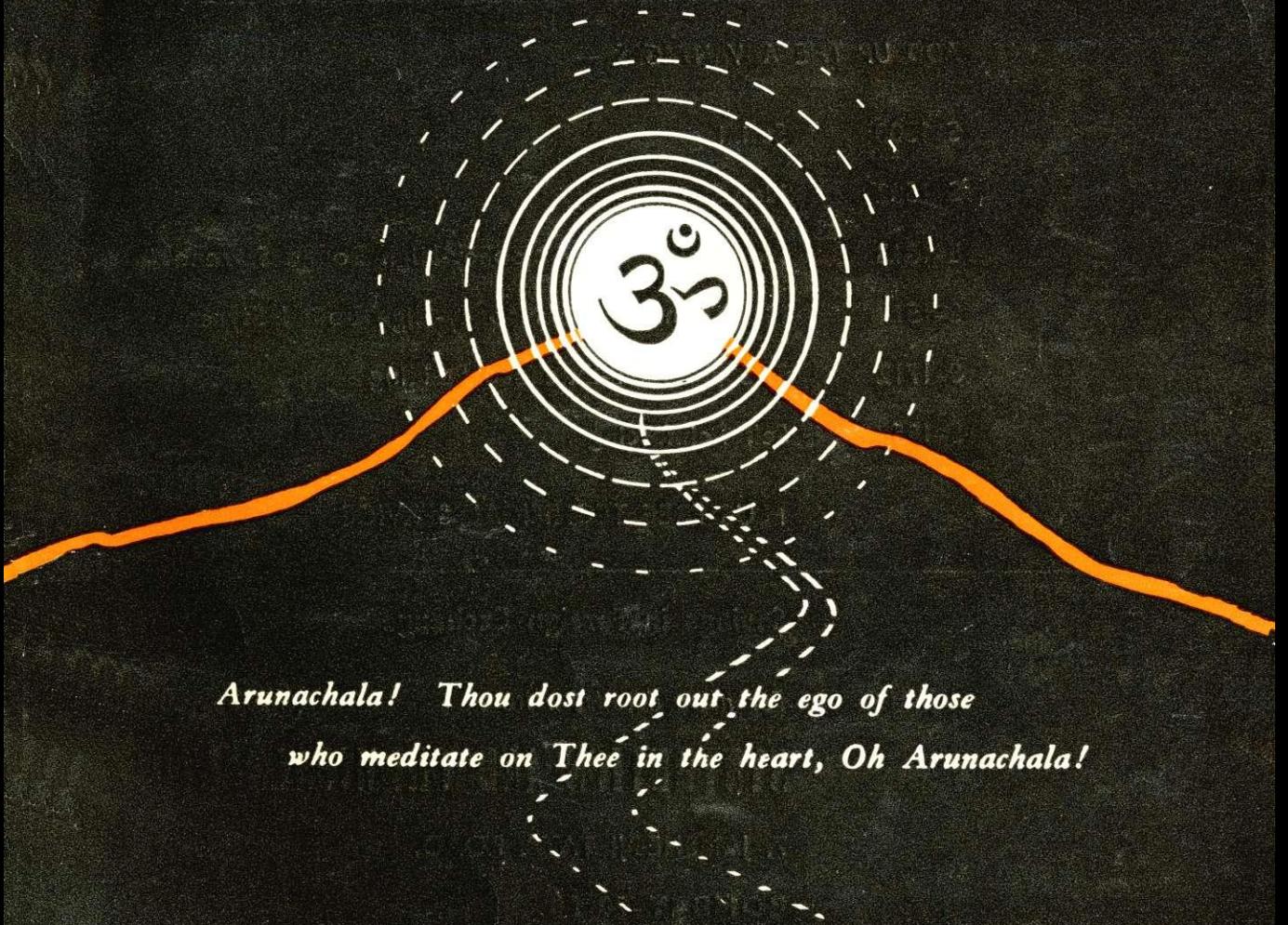


the
Mountain
path



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

vol. viii, no. 4, october 1971

Do not continue to deceive and prove me; disclose instead Thy Transcendental Self, Oh Arunachala!

—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 32.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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

Vol. VIII OCTOBER 1971 No. 4

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— Editor.

GRACE IN WORDS: The verse from *Forty Verses* (ULLADU NARPADU) in Malayalam and Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece is the facsimile of Sri Bhagavan's own handwriting. The translation is a new free rendering into English by Prof. K. Swaminathan.

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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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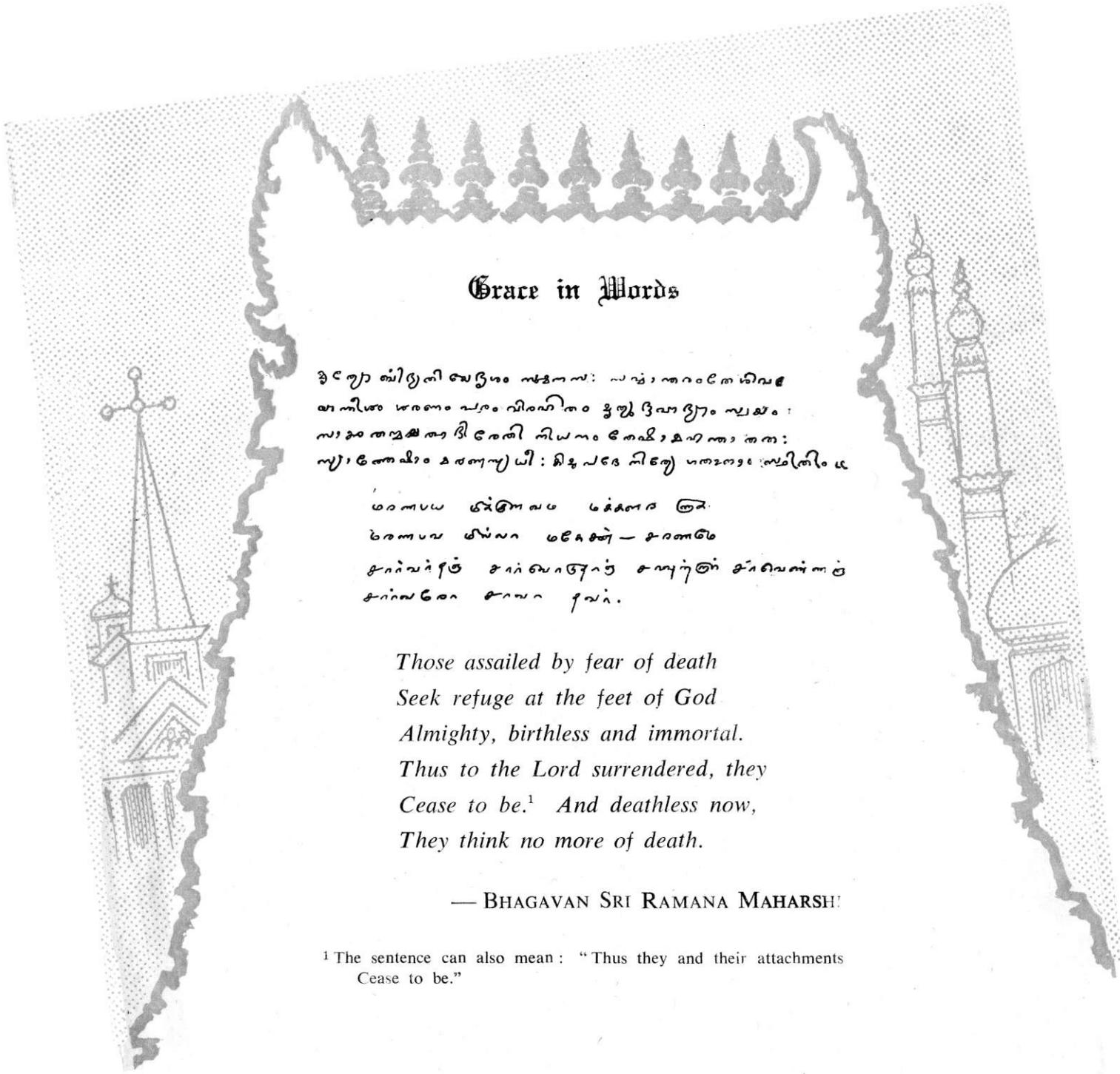
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



