

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

The Mountain Path

Vol. 13, No. I, January 1976

"Treasure of benign
and holy Grace found
without seeking, steady
my wandering mind, Oh
Arunachala !"

— *The Marital Garland
of Letters*, verse 49

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

Vol. 13

JANUARY 1976

No. I

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL :

	Page
Awareness Absolute — <i>Viswanatha Swami</i>	1
A Prayer (Poem) — <i>Anne Hall</i>	3
Garland of Guru's Sayings — <i>Muruganar</i>	4
The Field of Buddhism — <i>Christmas Humphreys</i>	6
Person or Self ? — <i>Norman Fraser</i>	10
Atheistic Existentialism — <i>Moti Lal Pandit</i>	11
The Daily Miracle — <i>Dr. M. B. Bhaskaran</i>	17
A Question of Identity — <i>Richard Lang</i>	18
The Dawn and Growth of Spiritual Consciousness — <i>Prof. R. Sadasiva Aiyer</i>	20
The Ten <i>Mabāvidyās</i> of the Mother — <i>Viswanatha Swami</i>	22
Teaching is an Act of Love — " <i>Sangitaprem</i> " (<i>Dr. David Teplitz</i>)	26
Facing the Fact (Poem) — <i>Wei Wu Wei</i>	27
Saint Jean Vianney — <i>Gladys Debn</i>	28
<i>Stories from Yoga Vasishtha</i> — VII The Story of Bhasa and Vilasa — <i>Tr. by M. C. Subramanian</i>	34
The Joy (Poem) — <i>Charles G. Reeder</i>	35
Science and Pure Consciousness — <i>Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan</i>	36
<i>Hindu Iconology</i> — 5 : <i>Dakshinamurthi</i>	39
How I Came to the Maharshi — <i>R. Chandrasekhar</i>	41
Glory of Arunachala — <i>Arunachala</i> <i>Mabatmyan</i> — <i>Tr. by M. C. Subramanian</i>	43

CONTENTS -- (Contd.)

	Page
Book Reviews ..	45
Ashram Bulletin ..	53
Introducing . . . <i>Sri G. Lakshmi Narasimham and Smt. Saraswathi Ammal</i> ..	60
Letters to the Editor ..	62

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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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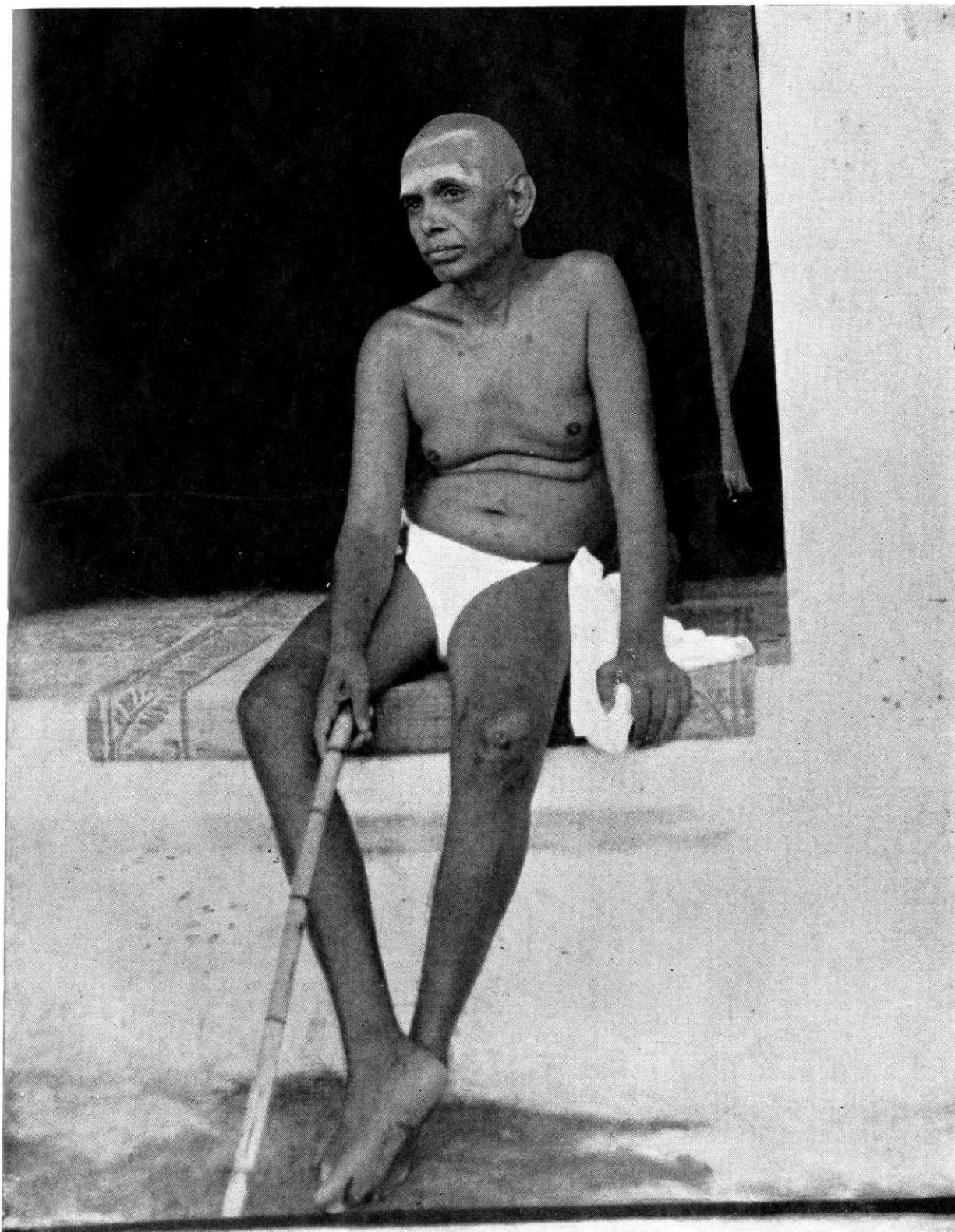
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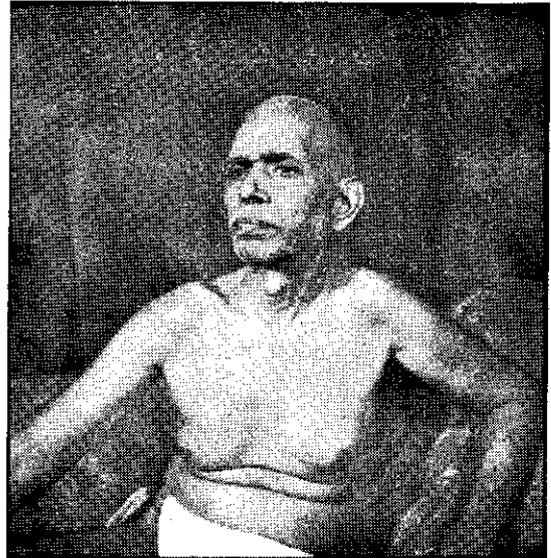
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EDITORIAL

AWARENESS ABSOLUTE

IT was at Skandasramam on Arunachala that I first met Bhagavan Ramana (in January 1921). He was standing on the open space in front of the Ashram building facing the entrance as I approached. The very sight of him was thrilling ; something very subtle, seemingly with its centre in that body, shone forth unlimited engulfing everything else. Needless to say I felt swallowed up by it. I stayed for a week with Bhagavan in that atmosphere of utter purity and serenity. I heard from him how he came to Arunachala, irresistibly attracted and swept off his feet by a tremendous benevolent Force ; how he was one with it deep down within his heart almost oblivious of his body and surroundings ; and how only later on he gradually regained the use of his senses and mind and was able to look about and commune with others when they approached him.

Subsequently too, when I had come to Bhagavan for good, the effect of his proximity continued the same way and I may say that there was no necessity for any sadhana in particular on my part. Along with a few other inmates I had my share in the work of the Ashram in the elevating company of Bhagavan and I studied his few works, devotional and philosophical, and heard his replies to various questions put by visitors. But the most important thing was the mere Presence, the spiritually uplifting company of Bhagavan. As Bhagavan says in the *Supplement to the Reality in Forty Verses* : "If one associates with Sages, where is the need for any other rigorous sadhana? No one looks for a fan when there is the pleasant southern breeze."



The climax of my spiritual experience in the proximity of Bhagavan was during his 'last' moments. As I stood in that small room along with a very few others, everything became shadow enveloped by one indivisible Pure Awareness, the one and only ever-present Reality. And so there was not the least feeling of any separation from Bhagavan or the least vestige of sorrow on that account. Not only that, there was a positive ecstasy and elation of spirit which is nothing but the Natural State of the Self.

All those who approached Bhagavan with spiritual earnestness have had this experience of direct contact with the Divine at the very first sight of Bhagavan. Ganapati Muni, the

great poet and *tapaswin*, saw an adept (a *Siddha Purusha*, a Perfect Being) in Bhagavan the moment he first beheld him by chance on the Hill in the Ashram of Jataiswami. The scholar became a disciple. Venkataramanier of Satyamangalam saw Bhagavan as a clear manifestation of the all-pervading Supreme Self and sang his five superb *Hymns in Praise of Ramana*. Humphreys saw Bhagavan as a glowing centre of Divine Radiance. Achyuta Dasa, Narayana Guru and so many others seeing Bhagavan recognised his unique spiritual greatness. Pascaline Mallet, a French lady, who stayed with Bhagavan for a few months sang in a poem in praise of Bhagavan : "One Light, One Life, One Love, shining through Thee, we see". And Grant Duff (Douglas Ainslee), the cultured scholar and poet, says in his Preface to Bhagavan's *Five Hymns to Arunachala* : "I was in direct contact with one who had passed beyond the boundaries of the senses and was merged in the Absolute Self. I do not need any proof of the divinity of Ramana Maharshi, just as I do not need any to prove the existence of the Sun."

What is the secret behind the common experience of Divine Glory which so many intelligent devotees have had in the presence of Bhagavan? Here is the answer given by Ganapati Muni, in his remarkable *Hymn of Forty Verses in Praise of Bhagavan* : "Bow down to the holy Guru Ramana who reaching the hidden source of the ego within has effaced all differentiation and shines forth as the One Self of all beings with various mental propensities and who is resplendent as the One Reality transcending the body and the entire world-manifestation." "I bow to Sri Ramana, the Great Teacher, the remover of all sorrow, who established in the Eternal Abode of Pure Awareness dispels the ignorance of earnest seekers, who though seeing and moving with the world stands as the Supreme Being transcending it."

Whatever is seen is non-self and the Seer alone is the unchanging Self. When we take to Self-enquiry holding on to this fundamental principle of Vedanta, the physical body, the life-current operating in it and the mind are eliminated as non-self. Even the intellect, the

highest known principle in man with its reasoning faculty, has to be discarded as non-self as it is only the faculty of one behind it, claiming it as his. Who is he? He cannot stand by himself and so he disappears. What then remains as the source of the elusive I-sense in us is the ultimate Self, which is ever there as the Ground of all that appears and disappears, of all perception in the waking and dream states and non-perception of anything in deep sleep.

Though the truth of the ultimate Self is explained within a few steps like this, the enveloping power of a mysterious force of darkness known as *āvarana* in Vedanta is such that it gets eradicated only after a vigilant self-enquiry constantly carried on. The inherent tendencies (*vāsanās*) of the mind based on a phantom ego get annihilated only after a continuous earnest attempt to abide at the Heart, the Source. So, Sankara says in his *Vivekachudamani* that liberation (*mukti*) is nothing but the complete eradication of the ego with all its *vāsanās*. Bhagavan says in his *Song on Atma Vidya* that Grace is needed for the dawn of Jnana as well as earnest aspiration and devotion on the part of the seeker to deserve it. When earnest effort and Grace meet, then there is the achievement of the highest spiritual aspiration of man, viz., spontaneous inherence in the ever-present Self.

The Self is Pure Awareness, unalloyed Awareness itself, whereas the mind is awareness of this and that. The mind cannot stand for a moment without an object because it is by its very nature a subject-object phenomenon. It disappears when it is divested of objects, unable to stand by itself. And there, the Self, the one indivisible absolute Awareness shines for ever as stated in *Sri Ramana Gita* (Ch. vii, v.5) : "When the ego which is but a phantom of the Self totally disappears, what remains is the real Self alone in all its plenitude and perfection." This is *Jnana* and this is *Mukti* (Liberation).

For one established in it thus, the subject-object phenomena may appear and disappear but he will remain for ever unsullied as Pure Awareness, since nothing has any existence apart from it. This is known as *Tanmaya*

Nishṭa. Being the Self is Awareness of the Self.

From a relative standpoint, the proximity of such a Sage, normally established in the Self under all circumstances of life serves as an eye-opener for those in the clutches of delusion and as an invaluable aid supporting them in their spiritual quest. The operation of the Spiritual Force of such enlightened Ones is not limited to the lifetime of their physical body. It continues for ever and those who think of them, surrender themselves to them, study their life and teachings and try to follow them do get into the ambit of their Grace, non-different from Supreme Divine Grace. This is the experience of so many spiritual aspirants

who had not met Bhagavan during his lifetime but devoted themselves to him on hearing of him or coming to know of him somehow or other. The enlightened Ones who are themselves timeless belong to all time and by their very nature shed light on the path of seekers and help them in ever so many ways.

Ultimately one sees that one has no existence apart from Pure Awareness, that there is no world apart from it and that there is no other God than Pure Awareness. Blissful Awareness is the sole Reality. Manifestation as the Many is nothing but its *Lila*. Every one, in manifestation, has to play his part knowing at heart that it is all nothing but *Lila*, the only Reality being Absolute Blissful Awareness.

A PRAYER

.....

By
Anne Hall

Arunachala, O blazing Sun,
Dispel the darkness dense surrounding me,
Destroy my doubts and fears, enfold me
In the warmth and brightness of your being.

Arunachala, voracious tiger,
Devour, destroy this separate "me"
And make my being wholly yours,
Infinite and free.

Arunachala, heart of the rose,
Waft towards me your fragrance soft,
Lift me above the thorns that hurt me.

Arunachala, O Hill of gold,
Help me climb your path divine
That I may reach at last the safety
Of your all-embracing arms.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

By **SRI MURUGANAR**
Translated from Tamil by
Prof. K. Swaminathan

467.

Do not perform as if it were worth doing
Every action that the unclear mind
Decides or fancies it should do.
To act as you are moved to act
By the grace of God, the life of life,
Is the wisest way of worship true.

468.

Surrendering, letting go and lifting
Both hands in worship, the chaste Lady found
Her *sari* growing and her honour safe
By grace mysterious, while the ruffians
Stripping her slumped upon the floor.

469.

Those who seek no security
But, leaning childlike on our Mother
Awareness pure and absolute,
Have reached the Lord's Feet, stand by
nature
Steadfast in His service, free
From ignorant Maya's urge which makes
One think "I am the body".

470.

The Lord who has supplied this day
Your need will surely always do it.
Take no thought for the morrow then.
Placing at His Feet your burdens
Live ever care-free.

471.

Absorption in *yoga* and *tapas* austere,
Effort with the aim of becoming
An instrument of Siva, even this
Is a blemish in the perfect state
Of spontaneous service in Self-surrender.

472.

Having as a servant settled down,
One should not even let a thought arise
That 'I am a servant'. In such egoless
And silent stillness, mere abidance
In pure Being, is indeed the radiance
Of true Awareness.

473.

Abiding as the heart within the heart
The Lord ordains all deeds as destined.
Hence if we stand unswerving and inhering
In the Self, then all things will proceed
Unerring and unhampered.

474.

"Who plants a tree will water it."
Those with this faith will have no care.
If one sees the tree drying up,
The pathetic sight is the sole concern
Of him who sees it.

475.

Since the Lord alone abides, the source
Of all, whatever is surrendered
To the Lord, the root,
Serves all the living world,
The whole big banyan tree.

476.

Whether one is or one is not
Engaged in work, one gains the state
Of non-action only when the ego
With its proud delusion 'I am the doer'
Dies and disappears.

477.

To those who wholly dedicate
 Their being to the Lord, to them,
 The Lord gives here and now Himself.
 And only those who are egoless
 And so aware that they are That
 Rejoice in the supernal bliss
 Of the pure Siva-awareness.

478.

With power of discernment gained at the
 Lord's
 Own peerless Feet, the ego-sense
 The form of 'I' surceasing, the self-loss
 Of self-surrender at His sacred Feet,
 This surely is the only end
 Of *bbakti's* manifold labours.

479.

The Lord abides as everything.
 Apart from Him nothing exists.
 Hence do not try to stand apart.
 Surrender of the fickle ego vile
 Is the mark of supreme *bbakti*, where
 The bliss of peace prevails.

480.

"Give yourself to God," they say.
 But is it ours to give, not His already?
 Now at least let us repent
 The theft and at His lotus Feet
 Put back what we had stolen.

481.

"Since I have nothing as my will
 May your will alone prevail."
 He who thus rejoices
 In the will divine
 Has no cause at all for fear.

482.

In the heart where dwells the Lord
 In the loved Form of Self-awareness,
 Refusing ingress
 To any thought by *vasana* wafted
 Is the Self's self-offering to the Lord.

483.

Total relinquishment of self-will,
 The attitude "Thy will, not mine,"
 This is true surrender following
 The extinction of the ego vile,
 That aggressive, original veiling power.

484.

Looking within, where is that crook
 Who regards and wrongly claims
 What belongs to the infinite Lord almighty
 As 'I' and then as 'mine'?

485.

When the ego in log-like stillness
 Dies and lies motionless, as food
 For Siva-*sakti*, only then
 True self-surrender is attained,
 For then alone the unfading bliss
 Of peace prevails.

486.

As from a jaggery image we break off
 A pinch and make an offering of it
 To the same sweet jaggery god,
 Such clearly is our fond surrender
 Of our spirit to the Lord who is all spirit.

487.

Unconditionally place your mind
 At the Feet of Him who is ever one
 With His *sakti*, Then ends the trick
 Of 'I' and 'mine', and radiant Being,
 The bliss supreme, prevails.

THE FIELD OF BUDDHISM

By

Christmas Humphreys

THE total field of Buddhism is so enormous, in geographical extent and range of subject, that it has no rival on earth. In the course of 2500 years the Buddha's message to each human being has been so widely spread that even to-day it is known and practised in one form or another by nearly one third of the human race. But in the course of time the doctrine has acquired a variety of forms with emphasis in each on a different aspect or particular. These schools or sects have arisen thousands of miles apart and sometimes with a thousand years between them. The student, therefore, who seeks news of the Buddhist Way will find available a choice of guides whose advice to him will vary. If he seeks to resolve the conflict in their views upon the Way, and the shortest cut to the end of it, he may find help from a student who is pledged to no one school but who studies all in turn and, as a Buddhist, applies his own blend of Buddhist principles to his own development and inner needs.

The field is divisible into two main parts; the one, certainly the oldest surviving School as such, being found in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and parts of South-East Asia, and the other, considerably developed, in Tibet and South Mongolia, in China, Korea and Japan. These two great Schools, the Southern or *Theravada*, the 'Teaching of the Elders', and Northern or *Mahayana*, the 'Greater Vehicle' of salvation as it was claimed to be, may well be viewed in the figure of two concentric circles. The smaller, nearer the source of the Teaching, is more compact in form. Much of its Canon was written down in Ceylon about 100 B.C. and is to-day available in Pali and, thanks to the work of the Pali Text Society, in English. The Mahayana, having expanded in all directions, turns the figure of two circles into a wheel, for the spokes of individual research

have landed those who moved in opposite directions a long way from each other. Being so much larger, produced in so many countries and languages, and in such a wide range of time, it is far more diffuse, and even self-contradictory, for it has no settled Canon, and is still progressing happily within that ever-new yet ever-old 'space-time continuum' which is beyond the accidents of history, or the words, however well preserved, of any man.

Yet it is remarkably complete. No other system of thought, to use the best term available, can claim such range of achievement. The Theravada, best described in Western terms as a moral-philosophy for daily use, has a magnificent ethical teaching based on applied philosophy, and in the Abhidhamma section of the Pali Canon is a complex system of psychology which analyses consciousness to a degree as yet unknown in the West. But this did not satisfy the Indian mind. The Mahayanist thinkers, some of them men who rank with the world's greatest minds, quite soon developed a range of metaphysics and philosophy which is second to none known then or since. On the basis of *Sunyata*, the doctrine of the Void, and the unity of life which is the rational basis of compassion, they evolved a Buddhist mysticism which only differs from other forms of it by leaving out the device (*upaya*) of a personal God to fill the otherwise unlimited horizon of the mind. Even religion was not omitted, and between the Shin Sect of Japan and certain forms of Christianity there is little to choose in practice. When to all this is added the ritualistic sects of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, and the amazing combination of Tantra, Buddhism and indigenous nature-worship which dominates Tibet, it is clear that the choice is ample for every type of mind save that which learns to eschew all scriptures, ritual and mental crutches, and leaps, with

naked mind, straight to the summit. The few belonging to this type, as the other climbers declare, are obviously mad, but the man of Ch'an or Zen smiles sweetly and with the finger of silence points to the moon of deliverance, that utter freedom which can liberate the mind from the subtlest fetter, even the foolish thought that it is free.

Are all these Schools developments of the original teaching, or degenerate and heretical conceits? I agree with Dr. Edward Conze. "To regard all later Buddhist history as the record of the 'degeneration' of an 'original' gospel is like regarding an oak tree as a degeneration of an acorn. In this book I assume that the doctrine of the Buddha, conceived in its full breadth, width, majesty and grandeur, comprises all those teachings which are linked to the original teaching by historical continuity, and which work out methods leading to the extinction of individuality by eliminating belief in it".¹

What do the members of the various schools have to say to one another? There is genuine tolerance, complete from the Mahayanist point of view, for to them all schools have the same centre, the recorded teaching of the Buddha as found in the Theravada Canon. The Theravadins, though never resorting to violence, or even to non-co-operation in matters common to all Buddhists, are inclined to a view which has much to recommend it, that the Buddha-Dhamma is to be found in the Pali Canon which, though not written down until the 1st century, B.C., is nevertheless the record, transmitted by memory, of the actual teaching of the All-Enlightened One. Therefore, they say, any additional teaching, however interesting, reasonable and based on the Canon, is not the Buddha-Dhamma, but a commentary upon it. The Mahayanist replies, first, that Mahayana teachings are all implicit, if not explicit, in the Theravada Canon; secondly, that many of them even in their present form, are as old as anything in the Pali records; and finally, that their own teaching far transcends the accidents of time and space, and therefore the limitations inherent in any one man's teaching whenever given to mankind.

What, then, is the essential difference, if any, between the two main Schools? The philosophic basis of the Mahayana, the doctrine of the Void, is only the extension of the *anatta* doctrine to the 9th degree, and the metaphysics of Mind-Only are a logical extension of the Samsara-Nirvana teaching of the Theravadins. Rather it is the Bodhisattva ideal as distinct from the Arhat ideal which is the distinguishing mark of all Mahayana schools. Let us, then, examine this profound, though in my view complementary difference, from the viewpoint of its value in daily life.

There was a time in Buddhist history when the difference between the Arhat and the Bodhisattva ideals was so great that the latter or Mahayana School was actually known as the Bodhisattva-yana, as if this change of emphasis expressed the scope and purpose of what, geographically, came to be the Northern School of Buddhism. Yet my own researches into Buddhism and Western psychology lead me to believe that the actual difference is that of complementary emphasis, as in the sex of humanity. If this be so, then a study of the difference, its origin and psychological significance, is of value to all who tread the Way. If Professor Jung is right, our minds are so constructed that in certain complementary powers and attributes we are all more one than the other. Balance is an abstract ideal, but the man who was truly and permanently balanced would have to stay still, for the act of walking, and therefore of walking on, is itself a rapid alternation between left and right, and all progress is in fact an increasing approach of the 'opposites'.

But each 'opposite' has its own opposite within it. Each of the ideals here examined is only an extreme form of a type. Each has within it the dark side of the light, the vice of its virtue, the psychological shadow of its own unconscious equivalent. And it is this 'serpent coiled within the flower' of the virtue which attacks intolerantly the opposing point of view.

