gathering of devotees. The celebrations began with meditation and the reading of a message received from Maj. Abdul Gaffar, the organizer of the Mandal. *Guru Stotra*, *Arunachala Pancharatna*, *Muktakairaya* and *Upadesa Saram* were recited next. Devotional songs were sung by Sri T. R. Subramaniam, Mrs. Ram Rao and the Mahila Bhajan Mandal. Sri R. N. Saraf, an old devotee of Bhagavan, gave an instructive and lucid talk on the first two stanzas of *Ulladu Narpadu*. The celebrations came to an end with *arati*, *mantra pushpa* and the distribution of *prasad*.

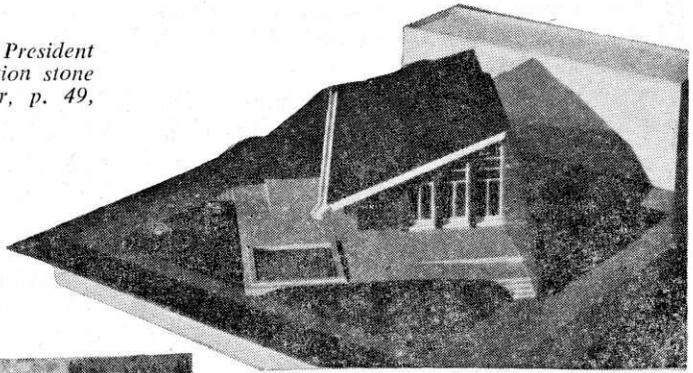
AT SECUNDERABAD

The Birth anniversary of Bhagavan was celebrated by Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandali in the

Gujerati High School on Jan. 7, 1973 with great solemnity. The celebrations started with *bhajan*, *sankirtan* and *parayana*. Sri Chimanlal C. Modi gave a talk in the course of which he narrated the death experience of Bhagavan which culminated in the realization that he was the Self Eternal and not the body which is like a corpse. He said that *Atma Vidya* is very easy and that its difficulties are only apparent. Sri B. K. Bhatt, Professor of Sanskrit, spoke about the spiritual Heart mentioned in the first two lines of the stanza of Bhagavan beginning with the words '*hridaya kuhare madhye*' (in the cavity of the Heart) and Sri S. Subba Rao explained the other two lines. Sri Akhandanand Yogi of Akhandanand Ashram sang in a voice full of emotion, Bhagavan's *Song of the Poppadum* and explained its significance. Prof. Sivamohanlal spoke about the dialogue between Major Humphreys and Bhagavan and exhorted the audience to spend a few minutes every day in self-enquiry. Goswami Sri Vrajjivanlalji Maharaj, head of Sri Radhawallab Sampradaya, said in the course of a short talk that Bhagavan was not so much a *tatwa jnani* (realised person) but *tatwa* (truth) itself. Sri Bharati Ben Jani narrated certain incidents of Bhagavan's grace in her life. The function came to a close with *arati* and the distribution of *prasad*.

* * *

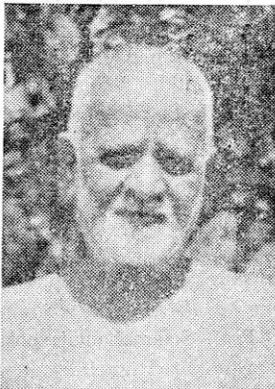
Sri C. Subramaniam, Union Minister and President of Delhi Ramana Kendra, lays the foundation stone of the Kendra buildings in Delhi (refer, p. 49, January 1973 issue)



An artist's model of the buildings proposed to be erected by Delhi Ramana Kendra. Note the mountain-like shadow of the shrine and meditation hall in the foreground on the wall of the large building in the background which is to house the library, the guest house, etc.