Grace in Words

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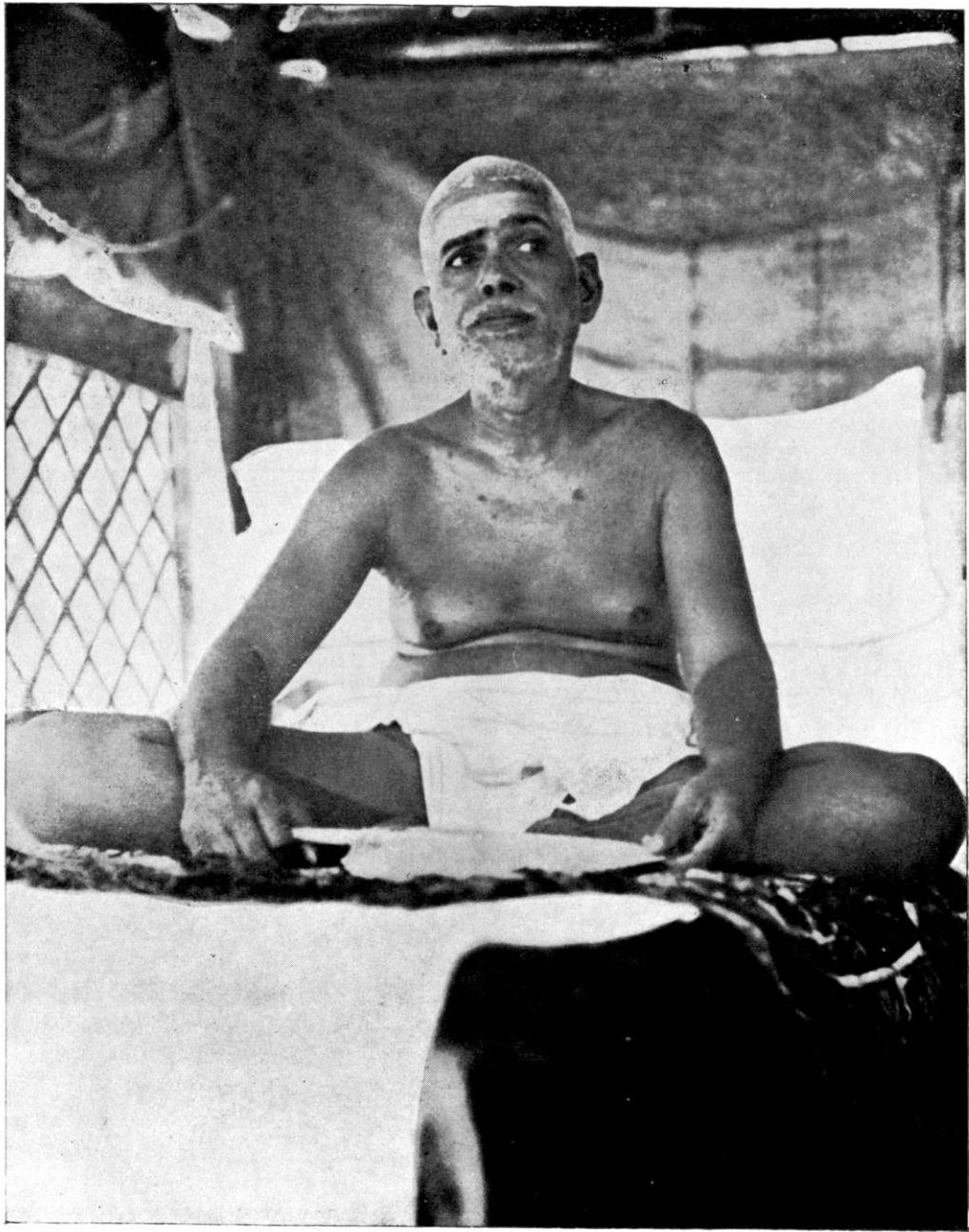
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*Those assailed by fear of death
Seek refuge at the feet of God
Almighty, birthless and immortal.
Thus to the Lord surrendered, they
Cease to be.¹ And deathless now,
They think no more of death.*

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

¹ The sentence can also mean: "Thus they and their attachments
Cease to be."







THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: LUCIA OSBORNE

Vol. VIII

OCTOBER, 1971

No. 4

LIGHT AND SHADOW

Editorial

Hear well with your ears. See the Light with a pure mind. The power of Lord Ahura is given unto him who has no illwill when the Good Mind pervades completely.

— from the *Zend Avesta* : *Yasna* 43 : 11

VISITORS who come to an Ashram for the first time expect to find only spiritually highly evolved people, almost saints. Letters arrive saying : “ You must be wonderful people. How I long to meet you all ” or “ I feel so very close to you and at one with you all through Sri Bhagavan’s Grace even though I have not met you ” and more. Usually there will be a group of sincere one-pointed sadhakas who devote most of their time to this greatest of all quests without getting involved in detractive matters. They form so to speak the salt of an ashram. But on the whole the types of people vary much the same as in the world at large with this difference that their characteristics good or bad will become more conspicuous. Lower tendencies get stirred up in the process of sadhana and come to the surface like scum to be removed.

Spiritual effort helps to eradicate or at least lessen their virulence resulting in lovable traits of character : enhanced unselfishness, serenity, more goodwill, etc. However, there are exceptions, fortunately rare, when the *vasanas* or ego take over almost completely and then eradicate that aspirant’s discrimination, distorting the mind to the point of reversing all sense of values ; *adharmā* is seen as *dharma* and *vice versa*. In extreme cases such a reversal of values is a sign of madness ; Sri Bhagavan’s disapproval expressed itself in the one word : ‘ mischief ’. All troubles particularly of a psychosomatic nature come from self-centredness of the ego which does the mischief. Hate takes the place of love and the most unlikely object will be chosen to vent it on. Effort instead, towards *sadhana*, will be swallowed up in an all-consuming surge of egoism unrestrained by considerations for the injury or hurt caused

to others with scant regard for facts. The perpetrator does not seem to care or realise the deleterious effect on himself though it is bound to bring him in its wake only misery. 'Evil there must be,' said Jesus Christ, 'but woe to him through whom it comes.'

According to the Dhammpada all that we are comes from what we have thought; it is founded on our past thoughts; it is built on our present thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, even as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the cart. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought then happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him.

Concentration on a single thought or object is a preliminary till it becomes possible to meditate in awareness without thoughts. Concentration on injury from thwarted ambition and resentment or hate could be put to better use. It is incumbent on a spiritual seeker in any case to try to overcome all sense of injury, justified or not, relatively speaking, since it drags one only away from the goal.

On one occasion Sri Bhagavan said that people thank God when something they consider good happens to them but they should also thank God for adversity. Nothing happens by accident. In surrender, whatever happens is accepted as coming from the Guru and necessary for our good, perhaps to expiate a piece of bad *karma*, so that Grace can take effect or turn us more inwards to self-enquiry. Who is feeling injury or hate? So, if it is impossible for one to concentrate happily in love then there is the alternative of concentrating miserably in hate. For life has a purpose—the return to the Source—like drops of water heading for their source, the sea, through many peregrinations in essence the same. Hate, however, can be reversed into love and goodwill which then can have greater force than ordinarily. There are cases of ruthless murderers and robbers (Valmiki, Angulimala) or a debauchee like Sri Arunagirinathar or a hater like St. Paul, turning into great saints. This is far from easy but everything is possible

with Grace, only the first step has to be taken in the right direction. 'A journey of a thousand miles starts with one step', is a Taoist saying.

In perspective or when faced with approaching death things that assumed great importance at one time pales into insignificance. Such is their substance or non-substance.

In the *Yoga Vasishtha* there is a story of a king who seated as he was on his throne dreamt in less time than the duration of a thought, a whole lifetime from youth till old age spent in misery as a *chandala* (untouchable). Tormented by hunger and unable to find food for his starving family during a famine, he decided to immolate himself and woke up to discover that he never ceased to be a king and was still sitting on his throne!

If time is an illusion and even science has come to the conclusion that this world is only an idea or thought concretised, then effort to wake up from this dream of life (through *sadhana*) with all its endless, so futile problems and troubles may culminate in a similar discovery that 'strictly speaking the duration of the life of a living being lasts only while a thought lasts' as the *Visuddhi Magga* expresses it and that we have never ceased to be the Self.

The followers of a Master, particularly of a Sad-Guru like Sri Bhagavan, constitute a spiritual family. When once someone raised the question of renunciation Sri Bhagavan said: 'Look, what a large family has gathered around me!' There is unity in diversity and so it is with a family or should be. There is unity even among thieves, said the Buddha. So long as *vasanas* are playing themselves out there will be occasional dissensions.

Seekers come to a spiritual centre often through great sacrifices working for years to save up enough to be able to spend, sometimes only a month, or less, at the source of peace away from life's turmoil. The more one keeps in mind unity rather than diversity particularly with regard to them, the nearer one is to

realising Sri Bhagavan's teaching by putting it into practice in daily life.

In the editorial 'Quest and Egoism' in the October, 1967 issue the founder-editor said that if understanding has really sunk in the heart of the newcomer and truth has been recognised as what he always knew but did not know that he knew, nothing again can ever make him doubt.

However, it is not so much the people in the Ashram as the radiance of the Sad-Guru, Ramana-Arunachala, which is of import. 'It draws to Itself those who are rich in *tapas*'.

"Hearken; It stands as a Hill eradicating
diversive knowledge.

Its action is mysterious, past human
understanding.

.....

"Only to convey by Silence Thy
transcendental state
Thou standest as a Hill, shining from
heaven to earth.

"To dwell without thoughts upon Thy
boundless nature is to lose one's
separate identity...

"As a string in a necklet of gems it is
Thou in Thy Unity
Who penetrest all the diversity of
beings."

—extracts from *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*.

Where there is light there is also shadow. The greater the light the greater the shadow. Near Christ there was a Judas. The Buddha had an enemy in Devadatta. The Pandavas were persecuted by the Kurus. *Adharma* is by its very nature opposed to *Dharma*. In the *Quran* it says: 'And thus have we made for every prophet an enemy from among the guilty and sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and Helper.' And somewhere in the *Quran* is a prayer for protection from the 'envy of the envious.' Spiritual envy can far exceed mundane envy. That was probably why Sri Bhagavan was usually very careful not to show His Grace openly to a particular devotee. With rare exceptions it was done so inconspicuously that only the devotee concerned knew.

To the extent that *sadhana* progresses in being able to see the Self in all beings, or to 'love thy neighbour as thyself' there will be goodwill and peace in the heart, for nobody bears malice or hatred towards himself. The opposite will be the case when straying deeper into diversity. The world is like a mirror; it reflects our state of mind. Duryodana could not find one good man in the same kingdom in which Yudishtira could not find a single bad man. There is a delightful story of a Russian pilgrim who felt only love in his heart after ceaselessly repeating a prayer to Jesus to the exclusion of all other thoughts till it became spontaneous.¹ Then he found to his great surprise that everybody started loving him.

A wise man said that none of our energy should be allowed to flow into a shadow of hurt or resentment and thus energize it. For nothing happens to us unless we respond to it. 'He who has not peace of mind feels an offence. He whose mind has peace feels it not.'