It is therefore more than an intellectual exercise to consider the two ideals of the Arhat

¹ *Buddhism*, pp. 27-8.

and the Bodhisattva, to see how each in turn was corrupted by its ever-tempting vice, to find out, each for himself, his own particular ideal and why he pursues it ; and to admit the right possessed by his neighbour to pursue the other.

Who is the Arhat ? In the earlier form of Buddhism, the Theravada, or Way of the Elders, the Arhat state was the goal of Buddhist endeavour, the result of treading to the end the Eightfold Middle Way to self-Enlightenment. The Arhat was a man made perfect, for he had purged himself of the Fetters, destroyed the Roots of evil, put out the Three Fires of lust, hatred and illusion, attained the full range of spiritual powers and achieved Enlightenment. He had reached the fourth 'initiation' ; having 'entered the stream', he had become a 'once-returner', then a 'never-returner', and finally had achieved the state of an Arhat who, being self-liberated from the Wheel of Samsara, need never be reborn. He was, in brief, a man who had perfectly fulfilled his task, who has attained the Goal of Buddhism.

In all this there is, nevertheless, an inherent danger. The whole process is introverted ; the emphasis is ever on self and the improvement of self. It is true that in Buddhist practice stress is laid on the elimination of what is usually thought of as the self, but whether the worker thinks of a self to be purified and enlightened, or of a self to be destroyed, he is thinking of 'himself' in its manifold parts, and not of any other. And what is selfishness but over-regard by the individual for the welfare and future of that which lies within his skin ? The danger is actual, and was early seen. The Buddha's exhortation to his first Disciples was to go forth and preach the Dhamma, to make it known for the welfare and the benefit of all mankind. Yet all too soon man, a would-be Arhat, became a self-centred ascetic, concentrated on his own enlightenment to the detriment of an equal duty, to make known to all men the Wisdom which he had attained. In the result, the ordinary 'warm-hearted' laymen came to regard these cold, impersonal zealots as one-sided, lacking a sense of community with their fellow men with their

problems and their several roads to enlightenment. A movement arose to pay more attention to the needs of all men, to the exclusion, it might be, of one's own. From such a movement was the Bodhisattva doctrine born, to restore the balance of a Middle Way from which the zeal of the few had led them into the darkness of extremes.

What, then, is a Bodhisattva ? Much ink has been spent on the word's etymology, yet for present purposes it may be taken as a compound of *bodhi*, Wisdom, and *sattva*, which can mean essence, being or higher mind. One whose essence is wisdom is therefore a Bodhisattva, but the word gives little of its practical meaning. A Bodhisattva was the converse of the Arhat in that his prime purpose was to save mankind. He was extroverted to his fellows' needs, and his own were of no importance. He was the dedicated servant of all men, and so long as the least of them lacked enlightenment he vowed to refuse for himself that guerdon of a thousand lives. Even the nature of the Goal was expanded, and Bodhi was held to be a far higher state than that of the Arhat who, by his own tremendous efforts, attained Nirvana. Later, the distinction was carried still further, and the older ideal was contrasted with that of Buddhahood, the Arhat remaining fixed at his own salvation, while the Buddha rose higher and higher in the celestial firmament and saved, in the process, all mankind.

Yet even in this flower the serpent lies concealed. It may seem nobler to speak and dream of a love for all mankind than to concentrate on the ending of the self within. The danger of losing the Middle Way in the darkness of *avidya* (ignorance) is quite as great. The Arhat-minded pilgrim argues thus : "There is a cleansing to be done ; the 'I' must cease to do evil, learn to do good, and then cleanse its own heart. So shall there be an end to selfishness, and thereby to the cause of suffering. Thereby the mind will be expanded until all sense of self is ended, and it is filled with the Light of Enlightenment. *What other mind can I so cleanse, so expand, so enlighten, but my own ?*"

The argument is well-founded. As is written in the *Dhammapada*, 'You yourself must make

the effort. (Even) Buddhas do but point the Way. And again, "Though one conquers a thousand times a thousand men in battle, he who conquers himself is the greatest warrior." And again, "Irrigators guide water; fletchers straighten arrows; carpenters bend wood; wise men shape themselves". It is far easier to fill the heart with love for all mankind than to give up smoking, far easier to 'help' your neighbour to save himself than to root out of the mind 'one fond offence'. The Bodhisattva ideal, in other words, may lead to laziness, to the replacing of hard work by woolly thinking, and the mind's control and enlightenment by the flabby sentiment of vague goodwill. As Mark Twain truly pointed out, to be good is noble, but to teach others to be good is nobler, and less trouble!

Both ideals, then, have their purpose and their dangers, their use and their abuse. What is the value of the distinction to you and me? It is this, that all of us are more developed in one of each of the pairs of opposites in human faculty. We are more intellectual or emotional, turned inward or outward, concerned with our neighbours' or with our own affairs.

The first step to the right use of our present talents is therefore to find out more about ourselves. What is our natural line of development, and have we upon that line already reached excess? Having decided on which side of the Middle Way we stand (and none of us stand entirely upon it), we can decide our future self-development. Is it to be by a greater emphasis on self or on others, on inner or outward activity? The answer is for the individual, and the self-answer must be true. Am I running away from the task of self-improvement by interfering, though with the best intentions, in my neighbour's affairs, or am I spending too much time on self-development because I am frankly little interested in the affairs and problems of mankind?

By now the truth of all this must be obvious to the humblest student. It is that neither ideal is better, the Arhat or the Bodhisattva, and neither alone is 'right'. Psychology provides

in this as in every human problem the needful answer. How can a man achieve 'Enlightenment' who is yet indifferent to the needs of others? Can the right foot go on a journey and leave the left behind? Can the head achieve where the heart is ignorant, or the heart remain indifferent as the vision clears? Conversely, can the genuine and persistent worker for his fellow men fail to achieve the ennobling of all faculty, the heart's release from personal desire, the death of self, the increasing vision of the mind? In brief, we must all be Arhats, working diligently at the dull and tedious task of removing faults to make way for virtues, and steadily gaining control of a mind new-purified. At the same time we must all be Bodhisattvas, steadily expanding the heart with true compassion, 'feeling with' those forms of life whose need is equal to our own. Both ideas are needed; neither alone is true. Yet for the time being we must choose the greater emphasis, for only on the higher reaches of the Path shall we discover that there is no difference between them, nor any between thee and me, and between this and that, between any part and the all-conserving Whole.

Buddhism, then, is a whole, and should be studied as such. What part of it is first applied, what relative emphasis is laid on any one of the dozen doctrines which together form the basis of the Buddha's teaching, is for the individual to decide. But whatever the choice, let the whole remain in the mind as the background to the part being then applied. Thus tolerance lives and grows with new experience, and the Western Buddhist, who is not born in a country attached to any school, can enter each as he pleases, learn what it has to teach him, and move to another as he wills. Or it may be that, just as Buddhism in Tibet and Burma and Japan is largely different, so the Buddhism of the West may in time be different still. It is no matter. To the man who sees world Buddhism as one it matters not what the form may be that for the moment helps him to work out his own salvation with diligence. So that this, the Buddha's supreme command, be obeyed, what matter the means?

PERSON OR SELF?

By
Norman Fraser

SOME years ago while working as librarian of the Buddhist Society in London I had the unique opportunity of browsing among the hundreds of volumes collected together during a lifetime of research by that great western Buddhist, Christmas Humphreys. I was already well acquainted with the basics of Buddhism with which I found myself in complete accord. There was, however, one very important principle which kept on bothering me : *anattā*. So I busied myself with the Pali Canon, etc., in the hope of coming to a definite understanding of this matter.

Now, under the influence of diehard Theravadists, I was almost convinced to accept the doctrine that I did not exist. Yes, there it was, the centre of arguments : *anattā* — was not the Buddha himself known as *Anattāvādi*? However, the other main influence in my life at the time was my friend Joel Goldsmith who, though a student of Buddhism, taught no such thing as *anattā* as understood from the Hinayana. So my problem was how to reconcile the seemingly opposed approaches to reality.

Before his *mabā-samādbi* Joel had told us about Ramana Maharshi and recommended us to take *The Mountain Path* which was about to appear. A study of Bhagavan's teachings in the *Collected Works* and Arthur Osborne's excellent book about them gave me the vital connecting link.

The very postulation of *Atma-Vicāra* is a confident affirmation that I exists even if I

does not at the time know who I is ! And we must remember that the Buddha never actually denied the *Atman*, and Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life".

It seems to me that the great misunderstanding, the mist that went up from the earth (in Genesis) and watered the whole face of the ground, was man's somehow coming to think that he had a 'selfhood' apart from the one and only Self. Jesus spent most of his time combating this error in one way or another, and I am now convinced that Siddārtha did the same in his own way. But both were misunderstood and misquoted though St. John's gospel and some of the Mahayana *sutras* point plainly to the truth — when one's eyes are open.

When understood, most of the great teachers of all times have stressed the necessity to wake up from the false sense of self — what C. G. Jung called the of-itself-created *persona* ; what Mrs. Eddy called the non-existent mortal mind ; to name only two well-known figures of our times whose philosophies, at any rate on the surface, could not have been more widely separated. But it is Bhagavan, with his reiterated insistence on "who am I?" who has, so to speak, put the matter in a nutshell and given us the sure way to the intuitive wordless understanding of what Is. It was his life's work well done and mankind will learn to be grateful for this unique ray of light he has left in the world.

"*Sat* denotes being beyond *sat* and *asat* ;
Chit beyond *chit* and *achit* ;
Ananda beyond bliss and non-bliss."

— Sri Ramana Maharshi

ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM

By

Moti Lal Pandit

(The author will write a series of articles, in which an attempt will be made, by analysing the philosophies of contemporary philosophers, in locating the crisis of man, namely, alienation and atheism. This is the first article in this series and deals with Nietzsche. Finally, the author will write a series of articles on Bbagavan Ramana with the intention of finding out an antidote for this sickness)

Introduction

EXISTENTIALISM, as a movement, has usually been identified, both by its followers and opponents, with atheism. But this is not correct. There are existential philosophers, such as Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel, who are theists. However Sartre, one of the foremost (French) existential philosophers, identifies existentialism with atheism. He believes that existentialism is the only philosophy which is consistent with its atheistic conclusions. Sartre does not deny the fact that there are other forms of atheism. But, according to him, they are insignificant in the sense that they do not dare to draw final conclusions from their atheistic attitudes and apply them consistently to life. It is existentialism alone which has the courage of applying the conclusions of atheistic philosophy to life.

Failing to understand existentialism as a unified movement, Sartre makes existentialism atheistic because he himself is an atheist.

Those existential philosophers who reject the existence of God do not borrow their atheistic doctrines from Kant or Comte. The denial of God is based more on anthropological and criteriological considerations. The argument runs like this : If man exists, God cannot exist, since the co-existence of both is impossible. But man certainly exists. Therefore, God does not exist. To understand the whole argument about the non-existence of God held by these philosophers, it is important, first of all, to know their view of man.

Man is Freedom

The very word "freedom" has two aspects : negative as well as positive. It is negative in the sense that freedom implies absence of determination and positive in the sense that it presupposes a certain amount of autonomy. Now both these aspects belong to man.

The existential philosophers conceive freedom in its negative aspect because they reject the view of those scientists who hold that man is nothing but the "result" of some forces. Thus some thinkers thought man was the "result" of economic and social forces, whereas others held that man was nothing but the "outcome" of various biological forces. Those who believed in psychoanalysis thought of man in terms of drives of the *Id*. Man was thus made a child as well as a victim of forces. He was treated in the same manner as any other object of nature. Thus he was robbed of his humanity. It was against this tendency that the existentialists rebelled. If man is simply the product of processes, then he is *nothing*. But this is not true. Man is a subject.

Man, since he is not a *thing*, cannot be explained by his antecedents. A thing, since it is the product of forces, can be described in terms of its antecedents. If we know the forces which have influenced the being of a thing, we know everything about it. A thing is only a point in the endless evolution of the cosmos. There is nothing new in it with reference to

powers that have determined its being. A thing is, therefore, relative in the sense that it is not *itself*, but merely a part of the material universe. It has no capacity of transcending its antecedents. In other words, the being of a thing is determined solely by those forces which rule the universe. These forces of the universe do not know that they are forces. Neither are they aware of their results. They are blind. The thing is not aware of its being, but is determined by blind forces.

Man cannot be reduced to the category of things. Man's being is not a result of blind forces. If we think that man is the result of forces, then we reduce him to the status of things. In other words, then man would be nothing. Although man's being is influenced by the forces of the universe, yet he cannot be totally a result of them. Then, what makes man capable of transcending the blind forces and their results? It is his subjectivity.

It is the subjectivity in man which pierces the blind darkness of the universe. It is through this subjectivity that there is something. Man transcends being as a result of his subjectivity. Thus, it is in this sense of transcendence that freedom means negation of determinism. Hence man as a subject is free in the sense that he has the possibility of transcending his being as a thing. No doubt, man's being is also determined by forces. But if there are necessity, results and forces, it is because of man's subjectivity. Man's being is the "letting be" of the universe.

When we speak of human freedom, we are not describing it as a quality or something that is attached to man. Freedom must be understood as that which concerns the *being* of man on the level of his being human. In other words, it means that man as a subject is free. It is only against this background that we can grasp the meaning of the freedom of human action.

Freedom, in a positive sense, expresses a certain autonomy of man as a subject. Man is not totally a result and product of processes; his being as a subject is a being-*himself*. It means that the being of man as a subject is a "being out of himself"

(*aus-sich-sein*). Man, as a subject, is not a part of the cosmos; but subsists in *himself*.

Now it may be asked: What is man *himself*? Man is a "self", an "I", a person. Since man as a subject is free, his being is to be understood on the basis of his *own* being (*esse proprium*): hence man's being is "non-generated" (*ingeneratum*) in the sense that it is not the result of processes. In other words, man subsists in *himself* as a person.

Man as Rational and Ethical

Man's superiority lies in the fact that he is rational. Boethius defines man as an "individual substance of a rational nature". Superiority of man over the other forms of life is signified by his "I". This *I* in man is a natural light, a light through which he subsists in himself. It is this "I" which makes the world subservient to man. This natural light is also referred to as "the light of reason". It is this reason which gives objective meaning and lets the meaning appear.

To be free does not mean to be free from certain obligations. Man's freedom is not without certain claims; otherwise it is no freedom. The subjectivity unconceals itself as freedom, and freedom reveals itself in terms of reason; therefore the existent subject is the centre and power that lets meaning appear. This meaning, which springs forth from the subject, is an objective meaning in the sense that the light of reason is an objective light: hence meaning is not left to the whims of the subject. The subject, therefore, is the "letting be" of reality. Therefore, man's subjectivity is related to objectivity. Hence the freedom of an existent subject is not absolute.

Man's activity is not a "process" in the sense that man transcends the dimension of processes and forces. Man, as a subject, is a person. To be a person means that man's being is distinct from other beings. In other words, man's being possesses a certain autonomy.

The autonomy of man's being reveals itself in his activity. It means that man himself is the source of his actions in so far as his actions

are human. Human actions are not deterministic in the sense that they spring forth from the centre of "I". It is this 'I' which breaks the deterministic chain of processes. Hence the result of any action is new in reference to those forces which influence man. In other words, every human action has a meaning which is *new*. Man's actions are free in so far as he acts *himself*.

Human action can never be divorced from the facticity of a situation. If it were so, then the I of man would remain isolated. But this is not so. Therefore, human action always "co-proceeds" from man *himself*. Man's subjectivity is not what it is; it is a subjectivity which is involved in the facticity. In other words, when I say that I *myself* performed this action, I mean that my action is not exclusively the result of deterministic forces; but it also means that without facticity my action would not be what it is.

What are the consequences of such an insight? It tells us that justice is impossible without a juridical order; that there can be no personal morality if we do not take the biological and sociological conscience into account.

The activity of the subject is not being influenced by the facticity of the situation in its causal aspect; rather the facticity tells or informs the subject about the nature of the situation. It is not the facticity which makes me to act in the manner I act; rather the facticity reveals itself to me in such a manner that I am able to take a particular decision.

Man's existence is "at" the world the sense that it is *Agere* (to act). In other words, man's existence is the execution of a project. This execution is free and, therefore, human self-realization. Human self-realization means that man realises his essence by *himself*. Therefore, we may say that human existence is a history.

We must keep in mind that human self-realization is never complete in the sense that every Yes is affected by a No: hence every new value reveals itself as non-value in reference to new values and actions. Therefore, human existence can never stand still in a

"factual" situation; it can never be goaded by a negativity which is inherent in man's being. Man must go ahead. In other words, it means that man *is* not, because the being of man is a "having to be"; it is an *avoir a etre*, *a zui sein*. Since man is a task in the world, he is "unfinished" in the sense that he, being a task, is a man in so far as his task is unfinished. If man gives up his task, he becomes a thing; therefore, he is not free, because the being of a thing is neither a task nor a subject.

The being of the subject is *Velle* (to will) as well as *cogitare* (to think). The subject is *Velle* in the sense that man is light for himself as well as for the world. This *Cogitare* is an objective light and, therefore, bound to the objectivity of existence. Therefore, man is a being which concerns himself with the *objectivity* of his being. In other words, man concerns himself with the "understanding" of his being. This understanding is characterized by a pre-predicative awareness of the existence of reality.

To say that man as *Agere* realizes himself in the world means that his activity is accompanied by an awareness which is related to the objectivity of his own essence. This takes place because in man there is awareness. It is this awareness of the objectivity of one's essence which saves man from the dictates of whims. It is this fact – the subject as *Velle* and *Cogitare* – which has made the existence of universal laws and norms possible. These universal norms are not written in heaven, but exist in "the hearts of men".

It is within this framework that some of the ideas, we have so far described, can serve as a basis for the explanation of atheistic existentialism. Some of the existential philosophers reject God on the basis of human freedom and ethics.

We shall concentrate our attention on the atheism of Nietzsche, for he was the first philosopher who openly rebelled against God on anthropological grounds. In Nietzsche atheism is not simply a conceptual formulation, but a *demand*. These atheistic ideas of Nietzsche influenced, in one way or the other, all the later existential philosophers who profess atheism as their religion.

Nietzschean Atheism

It is very difficult to give a chronological account of the progress of the atheistic ideas of Nietzsche. His philosophy is not systematic in the same sense as that of Kant or Hegel. He speaks about man in a thousand ways, but never wrote a "treatise" on man.

Nietzsche's philosophy is addressed to man himself. In what does this address consist? It is: "Will a Self and your will become a Self". When Nietzsche speaks of the Self, he is not speaking in personalistic terms. His Self is to be understood in a bodily sense. Thus he would define man as "body entirely and nothing more and the soul only as a name for something in the body". Nietzsche's primary emphasis is on body and, therefore,—if we can say so—his personalism is biological.

It is on this biological basis that Nietzsche divides the human race into two classes: the healthy and the weak. Both types of men suffer. The sick suffer because of their ailments and, therefore, desire to eliminate suffering. Since it is not possible to uproot suffering, the sick man's attitude towards life is pessimistic. This pessimism leads to passivity which results in human decadence. Therefore, the sick man is a slave rather than a master. The strong man, on the other hand, suffers not because of the misery of life, but because of overflow of life. He understands well that greatness springs forth from suffering and, therefore, does not desire to abolish suffering, since it is a means to higher values, that is, becoming a strong Self.

Since the weak ones are undesirable, they have no right to exist. The strong ones have a right to exist on the ground that their's is a cry of Yes to the world. It is Yes which enables them to do violence to themselves and to others, to rise higher and higher in power and domination. It is, in short, the message of Zarathustra.

Thus we can sum up Nietzsche's philosophy of man in these words: "Life is Will to Power". Will to power is an animating force in everything. All the higher forms of conscious life are characterized by this animating

principle. Thus all truths and values, religious beliefs, memory and forgetfulness, etc., are the outcome of this principle.

The will to power is a primordial cosmic will. It urges the strong to a ruthless exploitation and suppression of the weak.

Nietzsche constantly wages war against that kind of philosophy which strives to make happiness the definition and goal of human life. Not happiness but power is the end and goal of all forms of conscious life. Thus every living organism desires an "increase of power" (*Plus von Macht*.) To desire happiness means to will decay. To be truly manly one must live a life of danger in which one is forsaken and despised.

The Superman

A man who lives authentically has two characteristics: he says Yes to the world and is dominated by the will to power. But, as Nietzsche observes, the man of the present and of the past has lived an unauthentic life. "Verily, my friends, I walk among men as among the fragments and limbs of human beings. . . . The present and the bygone upon the earth—ah my friends—that is my own unbearable trouble and I should not know how to live if I were not a seer of what is to come".

The future man, that is, the Superman, is yet a distant goal. The present civilisation has sunk into a degenerate existence, because in it the will to power has been renounced. The possibility of future man will dawn at that juncture of history when he will be able to say Yes to the world. In other words, when man will be able to say Yes to the will to power and act accordingly. But, this, man can do only if he overcomes himself. Man is a transition, a bridge between the animal and the Superman. He is not a goal in himself.

The advent of the Superman will be terrible for those petty slaves who teach goodness and love. It is not these virtues which will generate the Superman. It is wickedness which is the main feature of the will to power. "The vilest is necessary for the Superman's best".

Another version of the Superman is this. The Superman will be the highest type of the human species. All men will not reach this stage. Only a selected few will have the courage to aspire for this stage. These few will be the lords of the earth. The higher type of men will demand strict discipline from themselves; they will delight in their own suffering; their strength will consist in their courage rather than in a virtuous life. No moral code will be applicable to them: hence all crimes will be allowed to them except weakness. It is they who will be the justification of life. "God hath died: now do we desire the Superman to live".

God is Dead

Now the advent of the Superman is possible only if all obstructions are removed. What is the main obstacle to the realization of the Superman? It is God.

Nietzsche rejects the existence of God on the ground that if God is allowed to exist, then man cannot fulfil his vocation. In other words, the existence of God will imperil man's becoming a Superman. Once the Superman is generated, he will overcome God.

Man invents God because he attributes power to a person stronger than himself, and this person is God. Therefore, the origin of religion lies in man's awareness of the existence of power. This feeling of power seems strange and heavy to man. He is not ready to recognise the fact that it is his emotions which give rise to the sense of power in him. On the contrary, he reaches to the conclusion that it is some other being which controls him. Thus the idea of God represents man's weakness.

It may be asked: In what way does God obstruct the advent of the Superman? God, declares Nietzsche, becomes the source of obstruction in the way of the will to power in so far as all moral precepts are connected with him. Morality destroys the instinct of life in man. "The holy man who pleases God is the ideal castrate... Life ends where 'God's Kingdom' begins".

The other obstruction which God creates is the idea that all men are equal. It is an inven-

tion of the mass, which desires to take revenge on the strong. The impotent and unhealthy "are glad in their inmost heart that there is a standard according to which those who are over-endowed with intellectual goods and privileges, are equal to them; they contend for the 'equality of all before God'.... It is among them that the most powerful antagonists of atheism are found. Therefore, the death of God is necessary.

The rejection of God, says Nietzsche, is also necessary because we must recognise the original "innocence" of man. This is necessary so that man can say Yes to the world. The world, according to Nietzsche, is neither good nor bad. All human actions are innocent. No human action is moral or immoral. It is foolish to say that this action is good and that action bad.

The belief in God has hidden all that springs from power; rather it has elevated that which is born of weakness. Anything that is born of weakness is evil. Man must take revenge on God, because he penetrates every corner of man's being. Therefore, "man cannot endure it that such a witness should live".

The Tragedy of Man

Nietzsche also prophesied the consequences of the death of God. He not only wrote about the past and the present, but also about the future. The future, according to him, will be without God. The future will bring the "triumph of Nihilism". Since God is dead, man can no longer worship or pray. Therefore, man cannot rely on an ultimate Goodness and Truth. Man has to live alone a helpless life on a mountain-peak covered by snow. Is man ready to face such a situation? "No one as yet has the strength to face this".

Nietzsche has no need of those atheists who believe in sound morality. He accuses them. "What guilelessness! As if morality could remain when the sanctioning deity is no longer present!" The future man, since there is no God and consequently no morality, must prepare himself for the fact that the will to annihilate will be as important as the will to create.

With the eradication of all morality, man will become equal to the animal. Hence man will not occupy a special place in the world. Man differs from other animals in this, that he is a "sick animal". The disappearance of the human species will be no great loss. It would rather purify the earth.