SWAMI RAMANANANDA SARASWATI

The tenth *aradhana* (death anniversary) of Sri Swami Ramananda Saraswati, a great devotee of



Sri Swami Ramananda
Saraswathi

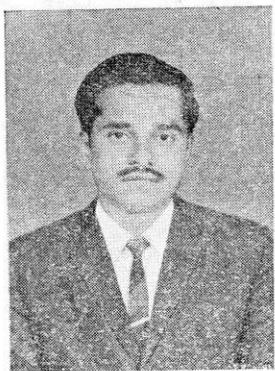
Bhagavan and the author of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, *Tripura Rahasya* and other Ashram publications, was celebrated on Feb. 21, by his daughter, Smt. Kamakshi Ramachandriah,¹ who has now settled down permanently in her house, near the Ashram, wherein is situated the Swami's *samadhi*. Devotees and inmates of the Ashram attended the celebration and paid

their homage to the Swami's *samadhi*.

ASHRAM FREE DISPENSARY

Dr. K. R. Srinivasan, M.B.B.S.,² who was rendering honorary service at the Free Dispensary of the Ashram during the last four years, discontinued his services at the end of 1972, because of the pressure of work in his own practice. We are grateful to him for his past devout and efficient service to the sick.

Dr. M. V. Shatrughna Setty, M.B.B.S., a young medical practitioner of Tiruvannamalai has offered to serve in place of Dr. Srinivasan and thus the service to the ailing continues uninterrupted. We have accepted with gratitude his voluntary assistance.



Dr. M. V. Shatrughna Setty

The Dispensary has been attracting more and more patients. We, therefore, appeal to medical firms to kindly help this useful institution by supplying free medicines and samples to the extent possible. Any help that may be rendered will be gratefully accepted.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

New Additions

- Mudita: Four Essays*: By Nyanaponika Thera and others. Buddhist Publications Society, Kandy, Ceylon. Price not stated.
- Francis Story*: By The Anagarika Sugatananda. Buddhist Publications Society, Kandy, Ceylon. Price not stated.
- Anguttara Niyaka — An Anthology, Part I*: Tr. by Nyanaponika Thera. Buddhist Publications Society, Kandy, Ceylon. Price not stated.
- The Girimananda Sutta*: Tr. by Nanamoli Bhikku. Buddhist Publications Society, Kandy, Ceylon. Price not stated.
- Rebirth Explained*: By V. F. Gunaratna. Buddhist Publications Society, Kandy, Ceylon. Price not stated.
- Ethics in Buddhist Perspective*: By K. N. Jayatilaka. Buddhist Publications Society, Kandy, Ceylon. Price not stated.
- Facets of Buddhist Thought*: By K. N. Jayatilaka. Buddhist Publications Society, Kandy, Ceylon. Price not stated.
- An Atheist with Gandhi*: By Gora. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. (75 P.)
- Reflections*: By Ross Thalheimer. Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 7.50)
- Basis of Tantra Sadhana*: By M. P. Pandit. Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. (Rs. 3)
- Simple Talks on Science of Thought*: By H. T. Hamblin, Science of Thought Press, Bosham House, Chichester, Sussex, England. (£ 0.08)
- The Range of Ethics*: By Harold H. Titus and Morris T. Keeton. East West Press, New Delhi. (Rs. 7.50)
- The Book of Mirdad*: By Mikhail Naimy. Penguin Books. (\$ 1.25)
- Devatma Shakti (Kundalini), Divine Power*: By Swami Vishnu Tirtha. Sadhana Granthamala Prakashan Samiti, Behramji Mansion, Bombay-1. (Rs. 10)
- Swami Muktananda Paramahansa*: By Amma. Shree Gurudev Ashram, Ganeshpuri. (Rs. 5)
- Bhagavan Nityananda*: By Swami Muktananda. Shree Gurudev Ashram, Ganeshpuri. (Rs. 4; Abroad \$ 1.50)
- The Holy Science*: By Swami Yukteswar. Self-Realization Fellowship, Los Angeles. Price not stated.