Suffering is nothing but getting entangled in diversity. It always comes from 'otherness.' An understanding of the origin and nature of suffering is the first step in the Eightfold Path leading towards cessation of suffering. The origin of happiness is represented as right speech, defined as abstaining from lying, tale-bearing, harsh language and vain talk. What a man has heard he does not repeat so as not to cause dissension. 'Blessed are the peacemakers...' said Christ.

Right action means concern for the welfare of all beings, abstaining from whatever may cause physical or mental hurt.

Right effort and right mindfulness is keeping to truth in word and deed and spiritual striving which neutralises negative emotions and cravings. Satisfying them would be like pouring oil on fire. It would flame up to the extent that it is being fed!

Sri Bhagavan said that all suffering arises from ignorance from a false attitude. This

¹ God or the Self is described as pure love (as far as a description is possible).

attitude can be reversed through *sadhana*, which is fighting for one's liberty, for freedom from all suffering, for sublime happiness. It is a great fight and help comes to an earnest fighter from the Sad-Guru.

If only we remember that we are not the 'actors' and avoid contentiousness, which Master Seng Ts'an calls a disease of the mind, all will be well. Sri Bhagavan said that to see wrong in another is one's own wrong. One's own sin is reflected outside and the individual in ignorance superimposes it on another.

Everyone is hungry for happiness which is his true nature. Yet it is one of life's paradoxes that this pursuit (amidst the flux of change) defeats its own purpose. Hence, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all else will be added unto you,' says Jesus Christ.

'Remember that in the interior of my Heart is transcendental glory with all the enjoyments of the world also.' (*Skanda Purana* as selected by Sri Bhagavan).

One of the tenets of Zoroastrianism is antagonism between good and evil, *Ahura* and *Ahriman*. 'There are two spirits in the universe: the Spirit of Good and of evil.² Both work in our thoughts and words and deeds. Between these two you have to choose for your weal or woe.' (*Zend Avesta*: YS, 30). One's character is constantly in the making. The actions, right or wrong, solidify into grooves and *vasanas* for future actions. When a sadhu asked what his future will be Sri Bhagavan replied that it will be as his present is. The recognition of good implies the idea of evil, both in the realm of concepts or pairs of

opposites which ultimately have to be transcended in stilling the mind. Zoroaster shows the path as all Masters do, for his adherents to go beyond this antagonism and realise God, visualised as the Universal Mind. Worship of fire in Zoroastrianism has a profound symbolism of Unity in diversity. Fire inherent in all objects is formless and reveals itself through objects. Friction produces fire latent in objects like two pieces of wood or sparks in two pieces of iron etc. Friction against the ego till the impurities are burnt out will reveal the all-pervasive Holy Spirit — Ahura Mazda or Ormazd.

Rig Veda and *Svestasvatara, Katha* and other *Upanishads* also use this metaphor; fire takes new forms in all things that exist. Spiritual effort is the friction that produces fire — the Self immanent — whether realised or not.

'The conquest of oneself is the greatest victory. Why fight with other men? Fight with your own self and attain true joy and glory,' says the *Uttaradhyana Sutra*.

To conclude — a Tibetan wise man of the *dge-tugs-pa* school says:³

"Out of a play that has no being in itself appeared
A many coloured picture of all the good and evil.
In *Samsara* and *Nirvana*
I have seen nothing that was not
A mere postulate or label."

² With apologies to those who doubt whether *they* themselves exist!

³ In *Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way*, p. 123, edited by Herbert V. Guenther.

Why hast thou forgotten God?
Anger hast thou not forgotten,
Nor falsehood;
Then why hast thou forgotten Truth?
Sunk deep in this world's show
(of ambition, hate and revenge)
Why hast thou forgotten the Home
From which thou comest?
Thou hast clung to the dross

Then why hast thou flung away
The Gem beyond price?
Joy thou pursuest
Then why hast thou scorned the one source
of all Joy?
Turn,
Trust God,
Fling from thee all that is less.

— GURU NANAK

SRI BHAGAVAN'S WILL

.....

A conversation between Major A. W. Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala) and a friend of his is reproduced in part below. (The subject of the conversation is Sri Bhagavan's Will (made in 1938) — whether he could at all make one).

FRIEND : 'X' says that a Maharshi could never make a Will.

CHADWICK : Oh, is 'X' a Maharshi?

FRIEND : No, of course not, but his opinion is to be respected.

CHADWICK : But if he is not a Maharshi how can he possibly tell how a Maharshi would behave under the circumstances? I thought such were supposed to be perfectly free, but you would bind them in chains.

FRIEND : But he ('X') is deeply read in the scriptures and so may be considered an authority.

CHADWICK : Deeply read in the scriptures, is he? Then what about Janaka?

FRIEND : Janaka? I don't understand. He did not make a Will!

CHADWICK : How do you know? In any case he ruled a kingdom. So Maharshis may rule kingdoms, may they not?

FRIEND : (Reluctantly) Yes.

CHADWICK : Well, what about Lord Krishna?

FRIEND : Krishna? Anyway I am certain *he* never made a Will!

CHADWICK : Probably not, but he sported with the naked Gopis. You therefore allow that Maharshis may sport with Gopis, do you?

FRIEND : Don't laugh at me. These things are beyond our comprehension.

.....

CHADWICK : Couldn't you admit as much for Maharshi?

FRIEND : (Mumbles.)

.....

FRIEND : If he was indifferent, why did he own anything?

CHADWICK : Was Janaka attached?

FRIEND : Of course not!

CHADWICK : Yet he owned a whole kingdom and Maharshi only a few acres of land . . .

He (Maharshi) did not confuse ownership with attachment, there need be no connection. He did not claim things for himself, yet no one but a crank could pretend that various things had not been given him. Were they not there in evidence? Who else do you suggest owned the Ashram?

FRIEND : The consensus of disciples.

CHADWICK : Rubbish. Nothing was ever given to a consensus of disciples; you know very well that all the things were gifts humbly placed by disciples at the feet of their Guru.

.....

CHADWICK : He never did anything for himself or for his own comfort but he was always all consideration for others. The necessity for some document to help the Ashram to continue after his giving up the body was explained to him and he saw this necessity and agreed. I repeat, it (Maharshi's making the Will) was an act of grace!

Throw like and dislike away and you will be clear about your Mind.
Be not for or against a thing.
For that is contentious
A disease of the Mind.

—MASTER SENG T'S'AAN,

VOHU MANAH

By
Dr. P. J. SAHER

IN Manichean writings we often come across a strange term called *manvahnēd vazurg* (the great soul). This has a startling similarity to the *Atman* of Vedanta and the Zarathustrian *vohu manah*. When we recall that Mani, the founder of the Manichean religion, was born in Persia and studied for a year or so in India, then the similarity acquires even greater significance.

On account of the familiarity between macro- and micro-cosmic conceptions in Gnostic teachings we may well assume that *manvahnēd vazurg* symbolized that spiritual element which as the Cosmic Soul dwells in man as his Higher Self. A similar idea is found in the Hellenic mystery religions and the Mandaean religion of Mani's father where the individual soul is also identified with the Cosmic Soul. This too is the main thesis of Vedanta. Just as every individual is expected to have a soul so does he have his own *manvahnēd*. Still more arresting is the idea (hinted at when not expressly stated) that this cosmic soul when it descends on earth as a revealer of true religion is to be called a 'messenger' (*avatar*) and so is both human and divine. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa laid particular stress on the fact that an incarnation has both a human and a divine aspect.¹ Mani considered Zarathustra (along with Christ, Buddha and himself) to be such an incarnation. This same idea, in a somewhat altered form, finds its counterpart in the Prophet and Apostle-of-God of the Semitic religions such as Judaism and Islam.

Now *manvahnēd* is a later derivation from the old Iranian *manah* + *vohu* as it originally appears in Zarathustra's *Gathas*.² The Iranian *manah* like its Indian equivalent *manas* means mind. *Manah* + *vohu* means therefore 'good + mind' and is identical with *vohu manah*

(the good mind, the cosmic mind in man which leads him on to the lasting good).

'O Truth! may I (be permitted to) see thee as (even) I myself (am like you a lover of) the good mind.'

We have a parallel to it in the Upanishads :

'O Sun! the face of truth is covered with (your) golden disc. Uncover! so that I, a lover of the truth, may see it!'

Vohu manah is, as we have seen, only the original term from which *Manvahnēd* is derived and means like the Sanskrit *Atman* either the Higher Self (*manvahnēd*) or the Higher Mind (*vohu manah*). In fact it would not be altogether wrong to compare *vohu manah* with the mind of Christ :

'For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that we may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.'³

According to Manichean teachings Jesus, like other divine incarnations, is one in whom the High Mind (or Higher Self) was an *active* aspect just as with us it is in its potential aspect. In a Manichean tract praising Jesus we read :

'We glorify the great *vohu manah* (vahman) whom you have planted in the heart of the good-intentioned ones.'

This cosmic principle which is planted in the hearts of men is also found in old Persian texts to be equated with *rosn* (the Light within). This also explains why the Parsis as legatees of the old Persian religion revere

¹ *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, by Swami Nikhilananda.

² *Yasna* 28 : 5.

³ *1 Corinthians*, ii. 16.

fire or flame as the most fitting emblem of God.

The Higher Mind is in all men an emanation of the still undiminished *vohu manah*. Thus not only in Vedic India but also in Zarathustra's Iran the soul of the individual was regarded as participating and in a certain sense, identical with the great *vohu manah* or cosmic soul. The Higher Self is also referred to in Manichean texts as the *saviour* to distinguish it from the ego (*jiva*) which is then called 'the I'.