Finally, the death of God implies that man's life is meaningless. Without God, the world will turn into a chaos. What will remain? Nothing except the No of man, a No to all things. In other words, it will be a world of absolute Nihilism. Since nothing has a value, "nothing has a purpose". The strong ones will not be content only in saying No; they will pursue their No up to the final deed. "Annihilation by the reasoning faculty seconds annihilation by the mind".

Conclusion

What do we gather from reading Nietzsche's works? The obvious reaction of the reader would be that Nietzsche was a proud man and that his philosophical attitude towards God, man and the world is filled with rank pride. It will automatically create an angry reaction in the reader: and this is what Nietzsche desires. Nietzsche wants his works to be examined by critics. He is not concerned whether his doctrines are accepted or rejected. But he demands from a critic that he must be able to "see" what he has seen.

What actually did Nietzsche "see"? Nietzsche saw that God is dead and, therefore, all morality has become meaningless. He attacks morality, because, according to him, morality generates fear and anxiety. His rejection of God is not based on proofs, but rather on the recognition of man, which, maintains Nietzsche, demands an unconditional rejection of God. It is this thread of reasoning which runs through all the works of existential philosophers who reject God. According to them, it is impossible to recognise the authentic being of man and his dignity if we accept the existence of God.

Nietzsche realised the burden of living a life without God. Modern man seems bent

on not returning to God. What happened to the gods of Greece? Once they were abolished, they were never restored. That is what atheistic philosophers would like to do with God. But we also find glimmers of hope in certain quarters that human life and human history must have a goal. Contemporary man, in his loneliness and despair, is searching for a meaning. He has reached the conclusion that he has found the lowest level of groundlessness and that he must begin now his search for the true God, and not for a God who is a super-economist and a tyrant. There can be no true affirmation of the world, until we find that Source which makes it possible to affirm the world in a positive manner. If life is meaningless, then there can be no true Yes to the world. Man will always search for a Ground. No philosopher can deny the fact that man has been, is, and will be always in search of God, because God is not a psychological problem, but the problem of truth. The very search of man for his meaning implies that there is a Transcendental Being. Even Nietzsche, in his extreme loneliness and despair, calls God back:

Nay! Thou back!
With all of thy great tortures!
 To me the last of lonesome ones,
 Oh come thou back!
 All my hot tears in streamlets trickle
 Their course to thee!
 And all my final hearty fervour
 Up-glow'th to *thee*!
 Oh come thou back,
 Mine unfamiliar God! My pain!
 My final bliss!

A life without God and sound morality is a life of nothingness. Its extreme form of barbarity can be seen in all totalitarian countries. Camus, though an atheist, realized this fact when he wrote:

The words which reverberate for us at the confines of this long adventure of rebellion, are not formulac of optimism, for which we have no possible use in the extremities of our unhappiness, but words of courage and intelligence which on the shores of the eternal seas, even have the qualities of virtue. No possible form of

wisdom today can claim to give more. Rebellion indefatigably confronts evil, from which it can derive a new impetus. Man can master, in himself, everything that should be mastered. He should rectify in creation everything that can be rectified. And after he has done so, children will still die unjustly even in a perfect society. Even by his greatest effort, man can only propose to diminish, arithmetically, the sufferings of the

world. But the injustice and the suffering of the world will remain and, no matter how limited they are, they will not cease to be an outrage. Dimitrk Karamazov's cry 'Why'? will continue to resound through history . . .

We offer as an example, the only original rule of life today : to learn to live and to die, and in order to be a man, to refuse to be a god.

(To be continued)

The Daily Miracle

By

Dr. M. B. Bhaskaran

THE 'me', the 'ego', the feeling : 'I am so and so' or 'I am doing this or that', seems to be the essential factor determining human activities. This sense of the 'I' can exist only in relation to something, as we know it. And this relationship changes according to the pleasure or pain involved in it.

The moment the ego experiences pain or conflict in a particular area of relationship, unable to dominate or to assert, he simply alters his association. Instead of worshipping God, he begins to worship power. And the power-seeking ego clings to any environment provided the power functions through him. If the latter is denied, he rehabilitates himself to wield it in some other field through various means.

The fantastic trick that the ego plays upon himself is that he is willing to sacrifice ; he is prepared even to die, on condition that he 'attends his own funeral'.

Nevertheless, the ego dies — in deep sleep — and all his activities are absorbed by that indescribable state. Bhagavan very often points out to this daily incident. The noisy ego, merging into the deep silence of profound sleep, has lost all his self importance ; he is not even conscious of his own body. This could be the miracle of death.

The ego emerges then from that deep sleep and with him, to him, reappears the world wherein he is ready to play his old game. This could be the miracle of birth.

This is the Daily Miracle experienced by all of us.

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

By
Richard Lang

THIS brief essay is intended as a gesture of thanks towards Ramana Maharshi. Here in the West many of us feel immensely grateful to him for speaking the truth in such simple and unswerving terms as he did; we feel in close sympathy with him, for this is what our lives are about too. Our expression of the truth naturally owns a different structure and language, but the essentials are the same. The supreme and only universal question is *Who am I?* "Find it out". We have, as Ramana pointed out, misidentified ourselves with our bodies — with what we are in appearance; and so we continually lose sight of our ever-present Self who alone exists and is real. Our task, our salvation, our peace, is in finding out Who we really are, and in becoming used to living in this Light. "You are the Self. You are already That". In realizing It we are discovering nothing new, but are merely coming to our senses. It is present here and now, and the remarkable fact is that we so easily overlook It.

Ramana gives us uncomplicated guidelines for realizing our True Nature. "The fact is that you are not the body". He adds that the Self is easy to see — easier to see than the world and much clearer! "It is really like gazing into vacancy or a dazzling crystal or light." Realizing the Self is not dependent upon personal achievements — it is open to all who look, now! "There is no reaching the Self. If the Self were to be reached it would mean that the Self were not now and here . . .", moreover "realization is common to everyone. Realization knows no difference in the aspirants". Ultimately only God sees God, for humans as such are incapable of this. Again the crucial question: Who are you? Are you just human, or are you really the Self?



Sri Richard Lang

These are all radical questions and assertions. Let us have the courage and the curiosity to test them out in that spirit of direct enquiry which Ramana Maharshi exhibited. Are you the body? Are you in the world or is the world in you? Accept no-one's word as finally authoritative except your own, for in this matter you must see Who you are for yourself. No-one else can do this for you. Perhaps, however, the following guidelines may help you Home just as Maharshi's directions point the same way Home to the Self. They are simple directions and only demand that you attend freshly to what you are for yourself now, rather than to how you think or expect or remember yourself to be.

Other people appear as bodies in the world, temporary and small: they are visible forms; they come and they go; they are appearances and as such are not the Self. I see how they grow and shrink in size as their distance from me alters! The Self, however, is changeless, and, unlike bodies, is not found in the world.

I now look down at my own body. Nothing can be taken for granted here ; all must be enquired into freshly. Its two legs and arms and torso are similar to those of other bodies inasmuch as they too are in the world, complete with physical background, displaying colour and movement and so forth. So far, no sign of the featureless Self. But I continue observing my body ; it is different in one important respect from other bodies — it has no face ! Instead of finding a collection of changing human features above these shoulders, I discover I am featureless : that simply there is nothing here save transparent room or capacity for these limbs and this world. Above my chest I disappear ! It really *is* like “gazing into vacancy”, and the room is being seen from this viewpoint of nothingness. It is not dark and fleshy where I look from, but light and clear : when I am simple enough to look without expectations, without fabricating an image of what I shall see before I look ! In the mirror I see my face, and from a distance people tell me they see a face : a camera tells the same story. But the camera coming closer reveals skin cells and molecules, atoms and so on, till in the end I appear to be practically nothing. I who am right here at the very Centre see that I am indeed nothing save room for everything ! Is this not true for you too ? Are you a mortal thing where you are, or are you not immortal boundless Capacity as Maharshi indicated ? Here where I imagined a face a moment ago, I am left with only a fleeting assortment of tickles and tensions, and at times a pinkish blur I call a nose (though it is very different from the other noses I see attached to faces !), and these sensations are vague and hard to place and do not solidify me centrally into a thing. Is this not true for you too ? Here at my Centre, as Maharshi described for himself, there is neither name nor form, but only God. What could be easier to see ? It is neither distant nor complicated. It is always available for inspection. It is yourself — Who you and all of us really are. Look now to see It !

But this cannot be It, you might object : this no nothing ! It is too simple — this cannot be the supreme Truth ! I don't feel like God ! If I am God and I realize It, surely the certainty will be overwhelming. How can this simple inseeing be seeing God ? Maharshi replies to these seeming difficulties : “You see this and that. Why not see God ? . . . All are seeing God always.” And elsewhere he adds : “What can be easier ? The Self is more intimate than anything else. If that cannot be realized, is it easy to realize what is apart and farther away ?” The truth *is* this simple ! What could be more certain than This ? Again, go by your present experience.

You can see Who you are in a moment, and yet, paradoxically, it takes time to get used to being Who you really are. Abiding in the Self comes through practice. And yet, Maharshi stresses, “Having once gained the Self it will be understood to be here and now. It is never lost.” There is no hierarchy of attainment here, for Here we are identical, always. Seeing This I may not always feel like God — at times I may have no feelings about This at all, and I may find myself to be in a kind of neutral state of bare consciousness. This is perfect. From this “Blankness” realizations will flow in their own appropriate time in ways perhaps unexpected but right. This is coolly resting in the undisturbed Silence within, the pure Source, for Its sake — for His sake — Alone. This is profound peace and quiet joy.

Again, I record an ever deepening gratitude towards Ramana Maharshi. I never met him personally, (I was born long after he died), but I know that this is not necessary, for his words still speak the spirit of his life, and his message is quite clear : enquire into Who you are. “Find it out.” Clearly and immediately, Here in this featureless Capacity, I am him in essence ; for this “Blankness” we all look and live from is where we are all really One ; where our everlasting Self alone abides.

(All the quotations are taken from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.)

The Dawn and Growth of Spiritual Consciousness

By

Prof. R. Sadasiva Aiyar

THE writings that have come down to us from Ancient Egypt of about five thousand years ago bear witness to the lofty heights reached by the pick of the people of that time in respect of the ethical ideals that characterized their daily life. Moral life — that is not sordidly utilitarian — is based on a spiritual metaphysic, on the faith that our life must meet with the approbation of the Supreme Being within and without us, who is aware of all our actions. Moral life implies and presupposes spiritual conviction. In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* we read of the exalted character of the life lived by the flower of the people. At the point of death, every gentleman, who brought himself to strict audit before the bar of his conscience, claimed again and again that he had been generous and kind, and a good neighbour. The book thus describes the virtue practised by him: "I wish it to be known by gods and fellowmen that I had been compassionate, that I had been generous and kind. I have given the widow as large a portion as to the woman who had the husband. I did not prefer the great to the small. I have never caused any one to weep, I have never spoken with a haughty voice. I have never made any one afraid. I have never been deaf to the words of justice and truth."

The same high spiritual note is struck by the Babylonian law-giver, Hammurabi, who flourished about 2000 B.C. in the Prologue to his legal code: "All that time the gods called me Hammurabi, the servant whose deeds are pleasing to the people in time of need, who thought about plenty and abundance to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak. He strove to enlighten the land and further the welfare of the people."

From the isolated sculptured works of the Indus Valley Civilization that have come down

to us we can infer the worship of Siva and *Sakti* and the practice of *Yoga*. It permitted like the Rig Veda the worship of more than one god as representing aspects of the one Supreme Being, exalted Yogic perfection. Doubtless, its philosophy of life must have been profoundly ethical as well as religious.

Now we come to another landmark in the development of man's spiritual consciousness. For the very first time, the Aryans, who settled in the Indus Valley several centuries after the Civilizations of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, gave utterance to the unshakable faith in them that "the Reality is only one and the sages call it by different names." We call these inspired outpourings the Vedas and they include the Upanishads that stem from them. Once again we see in them how man's moral life and spiritual aspirations are interwoven. Sages voicing the Rig Veda pray to Agni and Varuna to lead them along the path of virtue, to help them shun sinful ways, to embrace without ever loosening their hold of the *Rita* or the moral law that governs the Universe. In the X Mandala of the *Rig Veda* we have the well-known *mantra*: "All that we behold is the Purusha, Who having pervaded it, stands ten inches above it." The *Mantra* means the Universe we behold is only a pale reflection of the Supreme Being. The *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* sums up in one and the same syllable with three different meanings the *Supreme* ethical ideals that should govern a man's life. That single monosyllable is *da*, meaning at once self-control *dama*, generous parting with what one has to relieve the distress of the needy *dāna*, both climaxing in compassion *dayā*.¹

¹ See *Brihadāranyaka*, V. v-1 where *Prajāpati*, the Creator, instructs the gods, men and demons to cultivate the virtue each is deficient in.

The seeker in the realm of the Spirit is still only at the beginning of his long journey. He might well say: "The way is dark and I am far from home." Though the *Upanishads* tell him again and again that if he dissociated himself from his body, from his experiences of pleasure and pain, and if he ceased to be elated with success and depressed by failure, he would see as clearly as the fruit on the palm of his hand that he is himself the Cosmic Being, complete forgetfulness clouded his vision as he passed through the affairs of this world. A sure and feasible method whereby the *sadbhava* could keep the Reality in mind was needed. Nothing helps the human mind to keep a person as an inseparable part of himself is Love. This should be brought to bear on God — which is what we call *bhakti*.

Every step in man's path to God is taken by God's Grace. Through the long centuries since the days of the *Upanishads* we see the working of Divine Grace at every turn. In every village, in every nook and corner of India there have been saints who have drawn thousands of humble folk by some magnetic power in them. People have flocked to them for relief in distress and recovery from illness. Sovereign saints while helping them to cross a staggering hurdle have also given them a fillip in the spiritual Path. What is the burden of their advice? Saints like Kabir, Jñānādev and Nāmādev, like the Saiva and Vaishnava saints, why, Saints all over the world, have told us of the importance of *Nāma Japa* uttering the Divine Name, inwardly during the waking moments, through the tedious chores and routine of the day.

Man's spiritual advance has never halted through the ages. Great teachers have always guided his steps. With one voice they ask us to surrender ourselves without any mental reservation to the Divine will. "Our wills are

ours we know not how. Our wills are ours to make them Thine." It means the out and out extinction of *Abamkara*, the condition precedent of Jnana, wherein the triad of Knower, Knowledge and Known, disappears altogether. The destruction of the ego comes as the result of life-long endeavour. With the death of the ego the six enemies in the human heart, lust, anger, avarice, delusion, conceit and envy, die. As the most elementary step to the vanquishing of the ego, the saviours all over the world bid us to cultivate an attitude of Love and friendship to all beings. The *Lalita Sahasranama* says that the Goddess is attained by *maitri bhava*.² The Buddha asks his devotees to cultivate *metta*.

The method of finding easy steps to the mountain top is shown by all *Sat-Gurus*. Man's spiritual advance has continued through all the ages.

In our own time Bhagavan Ramana has summed up in the few verses of *Upadesa Sara* all the ways we have glanced at. To highly advanced souls he has given the supreme specific to arrest all thoughts, which lies in searching within as every thought rises: "To whom does this thought arise". The answer would be 'To me'. Whereupon you put the question: "Where is that me?" It will then be found that there is no 'me' as such and the real Self shines forth.

For the first time we have learnt there is no such thing as "mind". It is only a name for a stream of thoughts. We could not know this even from the *Upanishads*.

Apart from this, so many of His devotees who flock to Arunāchala cross "the difficult places" of their life merely by intently thinking of Him.

² *maitryādi-vasanā-labhyā*.

"The doctrine that declares 'Duality during the search and non-duality on attainment' is not correct. Who else but the 'Tenth Man' is one both while anxiously searching for the Self and after attaining it?"

— Sri Ramana Maharshi

The Ten MAHĀVIDYAS of the Mother

By

Viswanatha Swami

[This is the second and concluding instalment of the Ten Mahāvidyās, expounded in Ganapati Muni's Mahāvidyā Sutram (Aphorisms in Sanskrit). In our October '75 issue, the first instalment, dealing with the first five Mahāvidyās — Kali, Tara, Sundari, Bhuvaneshvari and Bhairavi — was published.]

PRACHANDACHANDI is the sixth of the *Mahāvidyās*. Her essential significance is the same as that of Bhairavi. The distinction is that Bhairavi rules over the Earth and Prachandachandi over the firmament. She is the deity known in the Vedas as Indrani. Another particularity here is that the manifest and unmanifest effulgence of the firmament is Prachandachandi. The distinction between Kali and Prachandachandi is that the transforming electric force is Kali and that which serves as the Weapon of the Supreme is Prachandachandi. She is known as Vajra-vairōchaniyā. Vajra is the weapon of the Supreme (Indra). On account of her brilliance she is known as Vairōchaniyā. In the individual she is *Kundalini Sakti*. Bhairavi and Prachandachandi spring forth from the same source, Muladhara, in the individual. The former rules over speech and the latter goes straight to Sahasrara and generates the flow of Amrita from there, causing profound ecstasy. It is by her valour that a subtle passage is opened in the crown of the head of an earnest *upāsaka* or *yogi*. This is the experience referred to by the text of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, '*vyapōhya Sirshakapale*' (parting the front and back of the skull). That is why this sakti is termed Chhinna-masta, breaker of the skull or One who chops off the head. As the conveyor of the force of Prachandachandi, *sushumna* is associated with her. When a *siddha* (spiritual adept) is urged to go to higher spiritual regions, then also, this opening of the skull takes place. The two associates of Prachandachandi, Dākini and Varnini, are the *ida* and *pingala nādis* respectively. Bhagavati

Prachanda-chandi manifests herself in Adepts (*Siddhās*) and therefore he who adores them adores Prachandachandi. This much regarding her aspect in the individual.

In the cosmos, the pathway of the Devas is Prachandachandi. She is known as Durga as well, as she is inaccessible to the unevolved. (*gam* = go, attain; *Durga* = unattainable, inaccessible). Vairōchaniyā of the Tantras is referred to as Vairōchani in the Vedas. (*Tam agni-varnām tapasā jvalanteem Vairōchaneem karma-phaleshu jushtām*). There are pathways between the orb of the Sun and our *sushumna*. They are innumerable, these rays connecting the Sun and individuals. *Sushumna* is not only a channel in the individual but also one with endless ramifications in the universe. It is by that passage a *Siddha* goes to higher spiritual regions discarding the physical body. The rays are composed of countless atoms of light. And so the Way of the Devas (*Devayāna*) is only *Akāsa*. *Akāsa* is called *Mabat-rajās* (vast collection of light atoms) in the Vedas and Renuka by Tāntrikas. It was the name of the mother of Parasurama as well as for she was an incarnation of the effulgence of Prachandachandi. And since her head was severed, she is known as Chhinnamastā also.

There are three knots on the path of our *sushumna* one at *Mulādhara*, the second at *Manipūra* (opposite the navel) and the third at the *Ājñā-chakra* (face region), known respectively as Brahmagranthi, Vishnugranthi and Rudragranthi. On account of them, the free flow of Divine Sakti is obstructed in us and when they are cut asunder, the Sakti flows

freely undeterred. In adepts the Sakti flows unimpeded and that is the secret of their greatness. When the final knot, *rudra-granthi* is severed one lives unhampered in perpetual freedom. The ego getting annihilated in the great effulgence of the Self is the significance of the saying 'Dying at Kāsi one is liberated' (*kasyām tu maranān muktib*).

One who aspires to get in tune with cosmic Divine Power should adore Prachandachandi. There are variations of her mantra but her particular name Vajra-vairōchaniyā is common to all of them. Prachandachandi is described as holding in her two hands her own severed head and a sword. Her maids Dākini and Varnini are standing on either side of her. Three jets of blood spurt forth from the neck of her headless trunk and fall into the open mouths of the two maids and her own mouth in the severed head held in one of her hands. She is standing on the bodies of Kāma, the god of love, and Rati, his consort.

This picture is highly symbolic. The severed head signifies the severance of the base ego. Of the three jets of blood, the central one denotes the irrepressible flow of power through the central *nādi*, *sushumna*, and its assimilation; the other two jets denote the flow and assimilation of power through the *ida* and *pingala nādis*. Her standing victoriously over the united bodies of Kāma and Rati represents the conquest of the sex-urge which is the very basis of spiritual perfection.

There is a remarkable mantra of Prachandachandi who is no other than Indrani in the Rig-Veda beginning *Sambōtram sma purā Nāri*¹ which means: "Indrani, the foremost of all deities blesses with her presence all spiritual effort and is ever-present in the battle of life (between the divine and demoniac forces). She is the awareness of her Lord, the ultimate Reality. She is the valiant consort and companion of her Lord Indra, who reigns supreme over the entire universe."

To watch one's own perception is the way of worshipping her. This is fixing one's attention on the seer. The attention of the un-

evolved is all on the object of perception, whereas the yogi's attention is either on the perceiver or the act of perception and the object perceived (the percept) is merely incidental. This is known as *Akshi-purusba vidya* in the Upanishads. It is known as *upakōsala vidya* (taught by Satyakama to Upakōsala) and *Pratyagātma vidya* (the Science of the Inner Self) also.

By devoting oneself to Prachandachandi one attains infinite power i.e., gets attuned to the Source of Infinite Power.

* * *

Dhumāvati is the seventh of the ten *Mahāvīdyās*. She is the periodical withdrawal of the Supreme and his retiring deep into himself (*yoga nidrā* or trance of yoga). She is the Sleep of eternal bliss of the liberated and in ordinary mortals she appears as sleep, swoon, forgetfulness and ignorance. She is the *Avidyā* or *Māyā* which veils the recognition of the Self and distorts the One as many. She is described in *Devi Mahātmya* as projecting herself as sleep, delusion and so on. He who aspires to bring about a tremendous change, cataclysm or upheaval should concentrate on *Dhumāvati*.

But, going deeper, the way of her *sādhana* is by discarding all thought waves. That leads to the great Silence beyond. One should not cause a split in Perfect Being by allowing the entry of any finite thought. Finite thought brings about distraction. This is known as *Bhuma vidya* in the Upanishads, where nothing other than *Bhuma* or *Brahman* is perceived. Total ignorance like sleep and swoon is condemned as dense darkness and mere objective knowledge also as such.

Perfect Awareness (*Pūrna Vidya*) stands by itself; it is self-effulgent. Non-awareness (*Avidya*) referred to here is with regard to objects as separate entities. Transcending mortality by the non-recognition of objects as such, one finds oneself immortal by the recognition of self-effulgent perfect Awareness. That is to say, it is only by non-recognition of

¹ *Rig-Veda*, X. 186, 10.

objects as such that Perfect Awareness shines forth. And that is liberation from bondage. Thus by the proper understanding of the significance of Dhumāvati one crosses the ocean of misery born of ignorance.

* * *

Bagalāmukhi is the eight of the ten *Mahāvidyās*. The significance of *Bagalāmukhi* and *Tara* are the same. They are considered as separate *Vidyās* on account of the difference in the aspects of their splendour. When sound becomes manifest light that is *Bagalāmukhi*. When mantras are repeated with steady alertness they are transformed into light. And that is why *Bagalāmukhi* is described as *Brahmāstra*, the *Brāhmīc Weapon*. Brahman itself is the *Weapon*, it is not the *Weapon of Brahman*. If it is contended that there are various other *Astras* (weapons), the explanation is that it is the same *Brahmāstra* (*Brāhmīc Weapon*) that is termed *Āgneya* and other *astras* on account of the different deities associated with them. When the effulgent mantra is capable of becoming a *Weapon* it is termed *jyeshtha*. *Brahmanaspati* is known as *Jyeshtharaja* as He is the Lord of *Mantras* and *Weapons* (*astrās*) born of them. He who wants to get over hostile forces should devote himself to *Bagalā*. Her *bijaksvara* is *Hireem*. One may practise the *japa* of the Vedic *Indra* mantra beginning with *Tadidasa Bhuvaneshu jyeshtham*. Though the deity of the mantra is *Indra*, it does not matter as the deity and his *sakti* are indivisible. And it has been recognised and practised as a mantra of *Devi* by elders.

Bagala is to be meditated upon as of golden complexion, wielding a club with her hand, and as a destroyer of foes.