¹ Referred to in the *Ashram Bulletin* of October, '72 issue, p. 287.

² See p. 124, April, 1969 and p. 287, October, 1969 issues of *The Mountain Path*.

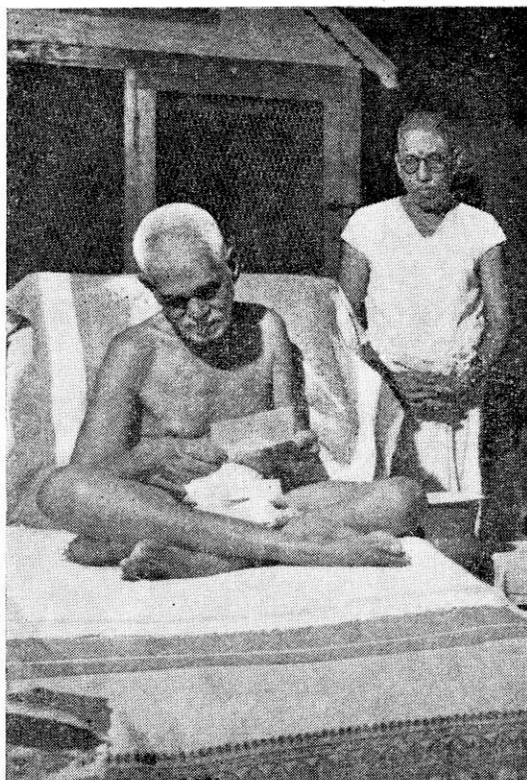
INTRODUCING...

Sri C. Somasundaram Pillai

Sri C. Somasundaram Pillai, retired Superintendent, South Arcot District Board, comes from a pious family of Cuddalore. His grandfather, Devasikhmani Mudaliar, knew several holy men, especially Sri Swami Bhagavantham and Sri Swami Dayananda, two great saints whom he had brought to Cuddalore from Vriddhachalam and Salem, respectively. He served these two saints with extreme devotion and, when they passed away, he built *samadhis* over their graves and arranged for daily *pujas* for them. All his descendents look upon these two saints as their family *gurus*.

Sri Somasundaram Pillai first heard about Sri Bhagavan in 1908 when he was studying in the II Form at Cuddalore from one of his classmates, named Subrahmanyam, who was a nephew of Echammal. She used to bring or send food to Sri Bhagavan till her death. But he could not come to Sri Bhagavan until 1932, when he and his wife, Uma, accompanied his brother, Sri Bhogatham Pillai and sister-in-law, both devotees of Sri Bhagavan, who were going to Tiruvannamalai to attend the *Maha Puja* of Bhagavan's mother. The party arrived on the eve of the *Maha Puja* and Sri Somasundaram Pillai and his wife had their first *darshan* of Bhagavan. This had such a powerful effect on them that during the next ten years they were drawn to repeat their visits. Once Bhagavan spoke about them to the people in the Hall that they belonged to the family connected with Sri Swami Bhagavantham and that was why they were coming here, obviously drawn by devotion.

In 1941 Sri Somasundaram Pillai's eldest daughter lost her husband. While he and his wife were overcome with grief, the late Ramana Padananda, a well-known devotee of Bhagavan, came to their house. They immediately sent for Sri Viswanatha Swami from the Ashram and Sri Swami Rajagopal of Mathur who was then at Cuddalore and arranged for the choral singing of Sri Muruganar's songs known as *Ramana Sannidhi Murai*, which were usually chanted daily in their house. This chanting lasted nearly a month. Sri Somasundaram Pillai then celebrated Bhagavan's *Jayanthi* at home. That night his wife, Uma, had a vision in which Bhagavan appeared to her as a child lying in a cradle. From that moment she considered herself the mother of Bhagavan. She placed a photograph of Bhagavan in a tiny cradle and adored it with great devotion treat-



Sri Somasundaram Pillai with Sri Bhagavan

ing it as a living child. She even showed it to Bhagavan. This worship appealing to her motherly instinct greatly enhanced her devotion to Him.