We have many interesting dialogues between the heavenly Self and the earthly ego in Gnostic writings. Very significant for its similarity to Vedanta is the following :

'O soul (ego, or *jiva*) do not fear!
I am your *Manvahmēd* (*Atman*)
and a surety and a seal
and you are my body (like)
a garment (which I have put on).
.....
And I am your (Inner) Light,
the original effulgence,
the *Great Manvahmēd*,
and a perfect surety.'⁴

The word surety here means that the Higher Self guarantees the release of the ego whose 'higher' Self it constitutes.

The great *vohu manah* which in the macrocosm represents all creation is also present as the microcosmos in the individual. We are reminded here of the description of the Atman as 'smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest, the Self seated in the heart of every creature.'⁵

All divine incarnations are emanations from the Divine Cosmic Mind, the universal *vohu manah*. Although they may seem to be distinct historical personalities they are in effect the same as the single Power from which they emanate.⁶ The salvation of the soul is often depicted in the allegory of a prodigal son returning from his wanderings in foreign lands to his parental home. Now God is very often mentioned as the father of *vohu manah* in Persian (Zoroastrian) teachings. In one of

his *Gāthās* the prophet Zarathustra speaks to God, Ahura Mazda, the All-knowing Lord of All :

'Verily O Lord have I through observation and intuition realized Thee to be the First and the Last . . . Thou indeed art the father of *vohu manah*.'
(*Yasna* 31 : 8)

From this it is clear that between the *Absolute* (Ahura Mazda corresponding to the Brahman of the Vedanta, the Nameless Tao of the Chinese) and the soul in man or cosmic creation there is an intermediate agency the first in order of creation who thinks the Cosmos into creation. In Indian thought this intervening agency is often ascribed to *Ishvara* (the personal God) or *Hiranyagarbha* (the Cosmic Egg). In Iranian thought this agency is fulfilled by the cosmic *vohu manah*, who implants a spark of itself forming the spiritual substratum of each individual. A person lives by virtue of, by the permission of, indeed by the life-force (*ahū*) of the *vohu manah*.

'Even the opening of the eye can occur only by the entrance of *vohu manah* into the life-principle.'⁷

Like the Atman, the *vohu manah* dwells in the heart of man, and the devotee implores its revelation. Zarathustra prays that it may descend upon him and his disciples :

'O God! as I am Thy friend so ordain that through Thy truth's grace the *vohu manah* be realized in us.'

(*Yasna* 44 : 1)

During his meditation before the holy fire Zarathustra recognizes God as *spenta*, the Holy Spirit. The Divine One grants him a boon in the form of a question and is willing

⁴ Translated from the original *Die Stellung Jesu im Manichaismus*, Waldschmidt-Lenz, Berlin, 1926, p. 113.

⁵ *Katha Upanishad*, I. 2. 20.

⁶ *Katha Upanishad*, I. 2. 20.

⁷ *Dēnkart*, ed. Madan, p. 281, I. II. f. The complete text of the *Pahlavi Dinkard*, Part I, Bombay, 1911.

to accept an appointed day on which Zarathustra may, in the form of an ecstatic dialogue, learn the sacred wisdom (*Yasna* 43 : 7). Of particular interest is the passage where Zarathustra says :

'I recognized you to be *spenta* (the Holy Spirit) O God (only) when the *vohu manah* inspired me through asking the question "Who art thou? To whom do you belong?"'

(*Yasna* 43 : 7)

The Higher Self is revealed when the ego is confronted with the question of its origin — Who am I?

The Manichean scribes not only reproduce the identical idea, namely the presence of *vohu manah* in man, but even use the same words of the Zoroastrian texts.⁸ As Zarathustra's version has its roots in the *Gāthās*, the Manichean version must also be of Zarathustrian and Irano-Aryan origin. Its similarity with Upanishadic ideas goes to show the close interrelationship of Indo-Aryan and Irano-Aryan religious thought. Just as the Hindu devotee strives for union with the

Atman, so too does Zarathustra. He says in one of his hymns :

'So do I strive for union with *vohu manah*.'
(*Yasna* 49 : 3)

Further we learn from Zarathustra's writings the existence of an ancient doctrine according to which the Cosmic Mind dwells in man through *vohu manah* within him. The latter is in essence identical with the Cosmic Mind, which includes at a lower level a collective organ composed of the minds of all human beings that are living, have lived, or will live. This collective organ is sometimes pictured as a mythical person who acts as a link between the cosmic *vohu manah* and its incarnation or apostle on earth.

Thus we see that even in the Irano-Aryan sphere of influence, and in the mystic lore of Western Asia, certain common conceptions are found which play a central role in Vedanta.

⁸ See Windergrens *The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God*, Upsala, 1945, p. 49 where the original texts of both are placed side by side and compared.

The Two Torches

Translation of a Sanskrit poem :
by DOUGLAS AINSLIE

Though the torch be inverted, the flame
Will burn upward the same :
Though the name no longer be flame
But just man-in-the mire,
He, too, will burn upward, aspire
To the place whence he came :
For he, too, is fire
Of a quenchless desire.
Though the torch be inverted, the flame
Will burn upward the same.

SRI BHAGAVAN'S SAYINGS

Devotee. Is there an Absolute Being? What is its relation to the relative existence?

Bhagavan. Are they different from each other? All the questions arise only in the mind. The mind arises in waking and subsides in deep sleep. As long as there is a mind, so long will there be questions and doubts.

D. There must be stage after stage of progress for gaining the Absolute. Are there grades of Reality?

B. There are no grades of Reality. There are grades of experience for the *jiva* and not of Reality. If anything can be gained anew it could also be lost, whereas the Absolute is eternal — here and now.

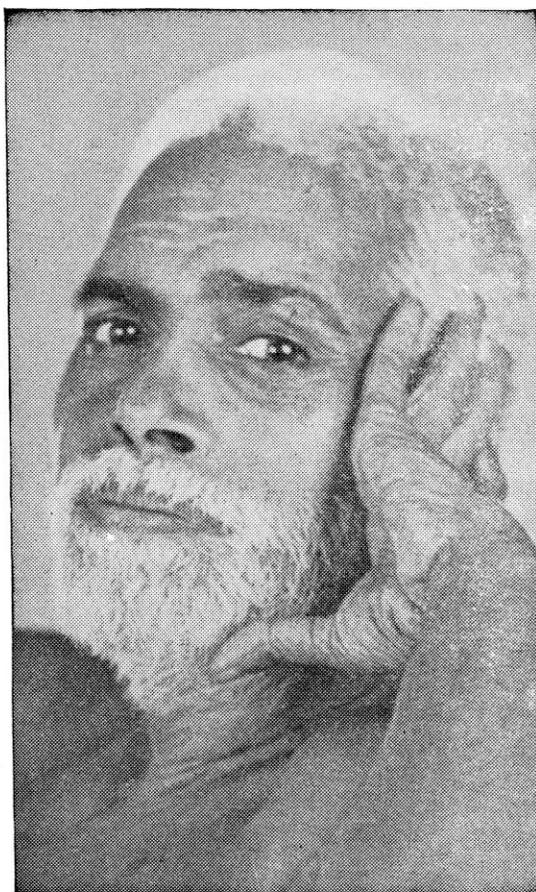
D. Is it enough to introvert the mind or should we meditate on 'I am Brahman?'

B. To introvert the mind is the prime thing. The Buddhist consider the flow of 'I' thought to be Liberation. But it can be gained only by keeping the 'I-I' always in view. So the need for the investigation of the 'I' thought. If one does not let go of the 'I', no blank can result to the seeker. Otherwise meditation will end in sleep.

There is only one 'I' all along; but what rises up from time to time is the mistaken 'I' thought; whereas the intuitive 'I' always remains self-shining, i.e., even before it becomes manifest.

The birth of the gross body does not amount to one's own birth; on the other hand, the birth of the ego is one's own birth.

For liberation nothing new remains to be gained. It is the original state and continues unchanged too.



D. Can *jnana* be lost after being once attained?

B. *Jnana*, once revealed takes time to steady itself. The Self is certainly within the direct experience of everybody but not as one imagines it to be. It is only as it is. This experience is *samadhi*. . . . The Self reveals itself when there are no *vasanas* (predispositions). Owing to the fluctuations of the *vasanas jnana* takes time to steady itself. . . . In the proximity of a great master the *vasanas* will cease to be active, the mind becomes still and *samadhi* results. Thus the disciple gains true knowledge and right experience in

the presence of the master. To remain unshaken in it further efforts are necessary. . . . *Samadhi* with closed eyes is certainly good, but one must go further until it is realised that actionlessness and action are not hostile to each other.

D. Meditation is with mind and how can it kill (still) the mind in order to reveal the Self?

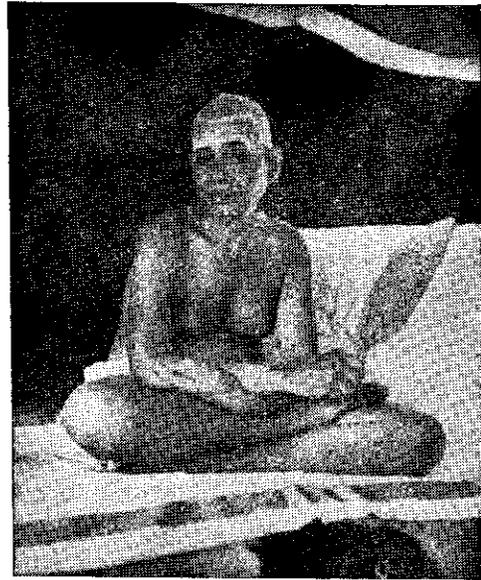
M. Meditation is sticking to one thought. That single thought keeps away other thoughts. That single thought also must vanish at the right time. Distraction of mind is a sign of its weakness. By constant meditation it gains strength i.e., fugitive thought gives place to the enduring background free from thoughts. This expanse devoid of thought is the Self. Mind in purity is the Self. Everyone says 'I am the body'. It is the experience of the sage as also of the ignorant. The ignorant man believes that the Self is confined to the body only, whereas the wise man believes that the body cannot remain apart from the Self. The Self is infinite for him and includes the body also.