Unswerving steady remembrance is the essential way of her *upāsana*. *Tapas*, *upāsana*, *yoga*, *dhruvā smṛiti* (steady remembrance) all mean the same thing — they are synonyms. The term *yōga* is mainly employed by *Patanjali*. The very first of his *yoga-aphorisms* is "Yoga is the control of thought waves". It is a negative term. Positively we may call it meditation (*ālōchana*). By meditation unnecessary thoughts are spontaneously eliminated. Concentration is *tapas*. Extraneous thoughts are annulled thereby. That is *upāsana* and

that is steady remembrance. If it is contended that awareness of the *Self* also is a *vritti* (thought-movement) that will be cutting the root itself.

Just watch what happens when one tries to recollect something forgotten. That is *yoga*, *tapas* and steady remembrance. The seeker does not stop his search until he finds out what is sought. The perfect *yogi* looks like one constantly in search of something, as he has no other object than himself to seek. Reflection (inner search) of one who has not found himself, the *Self*, is seeking. In the case of one who has found himself, his normal state itself is *yoga*. Watch one's state during deep sorrow. That is *yoga*, that is *tapas*, that is steady awareness. One in deep sorrow ceases sorrowing on the attainment of other objects of enjoyment. The *yogi* does not care for them as he is ever engrossed in the supreme bliss of the *Self*.

There is the flow of a conscious current to *Sahasrāra* through *sushmnā*. There it cools down and flows as a cool current through the *nāḍīs* of the body. If one blocks the flow proceeding to *Sahasrāra* at the *ajñā chakra* (region of the brows) it results in inherence in the *Self*. That is *yoga*, *tapas* and steady awareness. Then and there Awareness unsplit reigns supreme in its plenitude. He who is established there remains steady in the Awareness presiding over the waking state. If the current is arrested at the centre known as *Indra Yoni* (the region of the soft-palate) one gets established in the Awareness presiding over the dream state. If the flow is arrested at its source, the heart centre itself one remains established in the Awareness presiding over the deep-sleep state. If one practises a mantra established in pure awareness at that centre one becomes effulgent and capable of wielding the *Divine Weapon*. It is by inhering in Pure Awareness that the heart-knot is cut asunder. At the blossoming of Pure Awareness one finds oneself perfectly free, unhampered. It is the glow of the steady Awareness that is termed *tapas* in the *Upanishads*. By the *upāsana* of *Bagala* one becomes capable of wielding the *Divine Weapon* (*Astra*).

Here we are reminded of the Verse 23 of the *Supplement to Reality in Forty Verses*

of Bhagavan Ramana : "He who has by discernment effaced all objectivity (*vāsanās*) is one established in the Reality of Awareness, the Knower of the Self. He is the Fire of Awareness and the Wielder of Vajra.² He is the Hero who has done away with death cancelling time itself."

* * *

Mātangi is the ninth of the ten *Mahāvīdyās*. The significance of *Mātangi* is the same as that of *Tāra*. The difference between them is on account of their manifestations. Sound discernable to the ear is *Mātangi*. She is the deity *Sarasvatī* known as *Gaurī* as well, their essential nature being the same. She is in us the fourth stage of sound (*vāk*) known as *Vaīkaraj* (manifest sound). He who seeks learning or a captivating personality should adore *Mātangi*. Her mantra is of twenty syllables. She is described as bright or dark in complexion and holding a *vīna* resting on her lap. She is described as bright in her aspect as a deity and as dark in her *avatāra* as the daughter of *Matanga Muni*. She is described as polluted (by saliva) as the manifest sound in the individual proceeds from the tongue. *Ganapati*, the Lord of Mantras (*Brahmanaspati*), too is described as *ucchishṭa* (polluted) for the same reason. The name *Sarasvatī* also has a similar derivation. The *rasa* of the tongue is referred to as *Saras* (pool) and she who has her abode there is *Sarasvatī*. The nadi of speech in the tongue is known as *Sarasvatī* and therefore the deity also. There is a river also bearing the same name, conceived as flowing underground and joining the river *Ganga*. Clouds also are known as *Saras*, as they contain water, and their rumbling, lightning and thunder deemed as *Sarasvatī*'s.

Mātangi may be worshipped by means of the Vedic Mantra, *Mahō arnab Sarasvatee prachetayati ketumā | Dhīyō Visvā Virājati* (*Sarasvatī* is an ocean of Light, illumining all by her rays. She shines forth as cosmic intelligence).

The recitation of sacred lore is the way of adoring her. There is difference between sounds in their capacity to bear and convey

pranava, unmanifest sound. The letters of the alphabet convey pranava better than ordinary indiscriminate sounds. And more so the mantras as they proceed from immanent divinity in the form of effulgent words. We find this definition of the Mantras in the Vedas themselves, the treasure-house of mantras. And so translations of Mantras serve only to convey their gist in a way. They are utterly of no use for Japa, as they have not in them the celestial light and force of the mantras. By the upasana of *Mātangi* one comes to know whatever is to be known.

* * *

Kamalātmikā is the tenth of the *Mahāvīdyās*. Her significance is the same as that of *Bhairavi*. The distinction is that *Bhairavi* rules over the earth, whereas *Kamalātmikā* does over the heavens. She is known in the Vedas as *Ushō devī* and as *Lakshmi* in the parlance of later times. One who aspires for the highest should adore *Kamalātmikā*. Her root-sound (*bijakshara*) is *Śreem*. *Bhrigu* is the Rishi and *Devī-gayatri* the *cchandas* (metre). She is meditated upon as of golden hue, seated on a lotus with hands in the poses of granting boons and freedom from fear. One may meditate upon her with the aid of the superb *Savitā-gāyatri*. *Tat savitur varenyam—*. One may doubt the propriety of worshipping *Ushas* or *Lakshmi* with *Savitā-gāyatri*. Here one should understand that there is no distinction between the *Sakti* and *Sakta* and that elders have been making use of it as a *Sakti* mantra from the distant past. And one may ask how the Sun could be the mover and illuminer of the intellect as stated in the mantra when it is the Supreme alone who does it. The rays of the Sun do move, illumine and inspire the intellect as they are not inconscient as usually considered. And the special way of worshipping *Kamalātmikā* is to meditate upon the Rays alone. This is known as *Madhu Vidyā* in the Upanishads. By the upasana of *Kamalātmikā* one becomes certainly most elevated, enlightened and graceful.

(Concluded)

²The most potent of all weapons before which nothing else could stand.

TEACHING IS AN ACT OF LOVE

By

“Sangitaprem” (Dr. David Teplitz)

TEACHING is an act of Love. The Eternal energetic organic process of radiating His Power! Faith! and Hope! to the Universal Oneness of the human family. A teacher neither begins nor ends this task of disseminating the seed of Unity and Love. There can be no potential of action, but only the Reality of Action. “Love Is,” and therefore as Bhagavan often said: “Be quiet and just be!”

Ramana Maharshi spontaneously radiates his awareness of being to those who are ready to receive. We can see the antennae of some insects, but man's are far more subtle. Truly man searches and seeks the Eternal Vibration and knows of it, but his perception is so feeble as to neither see nor hear with clarity. With time each flower matures only if nourished, and man evolves when the seed of growth is nurtured.

The real teacher does not see an ocean of students, but feels the pulse of their energy and links to the circle of growth both from the internal and external forces. True knowledge is the water and salt of existence. False knowledge is the bizarre camouflage of egoistic rationalization. In order to learn to transcend the ignorance of learned knowledge one has to understand the reality of Eternal Awareness which does not change and which flows for ever through all beings. Neither geography, history nor politics can obstruct the current of the Awareness of Oneness! To think Unity is a potential and not a reality is to speak of oneness as a potential and not a reality, but just to be still and be is the reality of being, subtle, but not impossible! The impossible aspect is the delusion of the potentiality without diving deep within and quietly linking to the superconsciousness of awareness.

There is no such thing as a “teacher,” as we are all both learners and teachers at an

Eternal *Font*. A new mother has not to be taught the responsibility of caring for her infant. The vibration of sound serves fully the role of guide and guru. The *Sanātana Dharma* contains in itself all the variations of psychology, philosophy, religion, and so on. All these are One and not divisible. All around us Nature and the Divine bestow upon us strength and determination, so freely. Like a blade of grass growing through concrete, and the revitalization of a desert with the bringing of water to it, we can see the media of the astronaut, and the aquanaut, but are we not really the “terranaut” merged in the Divine Ether of Life, His Vitality and His Spirit!

In our day of over-specialization we are striating life to a degree of confusion and alienation. The only kinds of people in the world are male and female, and the other *accoutrements* are mortal folly. Communication is survival of mankind and non-verbal communication like pantomimes are universal. Silently diving deep within the “AUM” of Eternity one feels the vibrant pulse of existence and that makes living alive, really worthwhile.

Uninformed systems of education create silly barriers between man and man. The curriculum of life must parallel the needs of the fully actualized functioning man. Artificial sub-divisions of materialistic knowledge or programmed learning separate man from man. Our needs are similar and quite simple, like the phenomenon of nature. The world of scientific knowledge sheds and grows like the process of metamorphosis. It discards the old and inept, and moves to a higher level, but unfortunately the outmoded and irrelevant remains to hamper the growth process. We must constantly be willing to grow and change, both internally and externally!

In education we should abandon the irrelevant and outmoded hurdles which retard our intellectual and spiritual growth. The concepts of former decades must give way to the shrinking dimensions of our present microcosmos called "earth." Bhagavan's insistence on standing still is most important as we have surrounded ourselves with unnecessary resour-

ces and materials of learning in staggering abundance. Ought we not search within and try to see with our heart and feel His unending Vibration and Guidance? Slowly Ramana's message is seeping throughout the world and we should begin to move on with the waves of the Eternal Being, learning and teaching how to BE.

FACING THE FACT

.....

By
Wei Wu Wei

ALL I AM, all I could possibly BE,
whatever sentient-being says, acts, or knows it,
is Absence of Objectivity,
of any objective element whatsoever.
Such is negating the factual Presence
of objectivised phenomena extended spatially in duration,
and psychically experienced in Consciousness as 'living'.

II

This has been known by sages since the dawn of history.
May we not now apperceive it, know it, accept it,
and reap the harvest of this knowledge
of what, and all, we could BE ?
There is no 'time', there is no 'space',
there is no 'past', no 'present', no 'future':
only 'Here' infinitely, and 'Now' eternally,
which is 'This', known as *Nirvāna*,
instead of 'That', known as *Samsāra*,
the Kingdom of 'Heaven', instead of 'the Earth',
BEING, instead of 'living'.

SAINT JEAN VIANNEY

By
Gladys Dehm

JEAN-MARIE VIANNEY was born on May 8, 1786 at Dardilly, a village not far from Lyon in France. He spent his childhood amid the quiet, pleasant countryside where his parents had their small farm.

As a child Jean manifested piety of a high order. He had the good fortune of belonging to a family where prayers were said together every evening, so that praying became very important to him. Once, at the age of four, Jean retired from the family circle to pray alone in the cowshed where he was found by his mother who chided him for leaving the others. On another occasion when he wanted to keep a rosary which his sister Marguerite also coveted, he was made to relinquish it and he parted with it with tears. He was comforted however, by his mother with a wooden image of Our Lady. He became so devoted to that image that he took it with him to the fields and kept it near him when he retired at night.

Jean attended Church services regularly, having before him the pious example of his mother, to whom he was deeply attached.

During the dark days of the Reign of Terror in France, the Vianney family and other Catholic families were obliged to hide the crucifix which had been affixed for so long on the kitchen wall. Jean however, still walked with his beloved image of the Madonna in his pocket as he went about the chores of the farm. It was Jean's custom to watch over the cattle with his sister Gothon to whom he narrated Bible stories. Both were taught the art of knitting as they tended cattle and sheep, and along with it Jean taught his sister the prayers he knew. Jean also gave religious instruction to children who played with him, repeating to them the sermons he had heard from the lips of the priest who had said Mass

secretly in the woods on Sunday. When he was nine Jean went to a school which opened its doors in the winter of 1795. Later, in May 1798 he went to his aunt at Ecully where he was given religious instruction preparatory to his first communion which he received in 1799.

As an adolescent, Jean was trained in the arduous toil of farming, but he continued praying while he worked, reading the lives of Saints, the Gospels and *The Imitation of Christ*. These works he read avidly by the light of a candle in the stable-loft where he took his rest at night.

At Dardilly when the Parish priest returned to his church Jean attended services as before and decided to be a priest. He was conscious however, of the many obstacles which lay on his path, including especially his lack of learning. His mother and aunt, informed of his desire, supported him and tried to find a way across the many difficulties besetting him. Jean's father, on the contrary bluntly turned the matter down, stating that Jean was sorely needed on the farm.

Mathieu Vianney stuck to his stand for two years, but his wife gently persuaded him to give their son what he himself sought. Another ally to this cause was the parish priest Abbé Balley who announced his intention to give Jean lessons himself. Mathieu Vianney agreed to this plan, and Jean applied himself to learning French grammar and Latin when he was twenty. Jean prayed and fasted often and went out of his way to help the poor with the little he had. Once, he gave away his boots to a needy beggar. Jean realized he had made little progress in his studies even after several months and this caused him intense worry. Abbé Balley took pity on his pupil and encouraged him to study more with less arduous penance. To relieve the tension

under which Jean laboured, the priest suggested to him to undertake a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. John Francis Regis at Louvesc.

This the young man did, walking the sixty-five miles and reaching the place at the end of his tether. He prayed to Saint Regis to help him become a priest and try to save souls.

Back at Ecully, Jean worked hard, with the result that he received better marks in Latin. This encouraged him to feel that he might pass his examinations. Another obstacle showed itself, his military service was requisitioned but Abbé Balley obtained temporary exemption by declaring Jean-Marie an ecclesiastical student.

Years passed, and Jean continued his efforts to learn Latin. In addition to his studies, he helped the parish priest as sacristan.

Now the blow fell: calling-up papers were served on Jean. He was very despondent as he thought of the long years of study which yet awaited him whilst his precious time would be taken up with the army. Two days after reporting for duty, Jean fell ill and was taken to hospital. After two weeks in the hospital at Lyon and a short journey on the way to Spain he was hospitalized for six weeks more. His parents visited him and found him very ill. On leaving the hospital, Jean was told that he was to rejoin his detachment by foot. After a series of circumstances he found himself taken in by a deserter who advised him to do likewise. Later, he sought out the Mayor of Robins, and the latter arranged matters for Jean. Assuming the name of Jerome Vincent, Jean remained hidden there for two years. Later, Jean made no secret of this episode in his life. Public opinion was not in favour of Napoleon's constant call for more recruits, and Jean did not look upon his desertion with regret. The kindly Mayor who had his own views on the subject, told him he had the power to discharge him from military service.

Remaining at Robins with the Fayot family, Jean taught the children reading and writing and gave them religious instruction also. He became a favourite with the Fayots. It was

Madame Fayot who informed his family of his whereabouts, relieving their anxiety on his account. Eventually, an amnesty was granted by Napoleon and Jean-Marie could return to Ecully on condition that his brother Francois substituted for him, receiving for his part £ 120 which came to Jean from his father's estate. Jean's departure was a sad one as those at Robins had grown to love him.

In January 1811 Jean returned home. His happiness at being with his family was short-lived as his mother died at Easter. Jean mourned her passing deeply and returned to Ecully where he resumed his studies.

On May 28, 1811 Jean had his tonsure and was named Abbé Vianney; though he had three more years of study to undergo. In 1821 Abbé Vianney went to Verrières where he was to receive instruction in philosophy. He found the lessons taught there very difficult. Older than the other pupils, Jean had to suffer their unkind jests.

A year later, Jean returned to Ecully and Abbé Balley, but he did not stay there long. He went to the Seminary of St. Irenaeus at Lyon where he shared a room with the holy Marcellin Champagnat, future founder of the Order of Marist Brothers. There, Jean encountered difficulties again with his Latin. He was given a special tutor, but when the examiners told him that he should not return after the holidays, he was utterly despondent.

Once at Ecully, Jean did not hide his heartbreak. Abbé Balley came to his aid, going himself to Lyon to arrange matters. At Ecully Jean studied again, but this time the texts were not in Latin. Abbé Balley was very active on Jean's behalf, and when the examiners questioned the student in French the results were encouraging. On the 2nd July, Jean received the subdiaconate. Now, final efforts were made to obtain priesthood.

At Grenoble, Jean's dream got fulfilled. He was ordained priest on the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost — he said his first Mass on the 14th August in the seminary chapel.

After his ordination he walked back to Ecully where he shared his happiness with his

family and friends. There, Abbe Vianney assisted his devoted and esteemed Abbé Balley whose strength was failing.

With intense zeal Abbé Vianney entered the confessional where his parishioners began to grow in numbers and thus, a year and a half went by. Abbé Balley fell ill and died, on December 17. Abbé Vianney grieved the passing of his esteemed and dear friend. He did not stay on at Ecully, but was posted to Ars, a small village not far from Ecully.

When Abbé Vianney took stock of his flock there, he found that they were very slow to come to Church, and had grown very lax. Further, they were ruining themselves by dancing and drinking.

The parish priest lost no time in getting to know his parishioners, visiting them at their homes. He became a familiar figure with his slender form, worn cassock, thick peasant boots mended in several places and hat tucked under one arm. On his rounds Abbé Vianney discovered that gross ignorance prevailed among the village folk. They were totally unaware of the very rudiments of religious verities. Abbé Vianney spent long hours kneeling in earnest prayer — for the good of the flock entrusted to his care. The priest's meagre habits became known to his flock that only cooked potatoes constituted his diet and they were sometimes even forgotten in their container. The housekeeper spread tales of blood-stained clothes in his bedroom. Abbé Vianney used to wear a hairshirt, and inflict corporal punishments upon himself, and fast for the conversion of souls. Often, he knelt in the solitude of woods praying intensely for the redemption of his flock.

When his sister cooked for him two pigeons, Abbé Vianney voiced his distress and refused to eat the meat. It was his practice to mix flour and water and cook some cakes and eat them absent-mindedly. If good food was offered he promptly gave it away to a beggar. He lived thus for nine years.

Whenever Abbé Vianney preached from the pulpit it was in severe denunciation of dancing and drinking that was so common with the people there. His first attempts at preaching

were laborious but once the Abbé began to preach spontaneously, the words flowed easily and he waxed eloquent.

The parish priest surveyed with dejection the empty pews in his Church. The men in particular did not attend Mass. Some had not received the sacraments even when they were twenty. Abbé Vianney realized with sadness the task would be a great one, but he did not lose heart.

Resolutely, the Curé of Ars made his plans to close up the taverns which lured the parishioners away from Church.

Abbé Vianney condemned dancing as a highly dangerous temptation leading to vices of the flesh.

In the Confessional, Abbé Vianney began refusing absolution to those who wilfully sought out the sinful temptations of dancing. The women of Ars in particular, began to feel the priest's displeasure and severe censure. Carrying on his campaign still further, Abbé Vianney prevailed upon the mayor of the town to forbid public dances in the square. The taverns also started losing their customers. A fiddler was paid by Abbé Vianney not to play for the people. Soon, the priest's efforts were rewarded, and the villagers stayed home to drink their own wine. Another task tackled by the Curé was the abolition of work on Sunday. It took ten years, but he succeeded. Also claiming the priest's attention was the bare-armed and low-cut dresses worn by the women. He strictly forbade such apparel.

Abbé Vianney gathered the children about him to teach them catechism. Night prayers became a custom at eight o'clock every evening, and the shabbiness of the Church began to make way to a new altar, clean paintwork, new vestments and other improvements, including the construction of a side chapel dedicated to the Madonna.

Two years after his arrival in Ars, Abbé Vianney was told he had been transferred to another parish in Salles. Obeying at once, the Curé packed his few possessions into a cart and sought to cross the Saone, but it was in flood, and he had perforce to return to Ars.

Meanwhile an application was hurried off to Lyon asking that their Abbé remain at Ars. Accordingly the Abbé was established at Ars.

People began flocking to Church on Sundays. During the week also, the church was full. All this had been achieved through great effort.

The Curé was not popular with everybody. There were those who resented the changes the Curé had made in their living habits, and these discontented people spread malicious gossip about Jean Vianney. They held that his extreme pallor was the sign of a hidden debauchery. Venomous letters found their way into the hands of Mgr. Devie who forthwith ordered an inquiry into the matter. This was a tribulation to the Curé of Ars, but he bore his trials with fortitude. For a period of nearly five years he suffered grievously, anxious about the state of his soul. His duties as parish priest weighed heavily upon him. Months passed and Abbé Vianney felt a spiritual gloom of the soul. His untiring efforts to create a true Christian village, began to be appreciated in other parts of the country, and Abbé Vianney became known as the holy priest dedicated to fasting and prayer.

Abbé Vianney often went to the help of his colleagues, spending hours in the confessional, preaching with sincere eloquence moving his hearers to tears, baptizing an infant on a cold day in a forsaken hamlet somewhere. He gave of himself unstintingly, going out in the middle of the night in answer to a sick call, always ready to lend a helping hand.

Abbé Vianney decided to open a school and set about planning for it. Two ladies were sent to some nuns to brush up their learning, and all was in readiness. Another lady volunteered to serve as cook and maid. Thus the school was named Providence and began with twenty pupils. However, the school became overcrowded soon. After three years, Abbé Vianney converted the school into an orphanage for young girls as well as homeless young women. All received housecraft-training going out in turn to work in houses in the district. The kind-hearted Abbé could never refuse admission to anybody and the result was a severe overcrowding.

Location

By L. P. Yandell

The Apparent "me"
Goes here and there,
And wherever it goes
There it is.
But I am HERE.
Always HERE and NOW.

The Abbé's generosity was proverbial. On one occasion when he was given a new set of breaches he gave them away before reaching home. The 'Providence' was often left without necessary funds. Once, there was very little wheat left. Abbé Vianney placed a relic of Saint Regis beneath the small pile of wheat and asked the orphans to pray. When the door to the granary was opened a little later it was found filled with wheat. The Abbé often referred to it in later years. Once when Jeanne-Marie Channay told the Abbé that she had very little dough to make bread, he advised her to mix the water and flour. This she did, apprehensively watching her stock diminish. As she mixed again flour and water however, there was an increase and ten large loaves were baked. The Abbé said simply: 'God is very good; He does take care of the poor.'

The Providence was very dear to the Abbé's heart. He visited it every day and held catechism classes daily. A small chapel was built adjoining the orphanage.

Now the Parish Priest of Ars spent up to eighteen hours a day in the confessional listening to the pilgrims who had come to his village to unburden themselves. People travelled from long distances to listen to one whom they considered a living saint. Sundays and week days saw the Church full. Ars had become a model town; a place where no one worked on Sunday, where no drinking bouts were held in the taverns, no prancing men and

SEEING

By L. P. Yandell

Could the prisoner *really* see
 (See as the *I* — not as the “*me*”.)
 Would he still a prisoner be?
 I AM — says the I
 “Who am I?” says the “*me*”.

women flirted with each other, and where women clothed themselves decorously. People stopped swearing and children were no longer ignorant about their religion.

Abbé Vianney sensed some phenomena which came to be known as those of the Grappin. In 1824 he heard strange sounds at night coming from the presbytery. Thinking rats were responsible, the Curé entered his bedroom with a pitchfork but the noises continued although the source was not found. The strange noises were followed by loud raps on the presbytery door, and shouts. The possibility of thieves was considered. Armed with a gun a young man kept the Abbé company one night. In the early hours of the morning, bangs thudded against the presbytery door and the latch rattled loudly. The young man lost no time in flinging the casement wide to see if there was someone responsible for the din, but nobody was found outside. The noise continued for some time. The young man thought the devil responsible for these disturbances. The Abbé also thought so and said that because he felt fear it came from the devil; God never caused fear to man.

These disturbances continued for many years. Abbé Vianney said it was the Grappin, a name he gave the devil, who caused him sleepless nights; he added that whenever the noises became unduly violent it generally predicted a great sinner coming to his confessional to repent. Not content with noises,

the Grappin sometimes addressed Abbé Vianney in loud tones telling him: ‘Vianney, you eater of potatoes! Are you not dead yet? Never mind, I’ll get you out’. In bed the Curé was troubled by something stroking his face or by objects running over his body.