As both parents of Sri Somasundaram Pillai had died at an early age he had a feeling that he too would die before his retirement from service in 1950. He, therefore, decided to spend his remaining days with Bhagavan and so took long leave and came with his family to Tiruvannamalai in 1942. As soon as he became eligible for a pension in 1945 he retired from service and settled in Tiruvannamalai.

After Bhagavan's *nirvana* he went back to Cuddalore where he lost his wife a few months later. Finally in 1953, he returned to Tiruvannamalai to live permanently with his widowed youngest daughter who had settled down in the vicinity of the Ashram. He used to take part in the daily singing of Tamil songs at the Ashram. He also made himself useful in the Ashram office by helping with the accounts. He has always been eager to help the devotees of Sri Bhagavan who always meet with a warm welcome at his house. Although he is now 78 years old he never fails to come to the Ashram and pay his obeisance to Bhagavan at His *Samadhi*.

May he continue, by Bhagavan's Grace, to live in peace for many more years!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRUE MEDITATION

... For the past one year I have been practising transcendental meditation ... I mentally repeat the *mantra* and pass into the inner state of transcendental meditation. ... Now I feel great pressure in my head and that something is going wrong with my brain. There is also a feeling of fear and agitation. What am I to do? Please help me. Lately I came across Ramana Maharshi's photo and your journal, *The Mountain Path*. The first look on His face convinced me that He can help me and strange as it seems that He is my Guru. I am eager to continue my *sadhana* and be sure that I am on the right path. ...

A SEEKER

'Transcendental meditation' implies that one has already succeeded in transcending thought which is scarcely the case in the beginning stages. In case of difficulties Bhagavan said that concentration on the spiritual heart (at the right side of the chest) brings about equanimity by dissipating anxiety, undue pressure and all sorts of undesirable manifestations. It is good to remember that the real Guru dwells in your own heart and is all-pervading. With practice and perseverance a subtle vibration is felt which can be recollected even while working. Bhagavan remembers those who remember Him. Then one feels secure in His guidance.

As to mantras, nowadays mantras and initiation are given by so called 'initiators' more often than not by self-appointed gurus who are themselves not authorised to give them. Repeating such a mantra may have dire results. It is not only the words but the power of a genuine guru to transform the recipient which ensures their efficacy.

EDITOR

GURU'S GRACE

Writing for *Ramana Jyothi Souvenir* on 'Meditation and Meditation Hall' Sri S. S. Cohen remarked that those aspirants who are fortunate enough to be within the good looks of the Master and within the precincts of Sri Ramanasramam should be considered as 'arrived'. I am unable to realise the import of this saying. I understood that what he meant after all is that they have already got rid of longstanding *vasanas* and are experiencing the beauty of 'I-I' consciousness. But to satisfy myself I solicit your expert comments on the words 'are arrived' and what Sri Cohen actually meant by them. ... I will be very grateful for a lucid reply in the columns of your journal.

P. SUBBARAO,
Khammam, A.P.

*It is hardly likely that Sri Cohen meant by these words that all those within the precincts of Sri Ramanasramam are realised. What he may have had in mind by 'arrived' is most probably that their *sadhana* has started in real earnest. But why not ask Sri Cohen himself for an explanation? His address is: Sri S. S. Cohen, 3 Infantry Road, Vellore, N.A. Dt.*

EDITOR

AWARENESS IN SLEEP

... I would be grateful for a reply to the following questions: (1) Is conscious sleep possible? Before going to bed at night I am trying not to allow the mind to fall into unconscious sleep. To put it more clearly I want to be established in the Self with full consciousness while asleep. I find sleeping without Self-awareness a waste of time.