D. How to conquer desire, anger etc.?

B. Desire, anger or lust give pain. Why? Because of the 'I'-conceit; this 'I'-conceit is from ignorance; ignorance from differentiation; differentiation from the notion of the reality of the world and this again from 'I-am-the-body' idea. The last can be only after the rise of the ego. The ego not arising, the whole chain of mishaps disappears. Therefore prevent the rise of the ego. This can be done by remaining in your own real nature; then desire, anger etc. are conquered.¹

* * *

A devotee asked Bhagavan whether it was the proper thing to do if she asked herself "Who am I?" and told herself she was not this body but a spirit, a spark from the divine flame. Bhagavan first said: "Yes, you might



do that or whatever appeals to you. It will all come right in the end", but after a little while he told her: "There is a stage in the beginning when you identify yourself with the body, when you are still having the body-consciousness. At that stage you have the feeling that you are different from the reality of God, and then it is, you think of yourself as a devotee of God or as a servant or lover of God. This is the first stage. The second stage is when you think of yourself as a spark of the divine fire or a ray from the divine Sun. Even then there is still that sense of difference and the body-consciousness. The third stage will come when all such difference ceases to exist and you realise that the Self alone exists. There is an 'I' which comes and goes and another 'I' which always exists and abides. So long as the first 'I' exists the body-consciousness and the sense of diversity or *bheda buddhi* will persist. Only when that 'I' dies, the reality will reveal itself. For instance, in sleep, the first 'I' does not exist. You are not then conscious of a body or a world. Only when that 'I' comes up again as soon as you get out of sleep, do you become conscious of the body

¹ from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

and of this world. But in sleep you alone existed. For when you wake up, you are able to say 'I slept soundly'. You that wake up and say so are the same that existed during sleep. You don't say that the 'I' which persisted during sleep was a different 'I' from the 'I' present in the waking state. That 'I' which persists always and does not come and go is the reality (though veiled). The other 'I' which disappears in sleep is not real. One should try and realise in the waking state that state which unconsciously everyone attains in sleep, the state where the small 'I' disappears and the real 'I' alone is."

At this stage the devotee asked "But how is it to be done?"

Sri Bhagavan replied: "By enquiring from where and how does this small 'I' arise. The root of all *bheda buddhi* (diversity) is this

'I'. It is at the root of all thoughts. If you enquire wherefrom it arises, it disappears."

Devotee. "Am I not then to say (in answer to my question 'Who am I?') 'I am not this body but a spirit etc.'"

Bhagavan. "No. The enquiry 'Who am I?' means really the enquiry within oneself as to wherefrom within the body the 'I'-thought arises. If you concentrate your attention on such an enquiry, the 'I'-thought being the root of all other thoughts, all thoughts will be stilled (destroyed) and then the Self or the big 'I' alone will remain as ever. You do not get anything new, or reach somewhere you were not before. When all other thoughts which were hiding the Self are removed, the Self shines by itself."²

² from *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words.*

GARLAND OF GURU'S SAYINGS

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

182. Shining within as mere non-dual being,
Awareness, our real nature, this alone
Stands for the ultimate Knowledge
known as silence
Unknown to the dull, *asuric* ego-mind.
183. The master of such power and knowledge
He alone is the almighty guru
Well able by his grace to merge
Whichever creature reaches him
Into nondual, ineffable Self-Knowledge.
184. He who draws creatures towards the Self
And grants transcendent Self-experience,
Cling to him as the guru supreme
Praised by the wise as God Himself,
Another form of the one Self.
185. Heinous sinners and miscreants are they
Who fail to see as formless Being
The guru of awareness
Who though seeming human
Is in truth the space ethereal
Of supreme awareness.

A PREGNANT SAYING

By
WEI WU WEI

BETWEEN the Buddha, nearly two thousand five hundred years ago, and Sri Ramana Maharshi in our own lifetime, many sages have told us that there is 'nothing to be attained'. Since the most recent such assurance was heard and recorded by our contemporaries, and therefore its recording can scarcely be disputed, let me quote his words: "*To know that there is nothing to be attained is attainment*".

Is not this one of the most pregnant statements, one of the most ancient, and perhaps the most conclusive, ever recorded?

But what, exactly, does it imply?

Does it just imply that there is no factual state or condition corresponding to the concept of 'enlightenment'?

Or does it imply that there is no such thing as an 'entity' who could experience such a state?

Or does it imply that there is neither any such state nor any 'entity' to experience it if there were such a state?

Each is doubtless true in itself, but is there not a further possible interpretation? Might it not imply that such a state and the experiencer of it are each *inexistent as such*, because in fact the conceptualised 'state' and the conceptualised 'experiencer' of it are, *Absolutely*, not different, each being all the other is, inseparable and objectively unnamable?

It may not be possible, subjected to the rationalisation of Relativity, to conceive this solution — for it is outside the boundaries of duality, and therefore can only be apperceived in undivided mind. But each time it was said may not the intention of the Sage who said it have been to suggest that so it is and that so it should be apperceived?

When the mind moves do not follow it up and it will cut itself off from motion. When your mind rests (on something) do not follow it up either and it will cut itself off from (that on which it) rests. That is the non-abiding mind or the mind which dwells in no abiding place. If you clearly understand that on which your intellect dwells (you will find) that it is only the object which abides, so that there is no abiding place and no place of non-abiding. If you clearly realise for yourself that your mind does not abide anywhere whatsoever, that is clearly perceiving your real mind. It is a so-called clearly-perceiving reality. Only the mind which abides nowhere is the mind of a Buddha. . . .

— from the *Path to Sudden Attainment*.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEDITATION IN BUDDHISM

By

LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA

THE pre-condition of every religious practice or meditation is the recognition of divine or eternal qualities in man, qualities whose awakening or realization constitute the aim of religious life. If we do not believe in a supreme, all-transcending value, inherent in man and attainable by him, then the very reason and starting-point for any kind of spiritual aspiration is missing. That is why the Buddha proclaimed faith as the first pre-requisite of the spiritual way :

'Wide open are the gates of immortality,
Ye that have ears to hear, release your faith!'

However, the faith (*saddha*) which the Buddha demanded, was not the blind faith in dogmas, revelations, gods or human authorities (including his own), but the faith in ourselves, in our higher nature, and the possibility to realize it, to attain liberation.

'Liberation' can only have a meaning, if there is something that can be liberated, and this 'something' can be nothing other than the living power, the manifestation of universal forces that create and maintain the individual streams of consciousness. The very fact that Buddhism believes in the continuity of karmically conditioned, self-perpetuating conscious forces, moving through endless cycles of re-incarnations, proves that it recognizes an indestructible power or quality, which is maintained through countless lives and deaths.

The question which arises from this, is not how to destroy that power, but how to lift it from the narrow tracks of a never-ending, ever-repetitive cycle into the freedom and all-pervasiveness of an enlightened consciousness. Due to habit, which is a form of inertia, caus-

ed by 'ego-sclerosis', i.e. by calcification or hardening of our egohood at a certain stage of our individual development, man is in danger of cutting himself off from his universal heritage and to content himself with the lesser, though the greatest of all values is available to him. It is the greatest good that the Buddha is concerned with. That he did not only believe in it, but actually attained it and realized it himself, is proved by the fact of his Enlightenment.

On this the whole edifice of Buddhism is based. For the individual it is the highest aim ; for the teaching, however, it is the starting-point. The teaching, therefore, is rightly called 'Buddhism', the doctrine of Enlightenment. It is the idea of Enlightenment and not that of suffering (as so many Western critics of Buddhism believe) which gives Buddhism its character ; just as medicine is first and foremost the science of healing (and the Buddha, indeed, has been called 'the great Healer' or '*Bhaisajyaguru*', 'the Supreme Physician') but not the science of disease — though the knowledge of disease is necessary for the knowledge of healing — for the same reason the Buddha had to understand first the nature of suffering, in order to be able to show the way towards its overcoming, the way to happiness. However, the idea of suffering and its annihilation on the path of morality, renunciation and knowledge, is common to all religious systems of India.

What was new in the Buddha's doctrine was that he recognized individuality as a flowing, ever-changing, self-transforming living force, evolving or developing to an inner law, in contradistinction to an unchangeable, self-contained and separate soul-substance, as

assumed by primitive animism and popular belief. In this way he raised his doctrine to the level of a dynamic world-view, in which individuality was liberated from the *rigor mortalis* of separateness.

Thus we can only arrive at the conclusion that individuality is a necessary, important and meaningful expression of the universe or its inherent divine consciousness or ultimate reality. Consequently individuality and universality are not mutually exclusive values, but two sides of the same reality, compensating each other and becoming one in the experience of Enlightenment.

In this experience it is not the mind that dissolves into an amorphous All, but it is the realization that the individual itself contains the totality of the universe focalized in its very core. Thus, it is the world that hitherto was experienced as an external reality, that merges or is integrated into the enlightened mind in the moment in which the universality of consciousness is realized. This is the ultimate moment of the liberation from the impediments and fetters of ignorance and illusion.

We are still captured by crude similies of quantitative magnitudes in place of qualitative values, when we compare the ultimate experience of liberation with the "drop that slips into the shining sea". It would be more appropriate — though paradoxical from the viewpoint of three-dimensional logic — to say that the "sea slips into the shining drop". Because the drop is qualitatively not different from the sea. All the oceans that cover the earth, as seen from the distance of the sun, are not more than a drop in the immensity of space; and a drop, as seen from the standpoint of a micro-organism contained in it, is as vast as an ocean.