These abnormal disturbances were not confined to Ars alone. When the Abbé was with colleagues in another town, they heard a fearful din coming from his room. Apprehensive for his safety the inmates of the house rushed into his bedroom to find that his bed had been pushed away by unseen hands into the middle of the bedroom. The Abbé was asleep. Awakened by his colleagues, Abbé Vianney told them it was the Grappin at work. Once, in February 1857 smoke was seen issuing from the Abbé’s bedroom. It was found that his bed had been set fire to. The Curé said it was once again the Grappin, who, unable to capture the bird, had set fire to the cage. These disturbances which greatly affected the Curé’s meagre rest were accepted by him with such good humour.

Abbé Vianney’s little village of Ars was invaded by pilgrims and that gave him little privacy. His cassock was not safe from scissors, his breviary from plucking fingers. crowds came to hear him preach, and meet him in the confessional to see with their own eyes his saintly example. All of them wondered at the Curé’s ability to read their minds, and the miracles performed by him. Presently, the sick were brought to the holy Abbé and cures took place. Such adoration did not fail to arouse jealousy in the breasts of colleagues who ridiculed that crowds should flock around such an ignoramus. Unkind letters found their way to the Curé of Ars. He read them with humility, replying to their authors thankfully for having pointed out his unworthiness. He asked that he be moved from Ars and put in a small forgotten parish where he could live out his ‘poor life.’ The sincere tone of his letters often moved his enemies to remorse and made them recognize his sanctity.

Abbé Vianney continued to spend long hours in the confessional giving advice on vocations, converting sinners and healing the

sick. The days were long for Abbé Vianney. His day began at one o'clock, in the morning. Confessions were heard followed by Mass, then once again hours in the confessional. A glass of milk refreshed the Abbé who returned to Church to give religious instruction. Abbé Vianney loved to dwell on his favourite theme, the love of God.

"The more God is comprehended the more He is loved . . . When knowledge of God blazes forth within there arises such great love for God that the soul can yearn for nothing else. It is because love created man that man is so taken up by it — it is only when man turns to God that he finds fulness of heart. As a fish taken out of water, so too will man perish without God . . ."

"We must remember always that this earth is only a bridge to cross the water ; its sole purpose is to be a place on which one may stand . . . In the world, we are not of the world since we say in our daily prayer, 'Our Father, who art in heaven'."

At noon, the Curé usually partook of a light meal of vegetables. He ate very sparingly, and spent one hour alone. At one o'clock he returned to Church to Vespers, Compline and the confessional. At eight o'clock, night prayers were said. Back at the Presbytery, there were visitors who took up much of the Abbé's

time. Once Matins and Lauds had been said, the Curé often read his favourite lives of the Saints, after which he tried to take some rest.

In May 1843 Abbé Vianney fell ill and was near death but rallied and grew better. A curate, Abbé Raymond came to lend a hand with the parish work. This priest treated Abbé Vianney very badly, arrogant in his attitude towards his elder but Abbé Vianney bore such treatment with patience, defending Abbé Raymond when the public remonstrated. They spent eight years together.

Now the Curé of Ars longed for solitude where he could retire and prepare himself for death, but to all his requests the Bishop turned a deaf ear. The Abbé realized that this ardent desire was irresistible. So strong was this desire that he was about to leave the village one night, but he thought of the poor folk who would miss him in the confessional and turned back. Another time the villagers themselves barred his way, and he had perforce to give up his wish. The years passed. Abbé Vianney grew thin with pain. He was troubled by a racking cough which disturbed his short rest.

In the month of August 1859 Abbé Vianney passed away and was laid to rest in the small town where he had so tirelessly performed his life's mission.

Conception

By
L. P. Yandell

The "me" conceives a God, and worships
the concept.

The "I" is both conceiving and worshipping —
both questioning and answering.

Ah, *This* ! conceived as "Thee" —

The "I" of every "me".

STORIES FROM YOGA VASISHTHA—VII

The Story of Bhasa and Vilasa

Translated from Sanskrit by

M. C. Subramanian

VASISHTA said to Rama :

Saraghu and Parigha¹ talked about the nature of the world, paid their respects to each other and parted. One whose mind is always turned inwards and fixed on the Self is never touched by sorrow.

O Rama ! This bullock of a *jiva* (individual self) is bound with the rope of hundreds of desires. He is eager to graze in the pasture of earthly pleasures. He carries a heavy load of sorrows, wallows in the muddy pool of delusion, is bitten by insects called diseases, tethered by the rope of desires, unable to find a cool and shady place and thirsty by coming and going. You have to raise him from the slough of *samsara* with the greatest effort. Just as a good boat, O Rama, is obtained from a boatman, so also the method of crossing the ocean of *samsara* is learnt by associating with great souls. Not a day should be spent by a wise man in a place where the mountain (nearby) does not have the tree of a wise man with good fruits and cool shade. Neither riches nor friends, nor scriptures, nor relatives are useful in saving one who is sunk in *samsara*. The Self can be saved only by companionship with and guidance by a man of wisdom (Jnani). The mere knowledge that the body is like a log of wood or a clod of earth enables one to realize the Supreme Self.

The Self is like a great ocean, beyond words. It cannot be compared to anything. Nor does it stand in need of anything. It can perhaps be compared to the experience of *turiya*² in which the light of Consciousness is dimly but steadily seen. It is somewhat like deep sleep which is all enveloping like the sky.

The inner bliss which rises up when the mind and the ego are dissolved is the very nature of the Supreme Lord. O Rama ! That is the attainment of yoga. In a way it resembles deep sleep but is beyond words and can only be experienced within the heart. This entire world is the infinite Self. It is within the mind which undergoes changes. When (through *samādhi*) the world ceases to appear the Lord of Lords, the Self of the moving and unmoving beings, is realized. Then the desire for sense objects ceases. This comes with the experience of the effulgent Self. And this in turn is followed by a transformation into the homogeneous Self, which cannot be conceived even by great souls. The Self cannot be realized until the mind is slain by the mind itself. Till then there will be no end to the sorrows of the world. When the mind is annihilated there arises experience of supreme joy.

In this connection I shall tell you the old legend of a dialogue between two friends named Bhasa and Vilasa who lived in a valley of the Sahya Mountain which scales the sky by its height, stands on the earth as its base and stretches down to Patala (the nether world). On its southern side in a valley containing fruit-laden trees is situated the great and beautiful Ashram of Sage Atri, which Siddhas resort to get rid of their cares. In that Ashram there lived two ascetics who were like the planets, Sukra (Venus) and Brihaspati (Jupiter) shining in the sky. They had two

¹ The story published in our last issue.

² The Fourth state, i.e., underlying and beyond the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping.

sons named Bhāsa and Vilāsa. They loved each other like a devoted husband and wife. They were so like-minded that their minds seemed to have become one. Their fathers died about the same time. After performing their funeral rites they mourned for them. They then separated and lived in different parts of the forest with complete detachment. Their bodies became emaciated on account of their austerities and they were utterly desireless. Days, months and years passed. Then one day they met each other. Vilasa then asked Bhasa : "O fruit of the tree of noble living ! O my sole friend in this world ! Ocean of nectar for those who seek peace of mind ! Welcome. How have you spent your days since you left me ? Have your austerities yielded any result ? Has your mind ceased to be restless (lit. feverish) ? Have you realized your Self ? Have your studies been fruitful ? Are you happy ?"

Bhasa replied :

Welcome, my dear friend ! I have, by good luck, met you, my esteemed friend. How can we be happy so long as we are in samsara ? Until the objects of knowledge are transcended, the world of mind has withered away, and *samsara* is crossed, how can we be happy ? Until desires which arise from the heart are chopped off, like creepers by a woodcutter how can we be happy ? Until we acquire (true) knowledge, develop a feeling of equality and attain wisdom, how can we be happy ? O virtuous one ! Without attaining the Self and obtaining the elixir of knowledge this malady of miserable *samsara* will again and again attack us. Falling amidst various kinds of sorrows, beaten about by the strong winds of births and deaths and rolling on the rocks of the world, people grow old like a withered leaf.

(To be continued)

THE JOY

By

Charles G. Reeder

(Written on *Sivarātri*)

Was it Ramana ? he at whose coming
The earth quivers with joy,
The air expands into a breeze with happiness
The flames tremble like a golden tree !
And the ocean turns slowly and calmly
Like a great bull heading for home.

(Yes, this Ramana, not to be captured
His very breath flows and delights,
Quickening our hearts
His fountain, eternities, *samadhis*
Are but the white froth and foam of it !)

Science and Pure Consciousness

By

Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

"Subject and objects are creations of pure consciousness"

Sri Ramana Maharshi.

I REGARD consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we postulate as existing, requires consciousness," Professor Planck said in an interview with J. Wyn. Sullivan (see *Observer*, January 25, 1931). When Albert Einstein found himself up against a seemingly insuperable difficulty, he would stand up, put his pipe on his table, and say in his quaint English, "I will a little think" . . . And the magic was performed invisibly in the depth of his mind, by a process others could not fathom.

Most of us feel that we are not equal to the dimensions of something beyond the realm of mind. And yet, as Professor Planck stated, "everything we talk about, everything we postulate as existing, requires consciousness."

Who Postulates?

Modern science is well aware that a 'thing' as a 'thing' exists only to those who have a central processor, the brain. The brain contains a series of 'gate circuits' that pass or inhibit sense inputs. These are processed by an animated brain (animated by consciousness). The processed output is an imaging of the external world in its 'name-form' aspect. "In thee, O Hill of Consciousness, the picture of the universe is formed, and has its stay, and is dissolved; this is the sublime truth. Thou art the Inner Self, who pulses in the Heart as 'I'", sings Sri Ramana Maharshi. (*Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala*)

Take for example Bertrand Russell's case of a physiologist examining the brain of his patient. The physiologist undoubtedly believes himself to be looking at the brain of

another person. But Russell says: "Light waves travel from the brain that is being observed to the eye of the physiologist, at which they arrive after an interval of time, which is finite though short. The physiologist sees what he is observing after the light waves have reached his eyes; therefore, the event which constitutes his seeing comes at the end of a series of events which travel from the observed brain to the brain of the physiologist. We cannot, without a preposterous kind of disunity, suppose that the physiologist's percept, which comes at the end of these series, is anywhere else but in the physiologist's head" (Russell, *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 146).

Since the events in the above example take place in very short duration, the reader may not readily appreciate its significance. Suppose I am looking at Sirius which is many light years away. The light waves which started from Sirius many light years ago have now reached my eyes and the optic nerve leading into my brain. Suppose Sirius had ceased to exist a century before my birth. Yet, in effect, I am seeing Sirius. This proves that the structure of an object (including the human body) is not what it really is, but something that we construct from messages that reach the brain along the nerves. According to Craik (Craik, K. J. W. *The Nature of Explanation*, University Press Cambridge, 1943) the sensory information is used to build up a model of the external world. Suppose we have sense-organs which register two invisible elements, namely magnetic fields and plasma (blowing steadily out of the sun is a wind of plasma a tenuous gas mainly of ionised hydrogen). We can then perceive what we call interplanetary space as

a huge web of interpenetrating forces and energies of extraordinary subtlety and complexity. The earth in this set-up is not isolated, but actually moves within the sun's atmosphere. We shall be able to perceive that events in the sun can influence events on earth in far reaching ways.

Hence the world we see is a processed imaging of interpenetrating forces and energies. Conclusively therefore, we only know what goes on in ourselves and we do not know about anything else at all. Ramana Maharshi says: "Know yourself before you seek to decide about the nature of God and the world." (*Maharshi's Gospel*)

Who Am I?

We have considered events occurring in the external world. We only perceive their imagings as processed by the brain. Now let me take an occurrence related to my body: I scratch my head. Actually this is not different from my scratching the surface of my desk. What happens according to the physicist is that energy transition is taking place between particles (and hence energy states) composing my finger and those composing my head or those composing this desk as the case may be. These energy transitions set up in the nerve cell at the end of my finger a current which reaches my brain. Thus the energy transitions are "now" located in my brain.

Events have occurred relating to the "now" in my brain. Hence events like scratching my head, seeing Sirius etc. are events ranged about the "now" in my brain. I wish to call such events of the 'subjective past'. Events pertaining to the body are of the subjective past; so are events of the external world. What I wish to emphasise is that there is no private world or external world. Events occurring in one are of the same nature as those occurring in the other. In fact, our physical bodies are part of the physical universe. Both the body and the world are events of the subjective past.

What is more, if the functional arrangement of the brain is suitably stimulated by appropriate energy states, I shall experience the

sensation of scratching my head or desk. The hand may have been amputated or the desk may have been reduced to *ashes*. Events constituting the brain are events at the very end of the subjective past — the events of the "subjective now". Mark, they are not of the *very present*. When I say 'now' or think 'now', it is the end of the modulating process in the brain where the 'now' is acknowledged. In other words, it becomes the very immediate past, the 'subjective now'. The 'subjective now' arises after the rise of 'I' sense. The 'I' awareness must be there to acknowledge the 'subjective now' and the subjective past. That from which the 'I' sense rises is the 'real now', the 'very present'. It is pure conscious energy itself. The external *world*, the so-called private world of man etc. are all modulating events in pure conscious energy. "Pure Consciousness wholly unrelated to the physical body and transcending the mind is a matter of direct experience. Sages know their bodiless, eternal Existence just as the layman knows his bodily existence. But the *experience of Consciousness* can be with bodily awareness *as well as without it*. In the bodiless experience of Pure Consciousness the Sage is beyond time and space . . . Since, however, the physical body cannot subsist (with life) apart from Consciousness, bodily awareness has to be sustained by pure Consciousness. The former is by its very nature limited and can never be co-extensive with the latter which is infinite and eternal. Body-consciousness is merely a monad-like, miniature reflection of the pure consciousness with which *the Sage* has realised his identity. For him, therefore, body-consciousness is, as it were, of the Self-efulgent, infinite Consciousness which is himself, says Sri Ramana Maharshi (*Maharshi's Gospel*).

Pure Consciousness exists in humans before the rise of the I-sense. When pure consciousness is modulated with the subtle *latent impressions* in man, it becomes the subtle mind. This subtle mind rises as the 'I' and remains *compresent*¹ with a multiplicity of overlapping events called human body. The

¹Jointly present, See Russell, 'Human Knowledge',

gross form called individual (the percipient) receives sensory messages which construct a world of form. This is to preserve the complexes of compresence of events which make the gross individual. "If the first person, I, exists" says Sri Ramana Maharshi, "then the second and third persons, you and he, will also exist. By enquiring into the nature of 'I', the 'I' perishes. With it 'you' and 'he' also perish. The resultant state which shines as Absolute Being (Pure Consciousness) is one's own *natural state* . . . To those who have not realised the Self (i.e. Pure Consciousness), as well as to those who have, the term 'I' refers to the human form, but with this difference that for those who have not realised (pure consciousness) the 'I' is confined to the body whereas for those who have realised *the Self* within the body, the 'I' shines as the limitless Self — To those who have not realised the Self as well as to those who have, the world is real. But to those who have not realised, Truth is limited as the form of the world, whereas to those who have, Truth shines as the Formless Perfection and as the substratum of the world. This is all the difference between them." (*Forty Verses on Reality*)

‘*That Thou Art*’

The world is constructed around the 'I' or the 'thou' in humans. Its 'name-form' aspect is a mere imaging processed by the brain.

One can realise pure Consciousness by tracing to the source the 'I' sense or the 'thou'. Is that the end? Is there a reality behind the 'name-form' imaging of objects?

All 'objects', including humans, are composed of particles each of which has identical properties throughout the known universe.

These particles interact all the time. The laws governing these particles are the laws of the natural sciences — physics, chemistry, geology, biology, astronomy etc. And these particles as far as modern science can tell us are simply energy states. There is no reason to believe that anyone particle is more fundamental than the others — they all are compresent energy states. From the relative point of view of man, the energy states form into groups as 'this object' and 'that object' etc. Suppose you were as large as the sun — an immense *compresence* of energy states 10,000 million years is, then, a normal life span for you. You will be amused at the higgledy-piggledy universe where stars and planets come and go like morning mists.

The sun is in a state of 'being' as I am. So is a pot, an ant or a table. "The whole universe is composed of five factors, Being, Awareness, Bliss, name and form . . . That the pot is, is its 'being' aspect; that it appears is its "awareness" aspect; that it is dear to us is its 'pleasing' aspect; 'pot' is its name aspect; and its shape, its 'form aspect'. So it is with all objects." (*Advaita Bodha Deepika*, p. 84). Of these five factors, name and form are mere imagings processed by the brain; they are not real. The Being-Awareness-Bliss aspect is the same as the Being-Awareness-Bliss characteristics of pure Consciousness in man. Hence Being-Awareness-Bliss aspect alone is constant. 'That' is the same as 'thou' in humans. *That thou art*. "He who dedicates his mind to Thee, and seeing Thee, always beholds the universe as Thy form, he who at all times glorifies Thee and loves Thee as none other than the Self — (i.e. Pure Consciousness), he is resplendent, blissfully one with Thee, O, Hill of Pure Awareness!" (*Five Hymns to Arunachala*).

"Ramana Maharshi was more human, more fully and naturally human, than the rest of us and showed that to be thus human is to be truly divine. Through half-a-century of egoless living both as a man among men and as the Person — the Awareness — in all persons, the Sage proved Tagore's thesis that religion is not the descent of divinity but the fulfilment of humanity."

— from *Ramana Maharshi* by Prof. K. Swaminathan

DAKSHINAMURTHI

In his introduction to the Tamil version of *the Hymn to Dakshinamurthi* by Sankara, Bhagavan Ramana has stated as follows: Brahma, the Creator brought forth from his mind Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujāta to help him in the creation of the universe. But they looked about and wanted to know the secret of their own being and the mysterious universe around them and went about in search of enlightenment. And they found Siva Himself seated facing south under a huge banyan tree, wrapt in effulgent Silence and they also sat before him in profound silence drawn to him as iron by magnet. This is the substance of the well-known *sloka* on Dakshinamurthi, beginning — *chitram vatatarōrmule* — “What wonder is this under the banyan tree, mature disciples seated before a youthful Guru! The Guru elucidates by Silence and lo! the disciples are free from all doubt.”

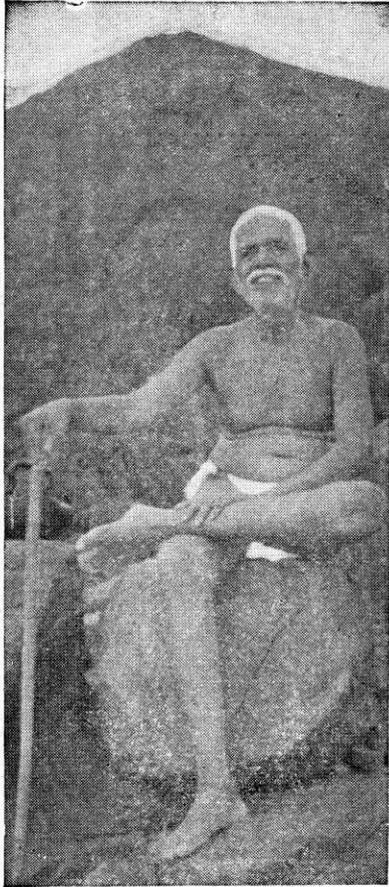
Dakshinamurthi is the Lord of all learning and that is indicated by the book of palm-leaves held in his left lower hand. And the right hand is held up in *chinmudra*, the Pose of Wisdom. The last three fingers of that hand are stretched and the pointer and thumb are united. This indicates the non-dual reality of the individual and the Supreme beyond the three *gunās* (*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) and beyond the three bodies, gross, subtle and causal in their three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. The rosary of *rudrāksha* held in the upper right hand denotes the string of Reality running through all manifestation as well as the need for constant spiritual effort. The flame in the upper left hand evidently stands for the Flame of Awareness which swallows up all seeming duality. The demon ego with its sense of separate individuality, the root of all misery is crushed by the right foot of Dakshinamurthi and his left foot is



Sri Dakshinamurthi

lifted up in victory and settled on the right knee.

The banyan tree under which Dakshinamurthi is sitting is probably the brain with its



ramification of nerves spreading down and Dakshinamurthi is the effulgent Self on the right side centre, revealed by Bhagavan Ramana. He is experienced at the centre on the right side (*dakshina*) and yet He is formless (*amūrthi*) beyond ideas of centre and circumference. He is of the very form of awareness (*dakshina*) and so He is Dakshinamurthi. We find this interpretation in the *Dakshinamurthi Upanishad* (*semusbee dakshinā prōktā*). Dakshinamurthi means the God facing south as well, as we see him in every temple. The south is the direction of Yama, the god of death and he is nowhere before Dakshinamurthi. Dakshinamurthi, therefore, is *Mrutyunjaya*, the Conqueror of death. Bhagavan Ramana has stated in the second invocatory verse of his *Forty Verses on Reality* that those who surrender themselves

to Mrutyunjaya, the Conqueror of death, become immortal by losing their sense of separate individuality thereby.

The coincidence of Bhagavan Ramana's choosing the southern side of Arunachala for his abode is interesting in this context. And it is further interesting that there is a small temple of Dakshinamurthi built many years ago just before the entrance of Sri Ramanasramam. Bhagavan's teaching also was in silence mainly and he enlightened seekers with his powerful silence. Bhagavan has addressed the Hill Arunachala as Dakshinamurthi in his *Eight Verses to Arunachala*: "Who has the power to convey Reality in word, when even Thou (as Dakshinamurthi) couldst do so in the past by silence only? Now to convey by silence Thy (transcendent) State, Thou standest as a Hill from earth to heaven."

In the Virupaksha Cave on Arunachala as well as in the Hall of Sri Ramanasramam, Bhagavan used to sit facing the south spontaneously, without any deliberation.

We find it stated in the *Arunachala Māhātmya* of *Skānda Purana* that Siva, as a Siddha, is seated under a huge banyan tree on the northern peak of Arunachala and the sacred work itself begins with the *dhyana sloka* of the Siddha describing him as having Vibhuti (sacred ashes) on his forehead with a dot of *kasturi* between the brows, holding the staff of yoga (*yoga-danda*), wearing a pure white loin-cloth and so on, much in common with the well-known appearance of Bhagavan Ramana himself.

Finally, a word about the main *mantra* of Dakshinamurthi found in the *Dakshinamurthi Upanishad*: "Om Namō Bhagavate Dakshināmurthibhaye mabyam medbām prajñām prayaccha Svābā": "Om, Obeisance to Lord Dakshinamurthi. Grant me, (Lord!) intellectual acumen (*medha*) and Awareness of the Self (*Prajña*). I surrender myself to you (*svābā*)."

The intellectual acumen referred to here is stressed by Sankara in his *Vivekachudamani* as follows: "The truth of the Supreme Self is very very subtle and it cannot be comprehended by a gross intellect. It is to be understood by earnest devotees endowed with very pure intellect with the aid of the very subtle ray of *buddhi* (known as *akhandākāra vritti*)."

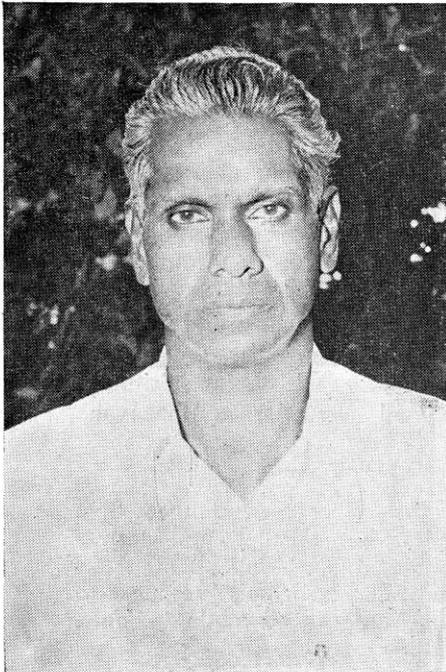
How I Came to the Maharshi

By

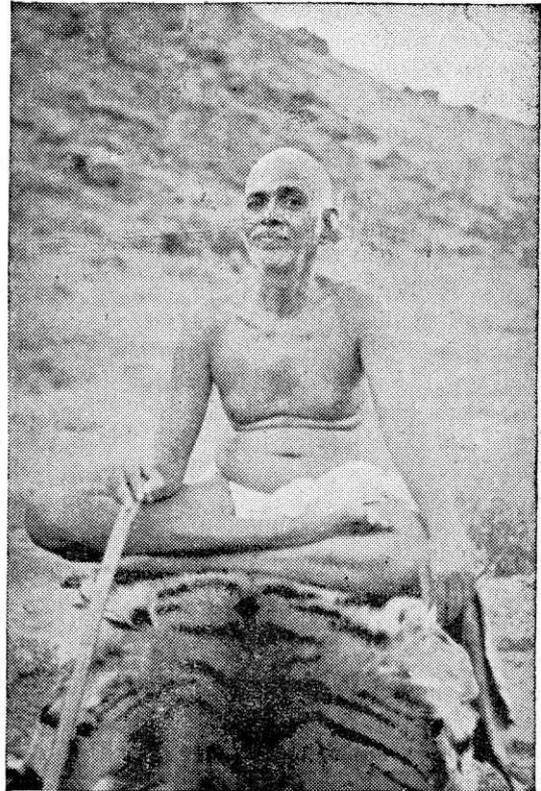
R. Chandrasekhar

(Visitors to the Asbram would not have failed to notice a young inmate enthusiastically mingling with all, though he could not speak. It is our Chandrasekhar. He is very efficient in his work and totally devoted to Bhagavan. He assists the Asbram in the Book Depot, packing section. His efficiency in packing has received unanimous recognition even from far off. We are happy to publish here his account of how he came to Bhagavan).