Will you throw some light? (2) Instead of taking Self-enquiry straightaway why can't we follow Sri Bhagavan's first incidence dramatising death which gives the urge to investigate. Could we not practice as a first step this procedure which the Maharshi adopted for the first time, which was also the last for him? I believe by putting this into practice our Self-enquiry will become more intense. Kindly let me have your opinion.

H. A. SH.,
Coimbatore.

(1) To be established in the Self or be Self-aware whether awake or asleep is not possible so long as there is identification with the body which is synonymous with illusion. Only a jnani is always conscious while awake or sleeping. What it amounts to is that you want to be a jnani straightaway. It takes a very long time to remove this illusion and make the mind absolutely pure so that the ever-present Self stands revealed as IT IS. Just persevere in your spiritual practice and this is bound to bring you nearer the goal. The last spiritual thought or meditation before going to sleep is important. Its momentum carries one through the night so that the whole night works for the sadhaka. (2) One can adopt dramatising death or remembering how impermanent life is if it helps in intensifying Self-enquiry. However, only someone ripe for realisation will experience death and what survives it. Ramana Maharshi did not adopt this dramatisation as a first step. It happened spontaneously.

EDITOR

SADHANA IN PRACTICAL LIFE

... For many years I have been searching for truth and have read many books especially those of and about Ramana Maharshi. As soon as I saw His photograph I knew from deep down that this was a true Master and a great peace engulfed me. ... I have a firm belief that a man needs a Guru ... and I look upon Bhagavan as my spiritual Guru in my own way. I picture Him from the photograph in my mind and experience great peace by doing so. Following the yogic path is very difficult especially in a country where most people think that yoga means standing on your head ... but a student of yoga does need a living guru to guide him. ... What are the householder's obligations to the world and God? Could you please explain the best course for a man who wishes to follow a spiritual path but has many responsibilities and obligations to fulfil in this material world. ... I believe that all paths lead to God and the Divine Presence is within us all.

A. R., Australia.

Sri Ramana Maharshi's living Presence can be experienced now as before. His guidance continues as He assured us before giving up His body. All one has to do is to remember Him in the heart and turn to Him and there is sure to be a response. The books available expound living truth.

In this age there is no need to renounce the world or give up one's occupation in order to follow a spiritual path. Performing one's duties to the best of ability, as selflessly as possible, is also sadhana. conducive to purification of the mind and can be combined with daily meditation or other spiritual practices at convenient times. Dawn and sun-set are best for this purpose. A householder's obligation is to look after those dependent on him to the best of his ability cultivating a spirit of detachment. The attitude of people of a materialistic bent of mind or their disapproval need not disturb a sadhaka. Those who suffer or are persecuted for the sake of Truth are blessed, Christ said. A seeker can be in the world but as far as possible not of it.

You are quite right in your belief that all paths lead to God and the Divine Presence is within us all.

EDITOR

BHAGAVAN AND SANSKRIT

... It is not easy to learn a new language and it takes much time to learn it thoroughly particularly if it is Sanskrit. ... So far as we know Ramana Maharshi's education was only up to the 10th standard. After that He lived a life far removed from any academic study. We cannot understand therefore how and when Ramana Maharshi learnt Sanskrit so well as to be able to write in Sanskrit such a masterly composition as *Upadesa Saram*.

A. PRASAD SINGH,
Bihar.

A jnani knows spontaneously what is to be known. The great Sanskrit scholar and devotee, Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni requested Bhagavan one day in 1917 to compose a poem in Sanskrit. Bhagavan replied with a smile that he knew little Sanskrit and less prosody relating to that language. But the Kavyakantha was not willing to leave the matter there. He explained to Bhagavan the technique of one of the Sanskrit metres called arya and repeated his request. When he saw Bhagavan again in the evening the poem was ready in exquisite Sanskrit, expressing in five short verses addressed to Arunachala the entire teaching of Vedanta!

EDITOR