The demonstration of the universality of man and of his capacity of attaining self-realization in the supreme experience of Enlightenment — without the intervention of gods, priests, dogmas and sacrificial rituals — on the direct way of meditation; this is what the

Buddha gave to the world, and which has become the very core of Buddhism, irrespective of differences, created by sects, philosophical schools or scholastic traditions or by racial or linguistic influences.

Meditation, however, does not concern only the mind, but the whole human being, including his bodily functions and activities. Therefore the first step towards meditation consists in taking stock of the situation in which we find ourselves. Meditation means many things: it means turning inwards, it means quiet observation, reflection and awareness of ourselves, it means to be conscious of consciousness, to become a detached observer of the stream of changing thoughts, feelings, drives and visions, until we recognize their nature and their origin.

But these are only the first steps of meditation, while in the more advanced stages we change from the role of a more or less intellectual observer to that of an experiencer of a deeper reality, namely of the timeless and universal source of all the phenomena we observed in the contemplation of our stream of consciousness and even in the simplest bodily functions, as for instance in the process of breathing, which in itself can be a subject of meditation, because it reveals the very nature of life in its alternate inward and outward movement, in its continual process of receiving and releasing, of taking and of giving back, of the deep relationship between the inner and the outer world, the individual and the universe.

However, between and beyond the two alternative movements, so to say at the turning-point between them, there is a moment of stillness, in which the inner and the outer world coincide and become one, since there is neither anything that can be called 'inside' or 'outside'. This moment, in which time stands still, because it is empty of all designation of time, space and movement, but which nevertheless is a moment of infinite potentialities, represents the state of pure 'being' or 'is-ness', expressed by the word *sunyata*, the all-containing void or metaphysi-

cal emptiness, beyond definition, beyond any kind of 'thingness' or conceptual limitation which, therefore, may be called 'no-thingness' or the primordial ground from which everything originates. It is the timeless moment before creation or, seen from the standpoint of the individual: the moment of pure receptivity that precedes all creative activity.

It is the first movement in the great symphonic *mandala* or magic circle, in which our inner world appears as sound and light, colour and form, thought and vision, rhythm and harmonious co-ordination, visible symbol and meditative experience. This first *movement* — which expression may be taken in the musical as well as in spiritual and *emotional* sense — corresponds to the first profound meditative attitude of experience, called "The Wisdom of the Great Mirror" or the "Mirror-like Wisdom" (*adarsa-jnana*).

In the light of the Mirror-like Wisdom things are freed from their 'thingness', their isolation, without being deprived of their form; they are divested of the materiality (like the reflections in a mirror, which can neither be said to be inside or outside of the mirror) without being dissolved, because the creative principle of the mind, which is at the bottom of all form and materiality, is recognized as the active side of the Universal Consciousness (*alaya-vijnana*) on the surface of which forms arise and pass away, like the waves on the surface of the ocean, which latter, when stilled, reflects the pure emptiness of space and the pure light of heaven (the two aspects of *sunyata*).

Hui-Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Ch'an School once said: "When you hear me speak about the void, do not fall into the idea that I mean vacuity. . . . The illimitable void of the universe is capable of holding myriads of things of various shapes and forms, such as the sun and the moon, and the stars, worlds . . . heavenly planes and hells, great oceans and all the mountains . . . Space takes in all these, and so does the voidness of our nature. We say that Essence of Mind is great, because

it embraces all things, since all things are within our nature."

If *sunyata* hints at the non-substantiality of the world and the inter-relationship of all beings and things, then there can be no better word to describe its meaning than *transparency*. This word avoids the pitfalls of a pure negation and replaces the concepts of substance, resistance, impenetrability, limitation, materiality, by something that can be positively experienced and is closely related to the concepts of space and light. The transparency of the mind-created body, the *vajra-kaya* or "Diamond Body", visualized in tantric meditation, symbolizes *sunyata* in visible form, thus bearing out the above-mentioned interpretation. Here 'form' is no more in opposition to space, but form and space penetrate each other in a luminous and dynamic play of light and colour. The conception of *jiji-mu-ge* (Japanese; lit. "each thing no hindrance") has its origin in this interaction of form and emptiness, or form and space, which are experienced in the realization of the ultimate transparency of the world: the world as a phenomenon of consciousness. Without consciousness there is neither form nor its concomitant notion of emptiness. Consciousness determines the world in which we live or the particular aspect under which the universe appears to us; in itself it is neither this nor that, it is *sunyata*.

Thus the Mirror-like Wisdom reflects with the impartiality of a mirror the nature of all things and of ourselves, while remaining unaffected and untouched by the images it reflects. It is the attitude of the impartial observer, the pure, spontaneous awareness, which in Zen Buddhism is called *satori* or *kensho*: "seeing into one's own nature".

By recognizing our own nature as *sunyata*, we realize that it is not different from the essential nature of all living beings; and herefrom arises the "second movement" of meditation, in which we realize the oneness of all life, the solidarity of all sentient beings. This is the 'Equalizing Wisdom' or the

'Wisdom of Equality' (*samata-jnana*), in which we turn from the cool and detached attitude of an observer to the warm human feeling of all-embracing love and compassion for all that lives. Already in the *Dhammapada* (Pali) this essential equality with others has been made the keystone of Buddhist ethics, when it was said that "having made oneself equal to others" or "recognizing oneself in others" one should abstain from hurting others, which shows that compassion in Buddhism is not based on moral or on mental superiority, but on the feeling of oneness.

If, however, this feeling remains confined to the merely emotional plane, it may lead to a purely sentimental and one-sided attitude, in which the feeling of oneness deprives the individual of responsibility, action and discrimination in a world that is not merely a featureless unity but an organic whole in which differentiation is as much an expression of reality as oneness, and form is as important as emptiness, since both depend on each other, condition each other like light and shade.

Thus we come to the "third movement" of meditative experience, in which we are neither concerned with concrete beings nor with material things, but where both differentiation and unity, form and emptiness, the purity of light and the infinite modulations of colour are revealed in their infinite inter-relatedness without losing their distinctive qualities and individuality of expression. This is the "Distinguishing Wisdom" (*pratyaveksana-jnana*), in which our mundane mind, our discriminating, judging intellect turns into the intuitive consciousness of inner vision, in which the 'special and general characteristics of all things become clearly visible without hindrances (*asanga*; i.e., spontaneously)' and in which the unfolding of various spiritual faculties takes place.

Through this wisdom the functions of the group of discriminating processes, which we sum up under the general term of perception

(*samjna-skandha*) are turned inwards and become transformed and intensified into creative transcendental vision (*dhyana*) — in which the individual characteristics of all phenomena and their general and universal relation become apparent. This Wisdom is represented by Buddha Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light, who is shown in the gesture of meditation (*dhyana-mudra*).

The "fourth movement" of meditative experience belongs to the realm of action and will-power and represents the 'All-Accomplishing Wisdom' or 'the Wisdom that Accomplishes All Works.' Here volition (*samskara-skanda*) is transformed into selfless, 'karma-free' action of life dedicated to the realization of Enlightenment, motivated by compassion and based on the understanding of both the individual and the universal aspect of life and phenomena, as experienced in the previous three movements. In the *Vijnaptimatra-Siddhi-Shastra* it has been said that "this kind of consciousness manifests itself for the benefit of all living beings . . . in the three kinds of transformed actions . . .", namely those of the body, speech and mind, "according to the vow", namely that of the Bodhisattva, whose "body" is the universe (*dharma-kaya*), whose "speech" is the *mantric* word, the word of truth and power, and whose "mind" is the universal consciousness.

Each of these four movements are represented by a gesture (*mudra*) of the respective four transcendental Buddhas who symbolize these states of meditative consciousness and experience, and occupy the successive places in the *mandala*, beginning with the east and moving via south and west to the north. The position in the *mandala*, therefore, does not indicate only a spatial position in the visible diagram, but a sequence in time, i.e. in the unfolding or process of meditation.

Thus the Buddha of the eastern quarter of the *mandala*, *Aksobhya*, the Immutable One, who embodies the pure inward-directed awareness of the basic mirror-like consciousness,

points with his right hand towards the earth (representing the totality of the past which the Buddha called up as a witness before his Enlightenment) with the palm *inwards*, while the passive left hand — as in the case of all the four *Dhyani*-Buddhas, representing the Four Wisdoms — rests in the lap with the palm upwards.

The Buddha of the southern quarter of the *mandala*, *Ratnasambhava* the Jewel-Born, who embodies the Wisdom of Equality, expresses the feeling of solidarity and love towards all living beings by the gesture of giving, similar to the previous one, but with the palm turned *outwards*.

The Buddha of the western quarter of the *mandala*, *Amitabha*, the Buddha of Infinite Light, who embodies the Wisdom of Distinguishing Inner Vision, is represented in the gesture of meditation; both hands with palms *upwards*, resting upon each other in the lap.

The Buddha of the northern quarter of the *mandala*, *Amoghasiddhi*, the Realizer of the Aim, who embodies the Wisdom that Accomplishes All Works, i.e., of selfless action, is represented in the gesture of fearlessness, expressing at the same time reassurance and blessing. His right hand is raised to the height of the shoulder and the palm is turned *outwards* in the gesture of blessing the world.

It may be noticed that in each of these cases the palm of the active right hand follows the direction of the consciousness. And in this connection it might be mentioned that the upturned palms in the gesture of meditation (*dhyana-mudra*) signify a receptivity towards the eternal qualities and forces of the universe. The palms are like open bowls, ready to receive the gifts of heaven.