MY father, Sri K. Ramachandra of Colombo (editor of *The Religious Digest*) is one of the oldest devotees of Bhagavan Ramana, who, by his books and articles contributed to weeklies and newspapers, has made known the Sage and His teachings in South India and Ceylon, even from the year 1934. The small-size framed photo of Bhagavan sitting on a tiger-skin, brought by him as a memento of his pilgrimage all over India, aroused my



Sri Chandrasekhar



curiosity. Though I was only a boy of 12 then, I felt that He was a great Sage with divine powers. I admired His having stuck on to the holy hill Arunachala, ever one with it.

A few years later — in January 1940 — I was able to visit Arunachala in the company of my father. I was thrilled to see the Sage, face age. I was introduced to Sri Bhagavan by

my father. I was thrilled to see the Sage face to face at his Abode of Grace. The whole place breathed an air of sanctity and serenity. I was also amazed to see that all the visitors who came for Bhagavan's *darshan* were taken care of and treated most hospitably. Staying at the municipal bungalow, near the railway station, we went to the Ashram daily to have Bhagavan's *darshan* and His *prasadam* for nearly a week.

Bhagavan was sitting on His couch, reading letters received and writing something in a note-book now and then. He had a book-shelf by his side. We had no conversation with Bhagavan; only prayed to Him for His blessings and we had it in abundance in gracious Silence, the Language of the Infinite. Is that not the basis of His teachings to understand once for ever?

In 1946, I came again in the company of my father and after a week's stay at the Ashram we put up in our own cottage, newly built nearby and stayed on for several months. It was really thrilling to sit in front of Bhagavan and meditate. Bhagavan sat on the sofa almost in silence and the atmosphere in the Hall was radiant and full of spiritual fragrance. The Sage thus blessed all who sat before Him in silence. He was gazing and gazing, spreading divine Grace all around. I was fortunate to receive such a look of Grace from Him, full of compassion. I felt blessed. It is the greatest and the most important moment and event of my life.

Those months of the year 1946 at the Ashram were never to be forgotten, for I had an insight of the mysterious spiritual power that had struck and laid my father bed-ridden for several months and made myself pulled here to stay along with him, suffering severe physical

pains and shivers and experiencing a lot of untold troubles; all through this we had sought spiritual solace alone and with Bhagavan's Grace gained strength to overcome them all. Thus stricken souls survive purely by His Grace, when all medical treatment fails! Such physical debility and suffering did lead us in the end to spiritual redemption. So the invisible power of Grace had indeed showered its blessings on us all even without our knowing it.

I was moved to notice the attention bestowed by Bhagavan on animals as well. He was daily feeding squirrels at noon time, and was giving fruits to monkeys whenever they came to the Hall. Bhagavan was particularly fond of his Cow Lakshmi which used to come to the Hall daily and eat plantain fruits given by Him. The fortunate Cow was under His loving care right up to its last moments in 1948 and there is a likeness of her in stone in a specially built samadhi over her grave. I had the privilege of witnessing its burial with due religious rites in the presence of Bhagavan. He was visibly moved as the body of the Cow was lowered into the samadhi pit. Thus the noble Cow got absorbed in Holy Arunachala by His Grace.

Though I had worked elsewhere between 1946 and 1949, I managed to spend one year or so here again, doing *sadhana* and studying yoga. The Hill has always its attraction for me. Going round the Holy Hill was a regular feature of my *sadhana* and I have come to realise the deep significance of this circumambulation. I have come for good to this Abode of our Master and I am happy doing my bit of service and *sadhana* and meeting devotees coming with great spiritual fervour and devotional surrender to Bhagavan.

"Sankara in *Subrahmanya Bhujangam* describes how Father Siva called 'Come hither, child' and, stretching out his arms, caught and clasped Kumara (Subrahmanya) as he leapt up from his Mother's lap. This scene is re-enacted, according to Ganapati Muni, in young Ramana's 'response to the Father's call', and his tranced journey from Madurai, his mother's home, to Arunachala, his Father's lap."

— from *Ramana Maharshi* by Prof. K. Swaminathan

Glory of Arunachala

Arunachala Mahatmyam

Translated from Tamil by
M. C. Subramanian

CHAPTER XII

BRAHMA SEEKS THE TOP OF THE COLUMN OF EFFULGENCE

Nandikesvara continued :
“ **A**S for Brahma, he flew up swiftly in the form of a swan in the sky, which offers no support to anything and followed that column of effulgence. All obstacles were scattered far by the wind produced by the motion of the wings of that soaring swan. As he went higher and higher the region of the earth became invisible. It looked like a streak in the sky. The god in the form of the swan saw the moon close to the column of effulgence like an evening cloud. He traversed successively the region where birds fly, the region of clouds, the region in which celestial cars move about, the region of the stars and the highest region where bright beings dwell. The speed of that swan surpassed the speed of wind and mind. However high and hard he flew he still saw the column of effulgence up-standing before him! Even after traversing the region of the seven Maruts he saw it piercing the firmament of heaven and blazing upwards even beyond it. He wondered at this and thought as follows :

“How can I face Hari without seeing the summit? He will nod his head proudly and refuse to release me from my promise. What is the use of prolonging this life which has not seen the fulfilment of my desire? What is it that is going to be accomplished by this? What is my fate? If I deceive Vishnu who is going to inform him? When the opponent cannot be conquered by straightforwardness he should be defeated by deceitful means. For,

is not one's honour one's precious wealth?”

While Brahma went on thinking thus and felt great sorrow he saw a white streak in the clear sky at some distance coming towards him. Even as he was thinking : “What is this which is coming here? Is it a filament of the stalk of a lotus? What is it that flies here?” it came near and he saw that it was a flower of the screw-pine. Though faded, it was very fragrant and pure. Hiranyagarbha (Brahma) took it up. It spoke to him in human speech : “Ah! Why are you stopping me? I have been travelling for ever so many thousands of years and am tired. Let me go”.

At this Brahma looked again at the column of effulgence which had grown higher still, and overcome by fatigue, began to think listlessly : “One who does not keep his word is worthless. What is the significance of this effulgence which pervades the earth and sky? My wings are almost broken, my eyes blind and my limbs weary. I am about to fall down. Why should I speak more? It looks as if my life-breath is leaving me. Let the thick knot of the ego be severed. Let my rivalry with Mukunda (Vishnu) come to an end at once. This mass of effulgence extends beyond the open sky and still remains as it was before! Neither I nor Narayana (Vishnu) can understand this. I have no strength to proceed further. Nor am I able to return”. Thinking and wondering within himself thus Brahma turned to that flower and asked it : “Who are you? Where are you coming from?” It replied : “I am a flower of the screw-pine. I am sentient. I dwelt on the crest of this column for a long time by the order of Siva. I am now coming down as I desire to see the world.”

On hearing this Brahma was slightly relieved. He asked the flower : "How far away is the top of this column of effulgence ?"

CHAPTER XIII

BRAHMA BEGS THE FLOWER OF THE SCREW-PINE TO BEAR FALSE WITNESS

Nandikesvara continued :

"The flower of the screw-pine looked at Brahma with a derisive smile and said : "Who are you, idiot? You seem to know nothing You do not know the origin of this. There are crores and crores of Brahmandas inside this. They are countless. Who can measure its dimensions? I have been coming down for ever so many thousands of four-fold *yugās* (*chatur-yugās*). Yet I have not perceived the earth which is its middle region." When Brahma heard this he abandoned his pride, clasped his hands, bowed to it and prayed :

.. "O Great soul in the form of a flower of the screw-pine ! I am of course an idiot. There arose a dispute between me who am Brahma and Vishnu. Both of us forgot the glory of Siva. We became proud of creating and sustaining the world. Our conduct is disgraceful. I have become indebted to Vishnu as a result of it. It is said that friendship arises even by exchanging seven words (*sneham sapṭapādam*). You are a great soul. You must be patient with my stupidity and be gracious to me. You must show some affection for me. When we

saw this column of effulgence Vishnu became a boar and I a swan and, with the object of showing our superiority, we began to seek its top and bottom. I do not know what happened to Vishnu who went to see its root. The fate of myself who came to see the top has been such that I have flown for thousands of years and become weary. My life seems to be leaving me. Good soul ! I have met you by some good fortune. Please be gracious to me. I am helpless. Bestow your affection on me, I beg you. I have not only become your comrade, O you whose words are sweet, but also your slave. Therefore you must grant my prayer. I bow down to you. If Vishnu has seen the bottom of this (column), I am defeated. If he has not seen it, I am equal to him. Either fate would be a disgrace to me. Friend ! You alone can now retrieve me from this sad predicament. You must utter a lie for me, your friend. That is but proper. Pray say in the presence of Chakrapani (Vishnu) : "This Brahma in the form of a swan has seen the top of the column of effulgence. I am witness to it. I live there always. He shall be (i.e., deserves to be) the grandfather superior to the father. This is approved by Siva who is the column of fire. Therefore, O Vishtarasrava (Vishnu), he is superior to you'. I request you to speak thus and help me and save me."

Implored thus by Brahma, the flower of the screw-pine spoke to Vishnu in the presence of the column of effulgence just as Brahma had asked him to do.

(To be continued)

JAUNDICED CITY

By "Mani"

The jaundiced city
Belches yellow fog
Self-created, self-shrouding
Self-dissolving *Maya*.

BOOK REVIEWS

MY LIFE AT SRI RAMANASRAMAM : By Suri Nagamma. Pub. : Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai-606603, S. India. Pp. 147. Price : Rs. 4.

Many have been drawn to the Maharshi. His luminous eyes have pulled many doubting Thomases into *atma-vichara*. Is it any wonder that a young Hindu widow, Suri Nagamma, crossing social and so-called religious hurdles sought and found refuge at Maharshi's feet?

The experiences of devotees come pouring in. The latest are sister Nagamma's, a welcome addition to the *Ramanana* of Humphreys, B. V. Narasimha Iyer (later Swami), Paul Brunton, S. S. Cohen, Somerset Maugham and Arthur Osborne.

Like Devaraja Mudaliar's *Day by Day with Bhagavan* and *My Recollections of Bhagavan*, Nagamma's narrative is unobtrusive and in part, scintillating.

The path of Self-Enquiry is not for all. So, others may devote themselves to service in shrines or in little-known hamlets.

The translation from Telugu is the work of Sri D. S. Sastri, the ever-smiling brother of the author. As R. D. Ranade says, translation is like pushing a heavily-laden mud-cart and demands labour and skill. In English it reads well; it is marked by the deep probings of a *jiva* in anguish. May all sisters be inspired by noble Nagamma's transformation!

SWAMI RAMANANDA BHARATI

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES : Ed. T. M. P. Mahadevan. Pub. : Arnold Heinemann, AB/9, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi. Pp. 303. Price : Rs. 50.

Brahmavidyā or spiritual wisdom has ever remained a live spiritual tradition in India thanks to a long line of mystic *gurus* going as far back as the sages Vasīṣṭha and Vāmadeva in the Vedas. The *guru* is a religious head and a spiritual guide, a self-realised saint as well as a skilled dialectician who can philosophically substantiate what he knows to be the reality. In the unbroken *guru-paramparā* of the Kāñcī-Kāmakoti-pīṭha founded by the great Śaṅkarācārya himself, we have today His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati, who has lived up to the highest traditions of that office, radiating light and wisdom on seekers of Truth, whether Indian or Western.

This is a collected volume of essays commemorating the *Sahasra-candra-darśana* (completion of a

thousand months) of the *Jagadguru* ably edited by Dr. Mahadevan and tastefully produced by the publishers. The first part contains an interesting and illuminating biography of the Jagadguru by the learned editor and tribute by such international savants as Paul Brunton, Frithjof Schuon and Dagmar Leitchi who reminisce about their personal experiences with the *guru*.

The second part, 'Converging insights', is indeed of absorbing interest to philosophers as well as general readers as it contains twenty articles by famous personalities including pontiffs like Dalai Lama, philosophers like Robert Van Eyck, physicists like C. F. Von Weizsacner, musicians like Princess Irene of Greece and even sportsmen like George William, Prince of Hanover. There are also some academic studies of Advaita in depth by the professors of the Philosophy Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, Madras University. Such variety is bound to deprive a unity of approach in any other discipline, but not in Advaita Vedanta whose scope is infinite. The several insights of the personalities do converge into revealing the unending vista of possibilities that lie unexplored within man and that cannot fall short of perfection, when properly pondered over.

For those readers who are not far too committed in favour of a mere intellectual exercise, the precious rays of Advaitic Wisdom shine here with a new glow, now in the prism of artistic perfection, now in the essence of a religious order and again in the presence of the ultimates of physics, not to speak of the most daring attempts in metaphysics, modern as well as ancient, typified in Spinoza and Sartre, Plotinus and St. Ignatius. It is in the nature of a modern vindication of *sanātana dharma* or perennial credo of man, and its perusal would help in shaking some of our primordial ignorance stalking in the garb of knowledge.

THE SIVA-PURANA : Translated into English by a Board of Scholars and edited by Prof. I. L. Shastri. Vols. I to IV (Pp. 1-2120). Pub. : Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawaharnagar, Delhi-7. Price : Rs. 50 each.

These volumes are indeed very welcome additions to the small stock of English translations of our ancient and sacred Purāṇas. The facing sheet makes the announcement that it is but the beginning of an

ambitious project entitled "Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology" devoted to bringing out English translations of all our major Purāṇa works (*Mahā-purāṇas*).

Research scholars of the last and present century have bestowed almost all their academic attention to Vedic and Epic studies to the utter neglect of the vast body of Purāṇic literature. The reasons may be that Purāṇas involve vital religious issues which scholars want to steer clear of. But the fact cannot be gainsaid that in the life and culture of the average Indian throughout the whole period of known history, right from the beginning of the Christian era, that is to say, for well over a vast period of two thousand years, the Purāṇas have served as beacon-lights. The whole body of Sanskrit literature and drama is replete with incidents drawn from these Purāṇas. The hymns of praise (*stotras*) used in the worship of our deities are mostly Purāṇic. The pilgrimages undertaken by the people at large in the length and breadth of this country, in fact the very idea of the holiness of our rivers and rocks, no less than temples and monuments, is derived from our knowledge of the Purāṇas. The daily round of a religious and ethical life, with the ideas of *puṇya* and *pāpa* with all their incidental do's and dont's and religious credos, stem from the sayings of these Purāṇas. Our rituals are observed according to their dictates and our ideas of life and death are all built upon their foundation. Further, we owe all our countless legends about gods and demons, kings and sages, heaven and hell etc. to these very Purāṇas.

It is because these Purāṇas are so inextricably intertwined with the active lives of the Indians that most of them were adapted or abridged and translated almost into every modern Indian language like Bengali and Hindi in the north, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam in the south, not to speak of Marathi and Gujerati in the west. In English too, though it is true a few have found pioneer translators like H. H. Wilson, one cannot aver today that they are either quite accurate or quite unprejudiced.

Hence the scheme of arranging dependable, readable and devoted English translations of all the Purāṇas today by a Board of present-day scholars is not only very welcome but also very laudable.

But it is indeed a pity why the worthy publishers have chosen to keep the names of the members on this Board a secret. Responsibility is ensured only when the names are at stake. We hope and trust that this grand series, getting aid from such a prestigious world body as the UNESCO besides the Government of India and modelled after the Sacred Books of the East Series initiated at Oxford

by Max Muller, will not keep secret the names of scholars involved in this colossal undertaking.

Looking to the fact that the Editor and his Board of translators have not devoted any considerable space to the usually interminable discussions of chronology, social and religious conditions, comparative versions of myths and legends, the reigns of kings recorded, secular knowledge incidentally elaborated, etc. — their Introduction prefixed to Vol. I being quite short (only xviii pages) — we might gather that the volumes are designed for the general reader rather than the specialist scholar. Even the footnotes added at times within the volumes are very brief and explanatory in nature. We wish that some more space will be devoted in the forthcoming volumes to a discussion of these also, to add to their usefulness.

Thus, what remains to be noticed is only the English translation. We are happy to state that we find the prose version quite close to the original and also dependable, if somewhat pedestrian without the fault of pedantry.

The present *Śiva-purāṇa* contains all the Līlās of Śiva as well as the accredited paraphernalia of Śiva-worship with the thousand holy names and so on. It also includes incidental accounts of Pārvaṭī or Śakti, Gaṇapati, Skanda etc., and rules for their worship besides the highest disquisitions on *yoga* and *Vedānta*, *Āgama* and *Dharmaśāstra*.

The account of Kumāra-sambhava found here is blatantly an adaptation of Kālidāsa's art-epic of that name since we have palpable agreements in phrasing as well as idea. But even this fact has not been indicated by the Editor. The first three volumes do not even mention the original Sanskrit Edition of the *Śivapurāṇa*, which is translated; we must thank the Editor that he has stated it in the Introduction to Vol. IV., as the one published by the Pandit Pustakalaya, Varanasi. Scholars would expect a detailed account of the different manuscripts of the work available today and variations between them because late interpolations in Purāṇas are well known.

DR. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY.

WHEN DAYLIGHT COMES — A Biography of Helena Petravna Blavatsky: By Howard Murphree. Pub.: A Quest publication of the Theosophical Society, U.S.A.: The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A. Pp. 277. Paperback \$ 3.50 (U.S.A.).

Madame Blavatsky is well known as the Founder of the world-wide Theosophical movement which has done so much to bring together Eastern and

Western religions. It is appropriate that this excellent biography should come out in 1975, Women's Year, for she was a pioneer in religious progress,

One cannot conceive of a better biography than this. If the reader leaves the introductory chapters to the end and begins with chapter 1 he will find that his attention is held first to last. It is impartially written and obviously based on careful research; and yet it is sparkling and delightful to read.

Madame Blavatsky was one of those people who have supernormal powers or *siddhis* and did not hesitate to display them. Ramana Maharshi never spoke of the importance of such powers saying that all that was necessary was the enquiry, 'Who am I'. The Buddha went further strongly condemning the display of any *siddhis*; the only miracle that mattered was the transformed life following from goodness and equanimity. The *siddhis* in themselves are neither good nor bad. Madame Blavatsky was a good woman always doing a kindness when it fell her way. And affection and admiration as well as respect followed her despite a hot temper and many mistakes.

But before her death, when passing through the worst storm of life, she exclaimed, 'O, cursed phenomena, which I only produced to please private friends and instruct those around me! What an awful karma to bear!'

As her biographer says: 'What a strange enigma she seemed! A great compassionate soul in a body through which flowed the fierce turbulent blood of Dolgorukov princes.'

But you must read the book yourself. Lucky indeed is H.P.B. to have such a fair minded and understanding biographer.

MARIE B. BYLES.

NUMBER AND TIME: REFLECTIONS LEADING TOWARDS A UNIFICATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PHYSICS: By Marie-Louise von Franz. Pub.: Rider & Co., 3, Fitzroy Square, London, 1974. Pp. 332. Price: : £ 3.75.

The trouble with those who attempt to carry Jung's thought further is that their speculations tend to merge into a misty sphere in which it is very difficult to say what is what. In his later years Jung felt that an advance could be made in unifying psyche and matter by undertaking research into the archetypes of the natural numbers. In itself somewhat fascinating, this idea could not be pursued by Jung himself owing to advanced age. He, therefore, passed the task to one of his follow-

ers, Marie-Louise von Franz, who hesitated at first to shoulder this formidable undertaking. Having ultimately decided to do so, she produced this book in six years.

As the chapters of her book indicate, she endeavoured to tackle the gigantic and abstruse problem of reconciling psyche and matter, first, by considering number as the common ordering factor of psyche and matter, second, by dealing with the structure of the first four integers, third, by examining the field of the collective unconscious and its inner dynamism, by probing into the historical and mathematical models of the *Unus Mundus*, and fourth, by inquiring into the relations of number and the parapsychological aspects of the principle of synchronicity.

After her extended foray into the nebulous region, she confesses that she has been led far afield from her initial reflections and that the mythological motifs to which she has referred propel the inquirer towards an unknown shore. Nevertheless, she believes that the concept of natural numbers has an archetypal basis. Others, however, would maintain that they are a mere convention arising from an exercise of reason in social practice. It is of course possible that Western mathematics has not considered all the aspects by which numbers are characterized; but would the ancient Chinese concept of number really shed more light on the subject? Numbers as energetic phenomena or rhythmic configurations sounds are more like a dance of words in the real fantasy; and the predominance of the first four natural numbers in mathematical representations of God could easily have been a conventional accident. And why should one give up the assumption that time is an empty frame and replace it by the idea that it stands for 'a sequence of qualitative, inescapable conditions for the events possible at any given moment'? If inescapable, why this perennial craving for the timeless moment and its perpetuation in the notion of eternity? And what are the qualitative conditions of time as time, that is, of time with the events abstracted from it? Time, if it is anything at all, is the stuff of unreality, of illusions and delusions that the ego creates for itself and of which the self knows nothing. Synchronicity, we are told, hints at the *Unus Mundus*. But why should one see more in a coincidence than the fact that it is a mere coincidence? Presumably because some minds cannot help seeing less as more and mental artefacts as collective archetypes. It could be that the problem of reconciling psyche and matter is a pseudo-problem.

It could be that no matter however hard we try the twain shall never meet. For, has not our Father Aristotle spoken of the Unmoved Mover as well as of primal matter?

MOTI LAL PANDIT.

YOGA WISDOM OF THE UPANISHADS: By Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda. Pub.: International Yoga University, 6111 SW 74th Ave. Miami, Florida, U.S.A. Pp. 240. Price: \$ 6.99.

A purposeful presentation of the *Kena, Isha, Prashna* and *Mundaka Upanishads* with a view to serving both the academic and the spiritual interests of the western seeker. Though the text of the verses is not given (a transliterated version could have been added), there is a fluent translation and copious notes and explanations by Swamiji, based upon other scriptures and Yogic tradition. Each important concept is illumined by several other insights.

While on the subject of Grace in the *Mundaka* (2.6), the author writes: "The Divine Grace assumes different forms to assist an aspirant. In its basic form it is Ishvara Kripa — the Grace of the Divine Self. When an aspirant is able to please a spiritual preceptor, he receives Guru Kripa (Grace of the Preceptor). As a result of this grace, he is able to overcome known and unknown obstacles on the spiritual path. When he discovers abundant will-power within himself for pursuing the path of Self-realisation, and is free from doubts and distractions, it is termed as Atma Kripa (Grace of one's own soul). When he is able to understand the subtle meanings of the scriptural instructions, it is due to Shastra Kripa — the grace of the scriptures. Thus, Divine Grace assumes different forms to assist an aspirant on his arduous journey through the darkness of the world-process."

More could not be said on the topic though the order of the action of the Grace naturally differs from case to case.

The notes are enlightening. For instance on the phrase, *samit-pani* 'fuel in hand' (*Mundaka*): "The tradition of carrying 'fuel' in hand while approaching a Guru has a profound, symbolic implication. The disciple considers all the fruits of Karmas as 'fuel' to be burnt by the fire of knowledge. Therefore, desirous of immortality, he approaches a Guru in humility, allows his very ego-sense to melt under the guidance of his spiritual teacher. He understands that all endeavours led by the faulty ego cannot lead to the faultless Self."

Equally helpful is the note on *shirovrata*, tonsure of the head. (P. 123).