The passive left hand of all these Buddhas is always shown in this attitude, because our essential, though unconscious, relationship to the universe is common to all stages of meditation. Besides the direction of the palms we have to consider the three planes or levels of these gestures. The first two are on the basic level and point towards the earth; the *dhyana-*

mudra is on the middle level, which represents 'man', in whom 'heaven' and 'earth' are united; the fourth gesture is on the universal level, where wisdom turns into spiritual action. On this level we also find the fifth gesture, which belongs to the central Buddha of the *mandala*, *Vairochana*, the Radiating One, who represents the sum total of the Four Wisdoms, namely the Universal Law. His gesture is the "setting in motion the Wheel of the Law" (*dharma-chakra-mudra*). In this gesture both hands are active on the level of the heart centre: the left hand turned inwards, the right turned outwards. Thus the inner and the outer world are united in the ultimate realization, as well as in the primordial state of universality.

The position of these *Dhyani*-Buddhas or their symbols — be it in form of *mudras*, colours, *mantras* or emblems, (like wheel, *vajra*, jewel, lotus, mirror etc.) — does not only indicate a spatial position in the *mandala*, but a sequence in *time*, a development or unfolding of spiritual qualities in the process of meditation, which comprises the totality of human consciousness and all its faculties, like awareness, feeling, perception, volition and all mental activities.

The *mandala* is like a map of the inner world, which we want to explore and realize in the great venture of meditation. Without such a map and the capacity to read it, i.e. without the knowledge of its symbolism, we are like travellers who set out on a journey without any conception of route or direction. It is for this reason that the study of psychology was of such importance to the followers of the Buddha from the earliest times, as the systematic representations of the *Abhidharma* (as in the Pali *Abhidhammattha-Sangaha* or the Sanskrit *Abhidharma-Kosha*) show, out of which the later *Tantric sadhanas* with their meticulous psychological details and *mandalas* grew.

"The aim of all the *Tantras*," as Giuseppe Tucci, one of the great explorers of *Tantric Buddhism* says, "is to teach the ways where-

by we may set free the divine light which is mysteriously present and shining in each of us, although it is enveloped in an insidious web of psyche's weaving." In this aim all Buddhist systems of meditation are united, though their ways may differ, but as long as they recognize the Four Wisdoms as the basis of all meditative practices, they shall never lose that spiritual balance on which the final success of them all depends. That this was recognized not only in the *Mahayana* literature and in Indian and Tibetan *Tantras*, but equally in Chinese Ch'an and Japanese Zen, becomes evident from Rinsai's (Lin-chi was his Chinese name) "Fourfold Contemplation."¹ Explaining his meditational method Rinsai made the following statement :

"At the first instance I destroy the Man and not the object. At the second instance I destroy the object but not the Man. At the third instance I destroy both : the Man and the object. At the fourth instance I destroy none of them : neither the Man nor the object."

This statement, which on the surface sounds like a paradoxical Zen *koan*, is in reality a sober assessment of the subject-object relationship in the experience of the Four Wisdoms :

In the Mirror-like Wisdom the pure *objective* awareness prevails, while the notion of the subject ("Man") is absent.

In the Wisdom of the Essential Equality of all beings, the subject ("Man") becomes the only conscious reality, without an object.

In the Wisdom of Distinguishing Vision both subject and object lose their independent reality and are seen in their mutually dependent relationship on the universal stage in their eternal interplay of emptiness and form, in which materiality, thingness and the illusion of separate entities gives way to the transparency of creative vision. It was this experience, according to the Buddha's own words, that characterized his Enlightenment.

In the all-accomplishing Wisdom of selfless action, subject and object are restored to their functional status of polarity on the plane

of the three-dimensional world of existential — i.e. relative — reality. Thus, "neither the Man nor the object" are destroyed, and we have returned into our familiar world, where "mountains are again mountains and waters are again waters" (to use the well-known Zen phrase), but where we see them with new eyes that are no more veiled by the illusion of egoity and separateness, freed from craving and possessiveness as well as from enmity and aversion. *Samsara* has turned into *Nirvana*, the mundane world has turned into a gigantic *mandala*, in which every form has become an expression of total reality and every living being a unique manifestation of a greater life and a universal consciousness.

Thus the meditative experience of the Four Wisdoms has revealed itself as a tremendous symphony of four movements, in which the pendulum of experience results in the transformation of *all* faculties of man, until he has become *complete*.

This completeness cannot be achieved through negations — for which reason the Buddha rejected asceticism — nor through the one-sided affirmation of the one or the other of our basic faculties. Feeling has to be balanced by knowledge, intuition has to be balanced by clear thought, contemplation has to be balanced by action. Those who believe that by mere passive sitting they can attain enlightenment are as far from the mark as those who believe that they can achieve liberation by mere learnedness or pious recitation of sacred texts. This was pointed out already by the ancient Ch'an Master Tai-hui when he wrote to his disciple Chen-ju Tao-jen : "There are two forms of error now prevailing among followers of Zen, laymen as well as monks. The one thinks that there are wonderful things hidden in words and phrases, and those who hold this view try to learn many words and phrases. The second goes to the other extreme forgetting that words are the pointing finger,

¹ Katto-Shu, part II, leaf No. 27b-28a; cfr. Ohasama-Faust, *Zen der lebendige Buddhismus in Japan*, Perthes, Gotha-Stuttgart, 1925.

showing one where to locate the moon. Blindly following the instruction given in the *sutras*, where words are said to hinder the right understanding of the truth of Zen and Buddhism, they reject all verbal teachings and simply sit with eyes closed, letting down the eyebrows as if they were completely dead. Only when these two erroneous views are

done away with, is there a chance for real advancement of Zen.”²

This sound advice is as true nowadays as it was then and applies not only to Zen but to all methods of meditation.

² Translated from the German version, quoted by Ohasama-Faust in *Zen, der lebendige Buddhismus in Japan*.

THE RISHIS

By
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

(Translated into English by Prof. A. C. Bose)

Divinity supreme!
It was the voice of India,
sounding in the solemn tone of thunder
from the shadows of her ancient ashramas,
that proclaimed Thee
the One integral Godhead,
infinite and eternal,
pervading all —
the sentient and the insentient world,
fire and water,
the forest tree and shrub.

The high-souled men,
free and fearless,
endowed with light and power,
crossed woods, rivers, rocks and mountains,
and through the great highway of truth
realised Thee
in the whole universe,
and never admitting a ban
on the human soul,
made their way into the deep heart of the world.

HATE AS UNWHOLESOME ROOT

By

IRENE QUITTNER

ONCE upon a time a certain deva came to visit the Exalted One. Knowing full well that the Buddha disapproved of killing, he tried to provoke him by asking if there was any kind of slaughter of which he approved. Not to be caught out by such a question the Buddha replied :

“Wrath must ye slay, if ye would happy live,
Wrath must ye slay, if you would weep no more.
Of anger, deva with its poisoned source
And fevered climax, murderously sweet,
That is the slaughter by the Ariyans praised ;
That must ye slay in sooth to weep no more.”

All we see of hate are its symptoms, its syndromes, its manifestations. First we must investigate its cause, understand it and only then can it be uprooted. There are many illnesses caused by hate. Commonest of all perhaps is a contraction of the muscles causing headaches, digestive troubles, rheumatic pains etc. Skin diseases can also be attributed to it and in extreme cases it can cause a complete closing down of the mind leading to blindness, deafness and paralysis. One of the latest theories about cancer is that it has not got a physical origin but is mind-induced ; probably by hate. Hate separates living being from living being so why not cell from cell ? The Buddha says there is no grip like hate and this indeed is no empty figure of speech. What is commonly called mental illness is just a matter of degree as, according to the Buddha, hate can be a precursor of madness. Lust for power, desire to impose one's will on others, loss or rejection lead to hate in some form or another. Hatred has three modes. It lies dormant in the mind ; then due to conditions it arises in the mind and if not stopped there, issues forth in action through the other two doors of words and deeds and when this

happens, then we're for it ! Competing, no matter for what, is a source of sorrow. As the Buddha says in the *Sutta Nipata* : ‘ And I saw men struggling like fish in a pond that is running dry, each obstructing the other. . . . ’

To put it briefly we are reactive principles based on grasping, and so hate arises for the most part due to being thwarted in some sense-desire or other. It also arises on account of the concept ‘ I am ’ with its inevitable corollary ‘ his is mine ’. According to the *Sutta Pitaka*, hatred is classified under nineteen forms such as ‘ This person has done me wrong ’, the same for the present and the future. The same for relatives and friends. The next three are ‘ This person was kind to my enemies ’. (How dare they ! By so doing they don't love ‘ me ’, are not loyal to ‘ me ’). Always this famous ‘ me ’ which in reality does not exist ! A very common cause for rift this and the spreading of enmity instead of *metta*, in the present and future. The next nine are that so and so did not do me a favour ; the same for the present and the future and so on. The nineteenth form of hatred being resentment against an inanimate object, such as the hammer when knocking one's finger instead of the nail. . . .

The mind is the most cunning thing I know. Again and again I say ‘ Ha ! I know you ! Up to your old tricks again ! Having been ‘ seen ’ the tricks usually disappear. . . . If one swerves or flinches from obstacles in meditation, they will only arise again until they are courageously faced and understood.

Hate can be controlled, mastered and finally uprooted. It can be counteracted by meditating on death and the four *Brahma-viharas*. It can be controlled at the five bases by stopping at feeling. Before craving has a chance to arise, one must return to the object of hate

with full attention and investigate its nature according to reality, we must try and see into the very root of hate itself. It can also be controlled by knowing that a hate-filled mind will bring a result which will be one of suffering, and who would be foolish enough to add to his misery intentionally! Another method I have found very helpful if none of the other methods work in ridding oneself of this horrible hate, though I don't think it is a very orthodox one, is to have a sense of humour and to be able to have a good old laugh at oneself when angry; if possible having previously looked at oneself in a mirror! This dissolves it quite rapidly I have found.