There are a few illustrations on some of the key themes of the Upanishad. They are mystically appealing and carry an atmosphere of their own.

Swamiji adds a note on the spiritual enquiry of WHO AM I. He details the method of the spiritual aspirants to pursue this quest and sums up: "Listen about the nature of the Self. Reflect upon the divine basis of your being. Meditate upon the indwelling Divinity within yourself. Enquire, WHO AM I? Thus you will discover your essential nature of *Sat Chit Ananda*, Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

INDIAN THOUGHT: Edited by Donald H. Bishop. Pub.: Wiley Eastern Ltd., New Delhi-49. Pp. 427. Price: Rs. 36.

One of the best introductions to Indian Thought to appear in recent years, this collection of scholarly essays by eminent authorities edited by Dr. Bishop is a satisfying volume. The Editor himself has a deep understanding of the spirit of Indian Thought and in his essays on the Gita and Buddhism, he shows a rare sensitivity to the aspirations and movements of the evolving Soul of India in the course of her long history.

Dr. Madhusudan Reddy brings out the spiritual elements in the Vedas; Prof. Talghatti underlines the integral character of the Upanishadic Thought which finds the meeting ground of the Universe and the Transcendent in Man. Chapters on Jainism and Lokayata Materialism are full of information. Dr. Karan Reddy's paper on the Concepts of Man gives a comprehensive survey of the different approaches to the subject, ancient and modern. Dr. Mahadevan is superb, as usual, in his study of Shankara. Dr. Raghavachar's essay on Shaiva Siddhanta, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita makes many abstruse points clear and stresses the points of reconciliation. Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Sri Ramakrishna and Gandhi claim a chapter each. One misses mention of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and his unique contribution to the spiritual renaissance of modern India.

The Epilogue in which the Editor analyses the Illusions of Contemporary Man and the Indian view on the matter is perhaps the best chapter in the book. He concludes: "A major contribution Indian Thought can make today is to remind the world of the illusions it must overcome. Our present crisis results from living by illusions. Indian Thought would call us back to the real."

THE ESSENCE OF YOGA : By George Feuerstein. Pub. : Rider & Co., 3, Fitzroy Square, London, W1. Pp. 224. Price : £ 2.50.

This is a presentation of Yoga in terms of the development of consciousness — physical, vital, mental, spiritual. Following Dr. Jean Gebser's lead, the author traces the direction taken by yogic evolution from the point of view of the growth of an integral personality. He speaks of "four world ages and their correspondences in the Gebserian terminology : *Krita Yuga* (archaic consciousness) ; *Treta Yuga* (magic consciousness) ; *Dvapara Yuga* (mythic consciousness) ; *Kali Yuga* (mental consciousness)." One may or may not accept this interpretations of the content of Patanjala Yoga, the Gita Yoga, the Buddhist Yogas, Kundalini Yoga etc. But it is interesting to follow the author in his study. The terminology used, however, puts the book beyond the understanding of the lay reader.

The writer sounds a note of warning to those who hope to actualise what they call 'Transcendental Awareness' even before their ordinary awareness is trained to function properly. (P. 200)

KAMAYANI : By Jaishankar Prasad (Translated by Jaikishandas Sadani). Pub. : Rupa & Co., Calcutta-17. Pp. 264. Price : Rs. 25.

Kamayani is a major poetical work of the late Jaishankar Prasad, a noted Hindi writer. It is a kind of allegory woven round the figures of Manu, Shraddha, Ida. The sources of story are from the Shatapatha Brahmana and the Puranas, though the traditions are mixed up in the treatment.

Manu, the protector of mankind finds himself on a solitary peak of the Himalayas after a great deluge that has swept away the civilisation built up by the gods in service of pleasure and joy. He has lost the urge to live. Some time later he is amazed to find life blooming again. At that hour Shraddha — daughter of Kama — appears and attracts Manu towards a life of action and fulfilment : she is FAITH in the truth of life, the goal of Bliss. Manu, however, fails to realise the true message of Shraddha, deserts her and finds himself in the land of Ida, the queen of a kingdom of material wealth and prosperity. He fashions a new civilisation of material values, falls victim to animal passion and is thrown out by the subjects of the queen. Shraddha gets an occult intimation of his state and comes to Manu, takes him back to the Himalayas ; he realises his fault and regains the eternal bliss.

"Manu is a character symbolising the 'mind' and the life and its struggle for fulfilment.

Shraddha is the preserver of truth with an infallible will and determination to live a conscientious and moral life. Ida embodies the rational and intellectual approach of the modern mind, shorn of creative, compassionate and balanced erotisation of self and its energy." (P. iv, v).

The English translation is fluent and chaste.

M. P. PANDIT.

THIS HOLYEST ERTHE : By Oliver I. Reiser. Pub. : Perennial Books Ltd., Pates Manor, Bedfont, Middlesex. Pp. 105. Price : £ 2.50.

There are some places on earth which are special centres of spiritual and occult forces. Their history dates from far beyond the recorded data in terms of our sciences. One such place is the Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset with which is associated the Zodiac of Somerset, the Camelot of Arthurian romance. Ever since Mrs. Maltwood announced her discovery of the Glastonbury Zodiac in 1925 following a flash of insight, scholars have been at work from different angles of approach to determine fact from fiction, legend from hearsay, and see for themselves how far it is true that Jesus Christ must have visited Glastonbury or that the holy Cup of the Last Supper lies buried on the Chalice Hill. Dr. Reiser studies the various researches that have been going on for the last five decades and records their findings. Naturally the readings are tentative. Dr. Reiser is unable to accept any of these findings as conclusive but hopes that an inter-disciplinary effort will one day reveal the truth of this 'magnetized spot'.

GOD AS MOTHER : A Feminine Theology in India : By Cheever Mackenzie Brown. Pub. : Clande Stark & Co., Hartford, Vermont 05047, U.S.A. Pp. 264. Price : \$ 15.

This is an historical and theological study of the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* which is usually classed as the tenth in the traditional list of the eighteen great Puranas.

To the author, Purana is no mere mythology, no figment of imagination. "The word *Purāna* itself means belonging to the past or an ancient happening. The Puranic tradition preserves contact with the past, and is thus a primary means for rediscovering and reinterpreting truth."

Striking a happy note with these words in the initial chapter itself, the author puts his whole work in proper setting. Discussing the theological trends in the Purana, the author points out that contrary to the popular notion that this Purana is highly sectarian, its theme is all-embracing covering in its clasp

the concepts of Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktism, Tantra, Yoga and the Panchayatana worship. It is true that the Purana mainly deals with the cult of Krishna and Radha, — not in any narrow sense but as the Supreme Purusha and the Primordial Prakriti sporting in the eternal Brindavan of the cosmos. Sparing neither the Western writers nor their Indian counterparts who had 'maligned and misunderstood' the feminine theology of the Purana, the author in a brilliant exposition demonstrates from the subject-matter of the Purana itself that Radha is the primordial Prakriti, the Mother Earth herself, the Creatrix and Sustainer of the myriad universes. Krishna and Radha are the efficient and material cause of every thing, the substance and its attribute, the base and the content, the soul and body of every being. Radha is the Love immaculate, incarnate for the redemption of man. She is the soul of sacrifice, the Prime-Mover of Krishna himself. More than the Divine Spouse, she is the Divine Mother, the creator and sustainer of all.

Here in this work one finds a happy blend of critical acumen arising out of modern methods of research with a rare insight born of faith in the esoteric. Clarity in thought and an equal clarity in writing have made the author's contribution significant.

MYSTIC APPROACH TO THE VEDA AND THE UPANISHAD : By M. P. Pandit. Pub. : Ganesh & Co., Madras-600 017. Pp. 125. Price : Rs. 10.00.

Based on Sri Aurobindo's esoteric interpretation of the Veda and Sri Kapali Sastri's Commentary, the *Siddhānjana* on the first Ashtaka of the Rig Veda, these studies break new ground, powerfully driving home the truth that the Veda is the book of Revealed Knowledge.

The need for a new approach in Vedic Study is ably stressed in the first article. Then follow three articles on the Vedic Soma, throwing a flood of light on the true purport and real significance of the hoary institution of the Soma Sacrifice. "In the course of his self-giving to the Gods in the path of ascent to the heights, the Rishi desires to offer the best in himself to his divine benefactors. And what he offers is the essence, the substantial element of all experience and realisation in his life, drawn and treasured by the soul as the delight of its adventure in life. This is the sap of his existence which determines all the movements of his being and the outflowings of his consciousness, the *soma*."

The Western scholars cite the legend of Shunah-Shepa to give support to their conclusion that

human sacrifice as an institution existed in Vedic times. How this conclusion is completely unfounded and is supported only by fallacious arguments, is demonstrated in the next article. The last article stresses the fact that the Upanishads, as popularly imagined, do not run counter to Veda, but are the culmination of the Vedic thought, *Vedānta*.

—S. SHANKARANARAYANAN.

EPICETUS : By John Bonforte. Pub. : The Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 178. Price : \$ 6.

"There are few known facts about Epictetus. Even his real name is unknown", thus begins this book by Bonforte on the eminent Stoic philosopher who flourished in Greece during the time of the Apostles between 50 and 60 A.D. He was a slave of Epaphroditus in his early years in Rome ; and it is told that when his master put his leg in a torture, Epictetus quietly warned him that his leg would be broken, and when it happened, he again said in the same tone : "Did I not tell you so?"

After he became free he lived frugally in Rome and elsewhere teaching philosophy all through the reigns of Domitian and Hadrian, whether persecuted or let alone. Although he wrote no books, posterity is beholden to his disciple Arrian who had kept notes of all his lectures. Of the eight books Arrian had left, four seemed to have been lost ; and Bonforte has given here all that could be garnered from the remaining records translated by T. W. Higginson in 1865.

Epictetus retained the quiet soul of a philosopher, although a slave who might have been dragged through the streets in chains. This is in striking contrast to the majority of men who may have every worldly prize in their possession and be absolute master of their personal fate to all appearance, but know no peace, no certainty as they are shaken by every thought they happen to touch upon. His sage advice on graduation day breathes a note of freshness — rarely to be noted in modern convocation addresses — with its strong roots in Will as the source of all good and evil and its disregard for all material things. Says Epictetus addressing the students for the last time :

"You are now going out into the world where you will meet many persons of all shades of opinions, and among them will be some of the most powerful men of our nation and of the outside world. Remember, there is God above you, Who knows and sees everything you do, and He is the one you should please rather than any man, no matter how powerful he may be."

THE REVELATION OF HUMANITY: By Jonas Sepetys. Pub.: Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 221. Price: \$ 7.50.

Ever since Einstein described electrons as bends in Space-Time the explanation relating to the whole nature of man and his world has undergone a sea change. Time has become the prime element in the understanding of the human being, revealing itself through the memory brain in coaction of the outer physical and the inner vital forces. Jonas Sepetys, who has previously published "A Critique of Relativity" is now concerned mainly with the subject of humanity which, according to him, is being borne through the pains of the bearing men in the entire mankind and through its historical time.

This is the difficult book primarily intended for philosopher-scientists who alone can transcend the Gutenberg galaxy, which has constricted our perceiving Reality by developing a particle-like description of the world, because our language needed nouns! What might have been tolerable a few centuries ago to interpret the world in terms of forces, energies, etc., has now become clumsy, and the author aptly remarks: "My man, who joins in himself inseparably matter and spirit, is an obvious contradiction of the traditional man comprised of two unlike parts, the independent spirit and the body, the place of the revelation of the spirit." Man and world are not two independent entities but only complements of one human being. Reality can only be tackled as a five-dimensional continuum: matter-energy-space-time-form; and the author is humble enough to affirm that his work is "purely individual, done by the analytic-derivative method, based on nothing else but the elementary data of the natural sciences."

ARGUS.

INTRODUCTION TO SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS: By George C. Papademetriou. Pub.: Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 102. Price: \$ 5.

Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) was a fourteenth century saint of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Byzantium whose works on Theology were long in neglect. Father Papademetriou in this work under review has very lucidly explained the implications of the Saint's writings, though they were not very

prolific. His theology centres round Christian orthodoxy and mysticism. The author discusses and clarifies Palamas' doctrine of God and his creative energy contrasted with His "essence". Palamas holds that this distinction is vital since God partakes the characteristics of both being accessible and comprehensible and at the same time both immanent and transcendent. The advocacy, of this doctrine led to the accusation by his opponents that Gregory was a ditheist. Nevertheless Palamas succeeded in establishing the 'real' distinction between essence and energy of God and the Council of Constantinople in 1351 ratified this doctrine as correct. The energies of God, it was held by him are expressed by the "divine light". The author has carefully indexed the works of Palamas and the book reveals a thoroughness blended with a logical analysis of the doctrines of the Saint which makes it easily intelligible enabling the reader to have a good understanding of the orthodox conception of God and mysticism of medieval Christianity which however sounds surprisingly modern.

STUDIES IN EAST-WEST PHILOSOPHY: By G. Srinivasan (Reader in Philosophy, University of Mysore). Pub.: Arnold-Heinemann Publishers, New Delhi, India.

This book consists of 19 essays which deal with the "nature and destiny of the individual and the implications of human existence." They range all the way from the Subjectivity of the Self, Person and Value, Man and Mystery to Determinism and Moral Freedom, Sartre, Spinoza, Ramanuja, Heidegger and the Logic of Moksa. In his essay on Advaita Vedanta and Heidegger the author points out the close affinity between the two. In the same way, the philosophy of Spinoza is compared with that of Ramanuja in an interesting manner. All the essays are very readable and quite illuminative without being too pedantic and profound.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASIRI.

TAMIL BOOK RECEIVED

RAMANĀNUBHAVAM: By Srinivasan. Pub. by the author, 74, Shanthi Niketan, Madras-600 073. Pp. 48. Price: Rs. 1.50.

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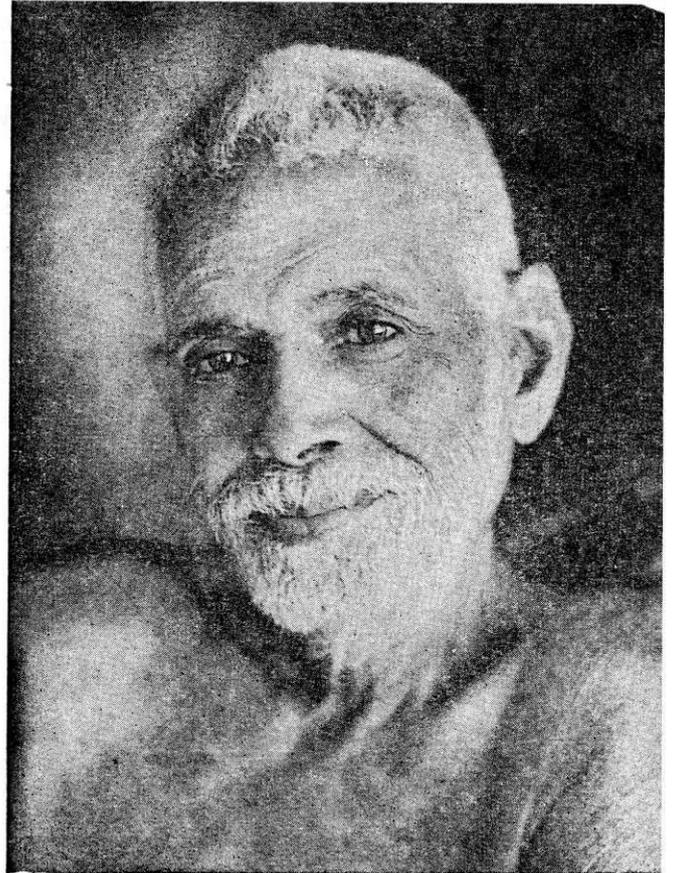
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.....



.....

Benefit Performance at Bombay in aid of Ramana Kendra, Delhi

.....

December 3, 1975 marked a landmark in the history of Ramana Kendra, Delhi, when KUMARI LATA MANGESHKAR and others enthralled a capacity audience of three thousand, for four hours, at the Shanmukhananda Hall, Bombay. The function was organised in aid of the Kendra's Building Fund and many prominent film stars of the Hindi silver screen paid tributes to Bhagavan Sri Ramana and helped in making the function an occasion to remember. Lata Mangeshkar's rendering of *slokas* from the *Bhagavad Gita* and *bhajans* of Meera Bai set the appropriate mood for the occasion.

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam, who had kindly graced the occasion, presented a beautiful colour photograph of Sri Bhagavan to Lataji.

Two attractive brochures: *Ramanānjali* and *Homage to Sri Ramana Maharshi* by Lata Mangeshkar and others, were brought out on the occasion. Music directors Naushad, Kalyanji-Anandji, Hemant Kumar, Hridaynath Mangeshkar, musicians Mukhesh, Mahendra Kapoor, Usha Mangeshkar and

film stars Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor, Sashi Kapoor, Amitab Bachchan and others wholeheartedly involved themselves in making the programme a fitting tribute to the Maharshi.

The Ramana Kendra, Delhi expresses its gratitude to Lata Mangeshkar and other artists who helped in this noble cause and it also wishes to state that no words of praise are adequate to acknowledge the untiring efforts of R. S. Jhunjhunwala, who not only got Lataji's consent but worked round the clock, to make the function the grand success it was. He was ably assisted by his sons, Rajesh and Rakesh, and the ever-smiling tireless representative of Sri Ramanasramam in Bombay, P. V. Somasundaram.

The Kendra proposes to utilise the funds raised through the Building Fund Concert Souvenir mainly for construction of a Library block etc., at its premises in New Delhi. It also proposes to utilise a portion, in furtherance of its objectives at Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, where Lata's services would be recognised by appropriate mention.



LATA MANGESHKAR

Lata Mangeshkar is a household name in India, and Indians of different age groups have been thrilled by this melody queen for the past three decades. One could, adapting from Shakespeare, say that age has not withered nor custom stale her infinite variety. Her exquisite rendering of songs have, if anything, become more sweet through the years. She is truly an "evergreen singer". The depth of devotional fervour with which she has rendered the *slokas* from *Bhagavad Gita* and the *bhajans* of Meera in her L.P. records, marks her true Indianness, which regards the spiritual values as the most worthwhile. The readiness with which she agreed to give a public performance for Ramana Kendra, Delhi, established for disseminating the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana, and the manner in which she put her heart and soul into her programme at Shanmukhananda Hall, Bombay, on December 3, shows clearly that Bhagavan's Grace is on her, which we are sure would ensure her having many more years of dedicated service to music and spiritual causes.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

From October 18 to 22, Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha of Narayanasrama Tapovanam, Kerala, gave a series of five discourses on *Sat Darsan*, explaining the teaching with many apt quotations from earlier works like *Shrimad Bhagavata* and *Yoga Vasishtha*.

INAUGURATION OF RAMANA KENDRA AT MADRAS

The necessity of having a Centre at Madras has all along been keenly felt to conduct meetings of devotees of Ramana giving talks on Sri Maharshi and His Message and *bhajans*, etc. Prof. K. Swaminathan, as long as he was in Madras, conducted with great zeal a *Ramana Bhakta Sabha* at his home; but, since his departure to the capital of India the need has been felt all the more.

The fulfilment came by the earnest efforts of Dr. B. V. Reddy. Sri Reddy succeeded in forming a Kendra at Madras and devotees are indebted to him for that.

The inauguration of the RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS took place at 57, Kutchery Road, Mylapore, Madras-4, at the residence of Dr. T. K. Ramana Kumar (son of late Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy), on Wednesday, November 19 evening. The Hall was decked with many pictures of Sri Bhagavan in various poses and the living presence of the Master was felt by all. After *Ramana Puja* and *Veda Parayana* the devotees assembled prayed to Sri Bhagavan to strengthen the Kendra and inspire its activities.

The Office-bearers of the Kendra are :

President :

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan
(in absentia Sri D. S. Sastri)

Vice-Presidents :

Sri D. S. Sastri
Sri K. K. Nambiar

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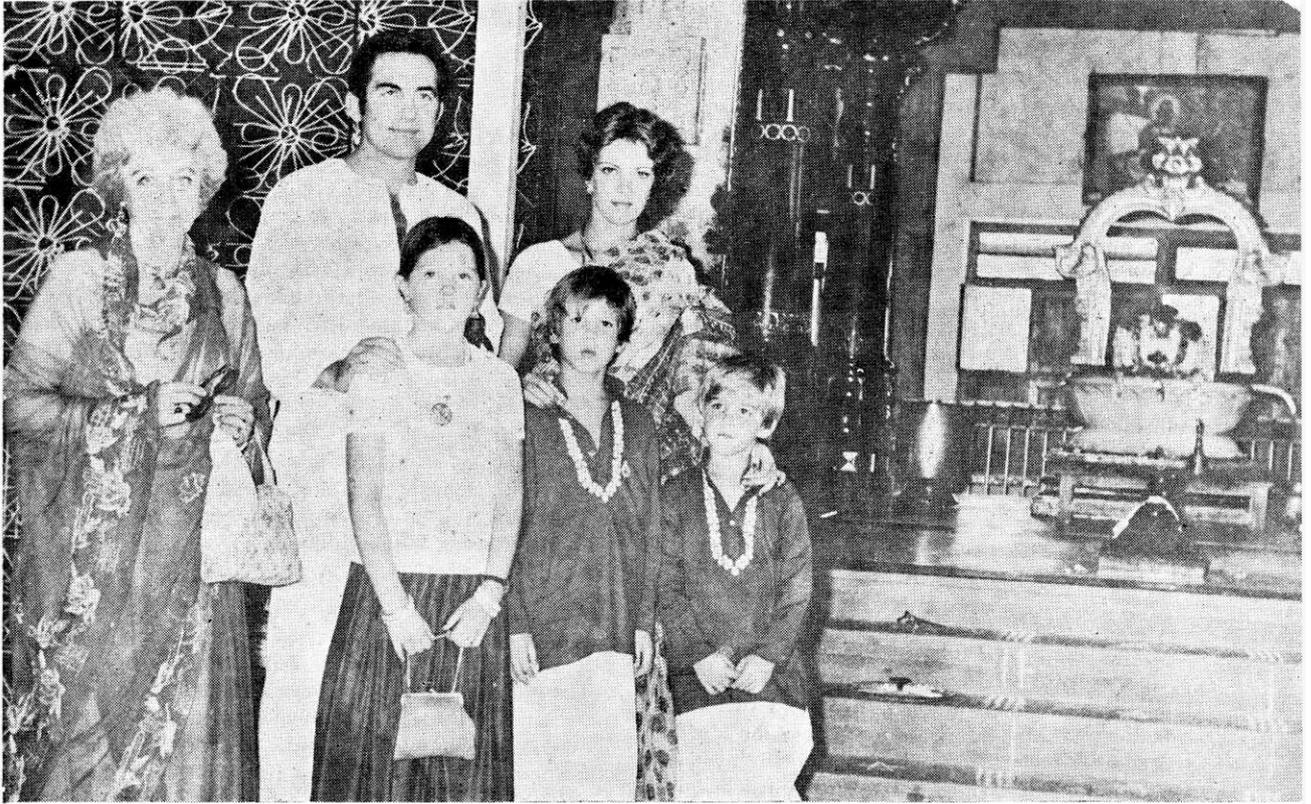
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Sri T. K. Nagarajan
Sri P. K. Somanathan
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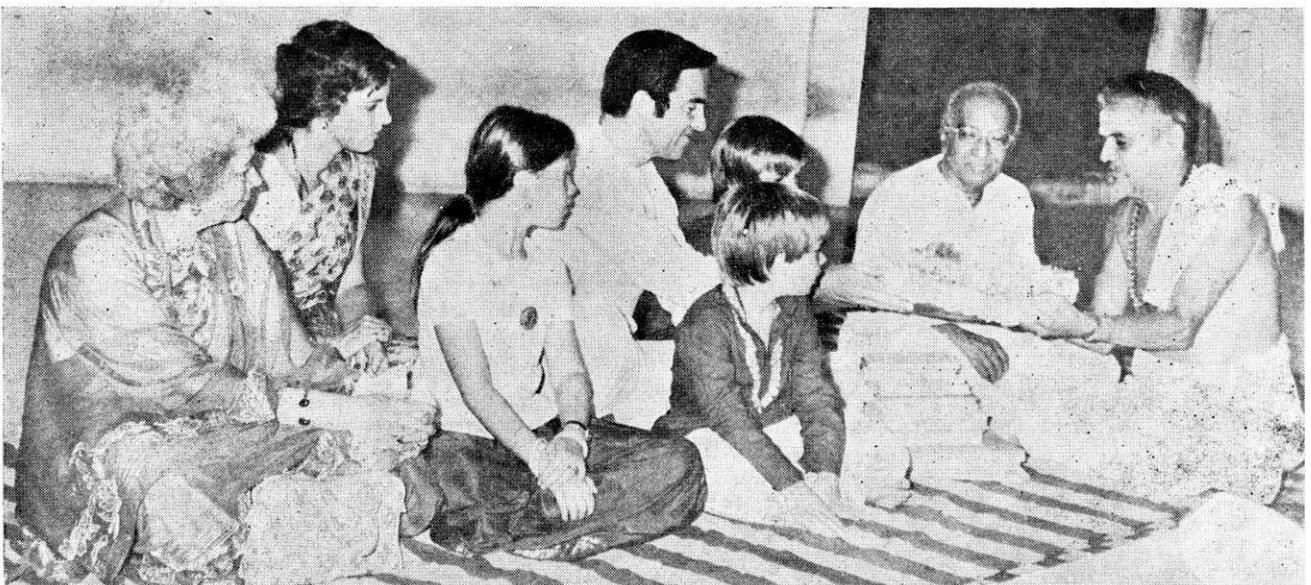
THE ROYAL FAMILY: (L to R) *Queen Mother Fredericka, King Constantine, Queen Anne-Marie and the Princess and Princes.*

GREEK ROYAL FAMILY'S VISIT

We are always happy to report of the keen interest evinced by the Greek Royal Family in visiting the Ashram to pay their homage to Bhagavan Sri Ramana and inhale the life-giving air of His Grace.

King Constantine and Queen Anne-Marie, with their children, accompanied by the Queen Mother of Greece and Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, arrived at the Ashram on November 7 and spent a day. The King showed keen interest in meditating at the

The Ashram President presents books on Bhagavan to King Constantine. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan looks on.



Old Hall, so too the Queen; and the Princes fascinated by the calm and peaceful atmosphere, went up the Hill along with the Queen Mother to Skandashram.

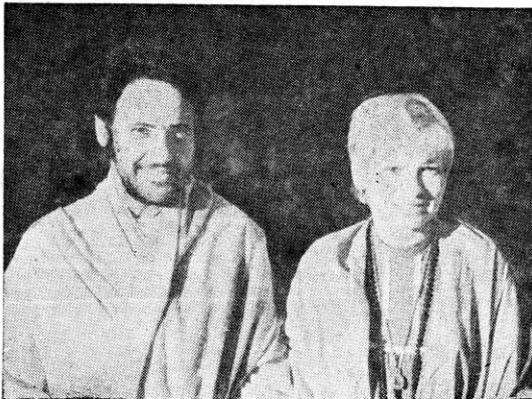
The Royal Family was received with love by the Ashram President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman. Though the Royal Family is fairly well-acquainted with the Ashram and its activities, the President took them round and helped them participating in the Ashram routine. Ashram publications in English and photos of Sri Maharshi were presented to the King by Sri Venkataraman.

* * * *

PILGRIMS

We are very happy to introduce to our readers a devout couple from Australia, who stayed with us for nearly 6 weeks at the Ashram. They fondly refer to the Ashram as their 'Home'. Mr. Robert Moore¹ and Mrs. Marie Moore spent most of the time during their stay meditating and visiting places up the Hill hallowed by the stay of Sri Bhagavan.

Mrs. Moore writes: "From my earliest childhood-memories all nature was my friend — birds, insects, animals, rocks, trees, flowers, the wind and rain. I always felt a tremendous love emanating from all — I was never lonely. I followed the Christian way of life, attending church and Sunday school. However, the yearning for a deeper, closer contact with the Divine was always there out how to find it?"



Mr. & Mrs. Moore

I searched and tried a few other paths, the last being the path of Raja Yoga, for six years. I found this extremely helpful in establishing my concentration and meditation. Still the yearning persisted.

It was in London in 1967, I had been ill with a glandular imbalance for a period of five weeks and confined to bed; this was really a blessing in disguise as this enabled me to meditate for very long periods throughout the day. A friend when visiting me asked me if I had read *A Search in Secret India* by Paul Brunton. I told her that I had read a few books by him, but not that particular one. I obtained a copy of the book and on reading it found it most interesting and informative, and when the part about meeting Ramana Maharshi was being read a great joy spread over me and I knew that this was what I had been yearning for — the Master has been found!

The next day I decided to meditate in the morning, and try the *vichara*, *Who Am I?* I followed the source of thought, where it arose and where it ended. Thought after thought got vanquished. The mind felt as if steel bands were enclosing it, tighter and tighter. Something seemed to be driving me on to continue the quest and not to yield to the mind to give it up. So I continued relentlessly putting down each thought with the inward quest *Who Am I?* A strange thing seemed to be taking place as I renewed my query *Who Am I?*; it faded somewhere within me and the mind submitted; and no thought followed. A wondrous feeling of peace and joy was followed by tremendous waves of bliss shooting up and down the body from the feet to the head and back again, one after the other; this was followed by intense heat permeating the body and this passed into a limitless expansion of indescribable bliss. I did not know how long it lasted. On thoughts gradually returning I became aware of time. I was surprised to note that a period of eight hours had elapsed! I had experienced an injury to the spine about nine years ago that had caused the shoulder and arm joints to fuse; and the leg hip joint was extremely painful to move. After this extraordinary inner spiritual experience by the Grace of my Master, Bhagavan, a miracle happened; I was completely cured of my physical ailments and disabilities!

Through Bhagavan's grace my husband and I were able to spend a day here last year — truly a day of spiritual blessings; and again this year we arrived at our spiritual 'HOME' to attend the festivals of Deepam, Jayanthi and Christmas. We found the Ashram at the foot of the beloved Hill, a fountain of joy where all may be healed and nourished completely by the all-pervading love of

¹ Mr. Robert Moore's account will be published as an article under the series 'How I Came to the Maharshi' in a later issue.

Bhagavan Ramana-Arunachala. When we leave, only our bodies will make the journey, for the heart ever remains attuned to Arunachala."

— MRS. MARIE MOORE

* * * * *

Mr. & Mrs. Moore brought along with them another devout person, Mrs. Isabel Bellamy, who



Mrs. Isabel Bellamy

is deeply interested in Sri Bhagavan. We are really happy to have amidst us this broad-minded and humble devotee. She writes:

"I am a physio-therapist, healer, radio-therapist and occupuncturist. I was brought up in the Church of England. At the age of 16, I had an experience of ecstasy — loss of identity, light and oneness with the whole universe. This set me off on a search for this unquestionable happiness. While training

in London, I went to a church for all religions where I experienced peace and harmony. I also started studying the spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner. I felt the need for unity in diversity. When I came to Australia I came across the teachings of J. Krishnamurti and I became aware that we are the cause of our own suffering. This was a tremendous help to see through the conditioning of my thoughts and started watching them. I then joined the staff of a Rudolf Steiner School for Curative Education, where I discovered I was a healer. I also read avidly while in the Theosophical Society and joined various meditation groups. I searched for what is vital force, what are man's energies? I then did intensive Raja Yoga for years. It was excellent discipline, which I needed but I eventually felt stifled and too restricted.

At this point I read *Maharshi's Gospel* and *Maha Yoga* and I first knew that this was the end of my search. The complete simplicity of Bhagavan and his teachings went straight to my heart. I found *Who Am I?* or even the thought of Ramana or Arunachala stills my thoughts and in silence beyond thought, I can live life as a little child. While trying to explain to a patient the need to get beyond dualities and thought, I went into the Silence and was completely healed of an over active thyroid and the patient received healing too.

All religions have Truth and Love and are necessary for helping people, with different approaches to life, but we all eventually have to find our own way inwards without props, so that the Self can 'be' — unimpeded in our thinking, feeling and willing and we are whole, beyond dualities, listening, watching, waiting to do the Will of God wherever we are."

MRS. ISABEL BELLAMY.

* * * * *

Mr. Wolter A. Keers of Hilversum, Holland, arrived at the Ashram with a group of tourists on November 12 and spent some useful time visiting places hallowed by the stay of Sri Bhagavan in Arunachala. Readers will remember his article in our July 1975 issue, which was widely appreciated. Mr. Keers was staying at the Ashram during the lifetime of Sri Maharshi. He has been kind enough to pass on some more articles too which will be published in due course. We would welcome him whenever he chooses to visit the Ashram, together with devout people seeking the munificent grace of Arunachala-Ramana.

* * * * *

Sri Ra. Ganapati, author of *Jaya Jaya Sankara*, *Navaratri Nāyaki* and other works in Tamil, was at our Ashram for about a week, with two of his friends.



Sri Ra. Ganapati

He is a life-long bachelor (*naishtika brahmachāri*) who is devoting his life to spiritual pursuits. He spent most of his time at the Ashram, meditating in the Old Hall. Being alert and receptive, he should have had the full benefit of the spiritual atmosphere of Bhagavan's proximity.

He was very much impressed with his talks with Sri Kunju Swami, one of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan living here. He was keen on meeting the other old devotees also residing at the Ashram.

May more and more of such seekers come to our Ashram. *ā mā yanthu Brahmachāri nah svāhā* — Taitiriya Upanishad.

* * * *

Sri A. R. Natarajan, Secretary of Ramana Kendra, Delhi, was here for ten days, with his wife, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan and daughters, Kumaris Sharada and Ambika.

Sri Natarajan was received at the Ashram with joy as he was straight returning from Bombay, after successfully conducting the musical concert there in aid of the Building Fund of Delhi Ramana Kendra. Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Sharada and Ambika kept themselves busy singing at the Shrine of Bhagavan whenever possible.

* * * *

Swamiji Yogeswar Sri Lakshman of Chillakur, Andhra, who has an ashram named after him, is a frequent visitor to the Ashram from Sri Bhagavan's days. His dedication to the Master is such that every year he brings members of his ashram devoted to Bhagavan and Arunachala so that they may imbibe the grace of Arunachala and Ramana. This year too Sri Lakshman Swami, with a party of thirty and more, stayed in the Ashram for 8 days. Their stay coincided with the Deepam Festival, celebrated at Arunachala on November 19. Sri Swami picked a Cow and a calf from the Ashram Gosala (cow-shed) and has taken them to his Ashram. As usual, the whole party of devotees did not waste a single moment of their stay at Arunachala; they went round the Hill, to the big temple and up the Hill. We were very happy to have amidst us such sincere seekers.



Sri Lakshman Swami

Among the many devotees of Sri Bhagavan who visited and stayed at our Ashram during this quarter, mention may be made of the following:

* * * *

Dr. M. D. Naik and party (Kumta)
Miss R. H. Dadabhoj, Madras
Mrs. & Mr. V. Srinivasan, Bangalore

Mrs. Vittal Mallya and 3 ladies, Bangalore
Miss Lynn Wills of Sandipany Sadhanalaya, Bombay
Sri A. L. Bennett, England
Sri G. S. Koppikar, Madras
Sri D. S. Patil, Bombay
Prof. B. N. Roychowdhari and family, Calcutta
Sri K. S. Nagappayya and family, Shimoga
Dr. B. M. Kulkarni, Kagal
Dr. G. N. Kulkarni, Kolhapur (with 11 persons)
Dr. B. Anjaneyalu, Warangal (with family)
Mrs. & Mr. A. S. Sangha, Jullundur
Sri V. L. Narayanan and family, Bombay
Miss Mehroo Screwvala, Bombay
Miss Zarine Dadachanji, Bombay
Sri J. M. Jariwalla and family, Bombay
Dr. Bhagawati Prasad and
Sri P. G. Kulkarni, Dharwar
Mr. Randy Sindelman, U.S.A.
Mrs. Odette Baumer, Switzerland
Smt. Christa Scholz, West Germany
Smt. Ruth Hartmann, West Germany
Mr. Warren Pugh, New Zealand
Mr. Barry McQueeney, U.S.A.
Sri Swami Siva Satchidananda, Sri Lanka
Miss Diana Sundin, France
Sri S. J. Roosendaal, Australia
Sri Nobbe, West Germany
Mrs. Marlies Hibschenberger, West Germany
Mrs. & Mr. Heinz Andre, West Germany
Mrs. & Mr. Volker Gausman, West Germany
Smt. Pamela Leah, England.

SRI SIVASUBRAMANIAM ("MANI")

Intimate old devotees of Sri Bhagavan will remember the unique place occupied by Dr. M. R. Krishnamoorthy in the Ashram circle.

He was the first medical attendant of Bhagavan and a great devotee and disciple. He was a rare specimen of dedicated service and was the first doctor of the Ashram Free Dispensary. He began the Dispensary with a dealwood box with some medicines and first-aid materials and was referred to as the "Ashram Doctor" by Bhagavan. All members of his family are earnest devotees of Bhagavan.



"Mani"

The doctor's eldest son, Sri Sivabramanian, known as 'Mani' at the Ashram, has been particularly drawn to Bhagavan and the Ashram from his early years. After spending some years taking care of his mother and younger members of the family, he has now returned to serve the Ashram and remain here as a permanent resident.

His spirit of service and his care of the elder devotees of Bhagavan as well as new devotees coming from far and near are praiseworthy. Apart from assisting the doctor at the Dispensary he is now in sole charge of the Ashram Stores. His is a dedicated life of loving service to all. He is diligently pursuing his *sadhana* of *japa* and *dhyana* also. May he, by the Grace of Bhagavan, shine forth as an example for others as well!

OBITUARY FRAMJI DORABJI

Framji Dorabji, a Parsee gentleman of Bombay, after many years of affluence at Bombay came to Sri Bhagavan somewhat broken, in 1937, and became a life-long devotee, visiting thenceforth his Master almost every month and on every sacred day of Sri Ramanasramam. He utterly surrendered himself to Bhagavan and by His Grace rose up spiritually as well as in worldly circumstances. He was the proprietor of the Wellington Talkies, Madras.



Sri Framji

We deeply regret to announce his passing away at Madras on November 20, due to unavoidable old-age debility. He passed away a day after the sacred *Krittika Deepam* of Arunachala, with the beacon constantly before his inner vision. He had never missed this particularly holy occasion all these years.

Framji was pious, humble and of a benevolent disposition. He adored Bhagavan as God Himself in human form. He has been a staunch supporter of *The Mountain Path* from its inception. Even during the last few years of great physical infirmity he was regularly visiting the Ashram. His wife and two children also became good devotees of Bhagavan. His son and daughter, *Dorab* and *Soona*, are well-known to the inner circle of Bhagavan's devotees.

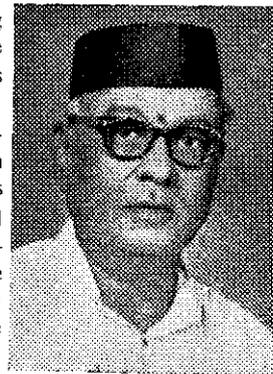
Framji is not dead; he lives for ever at the Feet of his Master, revered by all co-devotees!

VISHNUPANT KASHINATH KADAV

We record with concern the demise of one of the staunch devotees of Bhagavan, Sri V. K. Kadav.

Born of poor parents, Sri V. K. Kadav, on his own initiative started his block-making firm under the name of "Shankar & Co." in 1933, with meagre monetary resources. We gratefully record here that almost all the blocks used in our Ashram publications, including special Souvenirs, were kindly donated by this generous devotee.

He had his first *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan in 1944 and Bhagavan was graciously pleased to call 'Vishnu' as 'Vishnupant' which name he bore with devotional fervour. Thereafter, he visited the Ashram frequently and concentrated on *bhakti mārga*. He named his house as 'Guruprasad'. He lived, moved and had his being in Sri Bhagavan whose name he lispied even at the end. Philanthropic and generous by nature he held out his helping hand to the poor and needy. May his soul rest in Eternal Peace!



Sri Kadav

C. SOMASUNDARAM PILLAI

This is another sincere and staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. Somasundaram Pillai died at Cuddalore N.T. on November 2, at the ripe old age of 83 (see 'Introducing . . .' in our issue of July, 1973). We have lost in him an old devotee and a sincere friend; his services were always available to the Ashram in the Accounts section, whenever necessary. Somasundaram Pillai has a distinguished place among earnest devotees of Bhagavan Ramana. May his soul rest in peace at the Lotus Feet of our Master!

A. S. NARAYANA IYER

Rao Bahadur A. S. Narayana Iyer, brother-in-law of Dr. Narayana Iyer of Salem, a well-known devotee of Bhagavan, passed away peacefully on the afternoon of November 29, at his residence in Salem. He was an officer in the India Government delegation at Kandy, Ceylon, before the Second World War. He was genial by temperament and deeply spiritual and he will be missed by all who knew him. We offer our heart-felt condolences to his wife, Anandammal, and all relatives.

INTRODUCING....

Sri G. Lakshmi Narasimham¹
& Smt. Saraswati Ammal

Sri G. Lakshmi Narasimham, after taking his B.L. degree stayed at Sri Ramanasramam for three years from 1930 to 1933, along with his mother and sister, Lakshmi,² serving Sri Bhagavan. It was Bhagavan's Grace that his apprenticeship should be under him. Lakshmi Narasimham's marriage also took place at Tiruvannamalai and when the new couple came to do *namaskaram* (prostration), Sri Bhagavan remarked: "Now, your name (Lakshmi + Narasimham) has become meaningful!"

Sri Niranjanananda Swami (also known as *Chinnaswami*, Sri Bhagavan's brother) was the Manager of the Ashram then and his office was near Bhagavan's Hall. Like others Narasinga Rao also was meditating in Bhagavan's Hall. Chinnaswami asked him to assist him in the Ashram correspondence. Noting Bhagavan's approval of it, Narasinga Rao began going straight to Chinnaswami after bowing to Bhagavan. Later on this earned the humorous remark of Bhagavan: "Oh! He belongs to Chinnaswami, not to the Hall group!"

Chinnaswami was a strict and conscientious taskmaster. He spared no pains in keeping an exact account of moneys received and spent. He looked upon Bhagavan, not as his brother but God Himself, and so considered it his first duty to serve Bhagavan's devotees, accommodating them and attending to their wants. The temple, the big dining hall and well-furnished accommodations are the results of his labour of love. Actually seeing Chinnaswami's one-pointed spirit of service, G.L.N. (as he is known to the readers of *The Mountain Path*) dedicated himself to serve him to the best of his ability, surrendering himself thus to Bhagavan. Saraswati Ammal and Lakshmi used to do their bit of service in the kitchen. From their experience too they were led to conclude that whatever Chinnaswami did had always the distinct approval of Bhagavan.

Gradually all the members of Narasinga Rao's family became attached to Sri Bhagavan and the Ashram, by bonds of devotion and reverence. They all regarded Chinnaswami as a true instrument of Bhagavan. His eldest brother, the late Sambasiva Rao, was a reputed lawyer of Nellore. Till he passed away in 1962, he diligently served the Ashram in the legal and other spheres. Sister Lakshmi and



Sri G. L. N. and Smt. Saraswati Ammal

brother-in-law, B. S. Ranganadham, are great devotees of Bhagavan. His third elder brother, the late Satyanarayana Rao, a teacher at the Mahant's High

¹ Known as 'Narasinga Rao' at the Ashram.

² Introduced to our readers in the issue of July, 1970, p. 178.

School, Vellore, from about 1925, was the first to be drawn to Bhagavan and it was his influence which brought other members of the family to Bhagavan. He was deeply devoted to Bhagavan and was blessed with the proximity and touch of grace of Bhagavan during his last illness within the Ashram premises. His fourth brother, the late Subba Rao, a teacher at Nellore, used to assist with his Scout troupe during Bhagavan's *Jayanti* celebrations. These celebrations and the taking out of Bhagavan's picture in procession, started by him, continue upto this day at Nellore.

When G.L.N. came to the Ashram, he did not know even a letter of the Tamil alphabet. Impelled by Bhagavan's grace he picked up enough knowledge of Tamil to read and understand Sri Bhagavan's works in the original. Thus it was nothing but Bhagavan's grace that enabled him to translate into Telugu Bhagavan's *Five Hymns to Arunachala* and *Forty Verses on Reality*.

Chinnaswami intuitively hit upon some devotees to help him and trusted them completely. For instance, when he went to Rangoon in 1936 to personally select and purchase special teak wood for the construction of Sri Matrubhuteswara Temple, he put Narasinga Rao in charge of the Ashram during his absence of over a month. During the life-time of Bhagavan and Chinnaswami and even after, right up to this day Narasinga Rao has been a devoted servant of the Ashram. Thus he is now one of the Board of Trustees of Sri Ramanasramam. He is also a trusted friend and adviser to Sri T. N. Venkataraman, the present President of the Ashram. Narasinga Rao firmly believes that it is by Sri Bhagavan's Grace that Sri Venkataraman is carrying on his responsibility successfully, overcoming all obstacles on his path.

We wish these remarkable devotees many more years of devotion and service to Bhagavan.

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By S. S. COHEN

(author of *Guru Ramana* and *Reflections on Talks with Maharshi*)

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Letters to the Editor

Replies by Lucia Osborne

GOD AND CREATION

If God is all love why has He created this miserable world? We see so much suffering and the chaos and misery in the world are increasing. If God has created this world for His own sport then it is cruel and if not then what is the purpose of it all?

S. N., U.S.A.

Creation is neither good nor bad, Bhagavan replied to a questioner. It is as it is. It is the human mind which puts all sorts of constructions on it, as it sees things from its own angle. . . . Bhagavan compared creation to a peepul tree to which birds come to eat its fruit or take shelter, men come to cool themselves under its shade but some may hang themselves on it. Yet the tree remains unconcerned with all the uses it is put to and continues to lead its quiet life. It is the human mind which creates its own trouble and then cries for help. . . .

On another occasion Bhagavan said that creation is the mirror for the eye to see itself.

Creation is a figment of our own imagination differing with the state of mind of each perceiver. If it had its own reality it would be the same for everybody. All sadhana aims at awakening from this dream of life or creation to our true state which is eternal happiness.

The purpose of creation may be to experience the return to the Source. Those who had even a glimpse of it say that lifetimes of the greatest suffering are as nothing compared with the glory and wonder of such a glimpse.

One should consider the phenomenal world with reference to oneself as merely a dream, Bhagavan counsels, in order to help one to realise the oneness of Being.

Rationally it cannot be proved that the world has an independent existence apart from a perceiver.

* * *

MULTIPLICITY AND REALITY

Recently I had an opportunity to read a very interesting book — *Maha Yoga* by *Who*. He says that according to sages the world, time and places are unreal, even the differences between inside and outside is unreal and that Reality is changeless, indivisible and independent. But thus, also the differences

between places must be unreal. . . . How can there be one place more holy (e.g., Arunachala) than another? I understand that this can be good for the sake of teaching, for devotion and cultivating positive emotions in the minds of disciples. But I do not understand that even Bhagavan in his youth was powerfully attracted to Arunachala and later said that Arunachala is the Heart of the Universe and to be near Arunachala may be of great help in the quest. So is the difference between Arunachala and any other place real or unreal? Bhagavan also said that we should seek the Self inside and not outside in the world which is the same as the mind.

And one more thing: Bhagavan wrote the *Five Hymns to Arunachala*. But Bhagavan himself was the Self, the Reality. Does it mean that He wrote hymns to Himself? Or who wrote hymns to whom? . . . How can there be devotion when there is no division?

I would be very pleased if you could explain these difficulties. So far I have not found any answer. . . .

DR. PAVEL KRIVKA,

Czechoslovakia.

Reality is One and Unchangeable but so long as your body is real to you although intellectually you may understand that you are not the body, multiplicity or differences in creation or, as you say, between places have their relative reality. If you fall on the ground you raise yourself with the help of the ground. Physical supports of Grace are valid and necessary for those struggling to free themselves. Arunachala is such a holy support and Centre or Heart of the universe. A sage acts for the good of the devotees and as an example. Bhagavan has written the Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala for our sake identifying Himself with us, devotees. For a sage division is only apparent and his actions are for the benefit of the unenlightened. This cannot be emphasized enough and explains seemingly paradoxical statements made from the standpoint of a sage or as a pointer and help to still the mind. The difference between Arunachala and any other place is both unreal and relatively real. Similarly Bhagavan asks us to seek the Self inside in the heart which is really all-pervading. It is meant as a focussing point, a holy support of Grace.