As long as there is hate in us, there will always be found an object for that hate although most people think that they will be made happy by the removal of the offending object, but this is not so; in fact it is exactly the reverse; once hate itself is uprooted, there will be no object that can offend.

It can also happen that hate lies smouldering and being deprived of an object and lacking its normal fare, it will delve down into memory and fish up as a tasty morsel some past hateful object from there and then proceed to have a good feast off that!

Another interesting aspect of hate is cruelty. This is a perverted state of hate. Those too highly charged with hate become sadists, mental sadists and some even masochists. The Buddha says that the hate-filled person, if no worse bourn befalls him and he is fortunate enough to be reborn as a human being, will be born ugly. Furthermore he says that such a person should be treated with

indifference by his fellow men, fearing that he might curse them, abuse them or do them some injury.

But all is not lost for the hate types as this for them is balanced on the wholesome plane by intelligence and so while hate occurs in the mode of rejecting living beings, understanding occurs in the mode of rejecting conditioned states.

Life is a losing battle right from the word "Go". The sooner we realize this and cease dissipating our energy in trying to put things 'right' the sooner will we begin to fight the only battle which is worth while and the only one which we can win! The conquest of self through seeing what it really is. *Anatta* is the pivotal point of the *Dhamma* and this measuring of oneself against others, this endless and deadly self-reference which incidentally, is the last of the fetters to go, is the cause of most if not all our troubles and until this characteristic has been fully penetrated, there can be no realization of *Nibbana*.

By seeing into the root of hate itself, one is clearing the way for its final uprooting and when one has seen into its root and understood the sensuous lust for what it is, it then becomes obvious why this and hate are uprooted simultaneously on attainment of the same Path.

To find out what we are, or rather what we are not is the most fascinating search I know and the only advice I can give anyone with a similar aim is that which I constantly give myself: DON'T WISH, JUST WATCH!¹

¹The most direct method Sri Bhagavan gave was self-enquiry, 'Who am I?'—*Editor*.

'When a man has attained the liberty of holiness, then his thoughts are peace, his words are peace and his work is peace.'

Hate never ceases by hate. Hate ceases by love. This is a law eternal.

— *Dhammapada*.

THE MYSTICAL RELATIONSHIP

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By

G. N. DALEY

THE consciousness of man is his life and his spirit. It is eternal and will not perish nor will it ever change. The body together with the mind and feelings are but the restless and impermanent vehicles which are the temporary housing of the spirit. Man in his effort to understand the nature of the mystical relationship of consciousness with body and mind has sought for an answer in the heavens, the stars and the earth. In his search he has invented mythologies and has created gods bestowing upon them supernatural powers and infinite wisdom in order that through these creations of his he may gain some sense of direction and understanding. The spark of Divine Life which is within every living thing is called life, spirit or consciousness: it is the compulsive urge in man which creates divine unrest within the mind and the feelings and stirs within him the desire to find out, to know and experience the final and eternal Reality.

Although spatial and temporal extensions, and therefore all objects and things which are in space and time, are quantitatively not in the least like their appearance to ego, they do have their own reality in relation to the seer. Between these two, the seer and the seen, there exists a realistic mystical relationship, and it is an inescapable relationship — so long as the two remain separate. With spiritual evolution, which is the direct result of the changing relationship of consciousness with body and mind, the sense of separation diminishes. Spiritual progress is also the immediate cause of this changing relationship — they are one and the same thing seen from different viewpoints. So long as consciousness is identified with ego progress will be either non-existent or at best it will be imperceptibly slow, and the relationship which

consciousness has with ego will be that consciousness immersed in or bound by the appetites and habits of ego. In this relationship consciousness is scarcely considered as being anything other than a subsidiary mode of sentience and is likened to some kind of appendage which belongs to and is the slave of ego's habits and desires. This strange attitude, symptomatic of 'the fall of man', arises through a faulty relationship which places the demonstrable and material tangibility of ego in a more important role than that of consciousness. The seer is almost completely ignored and body and mind are erroneously given the right of way and of action in all circumstances and only their requirements are heeded. When consciousness places serious and sustained attention upon the practice of spiritual disciplines the result is a constantly changing relationship where less and less attention is placed upon ego and material things. The habits and desires begin slowly to weaken, and as the awakening deepens it is seen, perhaps a little dimly at first, that the only factor in this trinity of body, mind and consciousness is the spirit within, and the life within which paradoxically is not within matter at all since all appearance is but a content of consciousness. This gives rise to thoughts, "How heavy is a stone?", "How high is a tree, or how long is a river?" Can that which is contained within consciousness have weight, length, breadth or height in its own right if these dimensions and measurements are only considerations of mind? As deepening realisation creates greater certainty that the true identity is the spirit and not the ego which can offer no more to consciousness than endless pleasure and pain, that which was originally considered to be the reality is now observed to be the obstacle to Reality. Thus

in ratio to the changes which occur within this relationship awareness begins to assume its spiritual overlordship and body and mind have no longer the importance nor the authority which they formerly usurped.

Bhagavan has repeatedly told us the quickest and most certain way to change this relationship and to accelerate the process until ego is utterly dissolved and the relationship which can only perpetuate conflict, pleasure and pain vanishes like a shadow before a bright light. Bhagavan's method is the simplest and is not encumbered by deflecting and often contradictory concepts and considerations. He

simply instructs us to enquire within ourselves, "Who am I?" Nothing else is needed. Ask within yourself. Turn within intuitively alert. Was anything really there when the dream and the dreamer have gone, within there is only the Sound of the Word, the ever fresh joy of the outgoing Breath of Brahman which becomes differentiated into the vibrations of heat, light, sound-energy wherein are contained the multiplicity of all other vibrations appearing to ego as the infinity of space, its solid and subjective content and structure and the helpless, hopeless, endlessness of the time of it. Find out. Ask yourself within. Bhagavan will do the rest.

ENVY IS MISERY

Be straightforward in all actions, truthfulness always brings success.

Treat others as thou wouldst thyself be treated.

When man goes beyond liking and disliking . . . when man does no injury in thought, word or deed then does he become Brahman.

Death stalks this world and old age envelops it. Days and nights march relentlessly on. Why do you not awake? Even now do what would bring you good; let not time pass you. Now with so much left undone death beckons you.

Death and eternal life — both abide in you. Death comes by delusion, immortality by the path of truth.

There is no austerity equal to truthfulness, no misery like envy, spite and illwill. The secret meaning of the Vedas is truth, of truth self-control, of self-control freedom from all bondage.

— BHISHMA to Yudishtira,

MATERIAL PROBLEMS IN A SPIRITUAL CENTRE

By
RAMAMANI

TURNING to a spiritual way of life or a spiritual centre does not mean that the doors will be shut on material things and that material problems will cease to be of consequence. In fact there is no watertight compartment dividing one from the other. The material slips into the spiritual noticed or unnoticed. When mundane problems arise in or around a spiritual centre, what should be one's attitude? Should one try not to get involved, or should one grapple and deal with them as with other worldly problems?

Of course when problems are purely individual relating to personal matters or even when of a spiritual nature they are of the greatest importance to oneself only. It is when problems are on a wider, collective scale that they come more into the limelight.

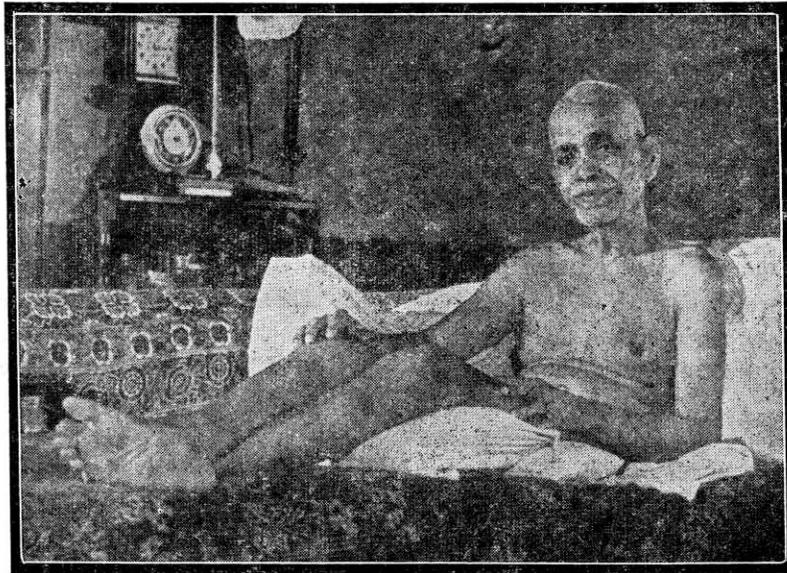
In analysing the problem the first thing to be remembered is that spiritual effort does not take place in a vacuum. Nor does a spiritual institution function in a vacuum! The complexity of human relations, the angularities of individual temperament, and basic human traits or rather weaknesses have to be contended with and recognised as potential sources of trouble. Therefore whether we like it or not an overhanging cloud around an ashram or a spiritual centre is by no means a rarity or impossibility. Forgetting the ideal or the purpose for which seekers come, some may give vent to all sorts of controversies, recriminations, despoliation of character or even a trial of strength when possible.

What is the position of a seeker *vis-a-vis* such problems when they arise? On the one hand there are those on whom administrative functions have devolved. One can see their lot is difficult. The administrative set-up of

an ashram is a necessity for its proper functioning. Considered basically it is evident they serve a cause greater than themselves and therefore their function is sacred, in spite of possible limitations and may be defects too. The main thing is that they are there and do the job of maintaining the centre. Ranged against them are possible critics of a wide variety. Some may complain that not enough is being done towards propagating the teachings of the Master. Some may complain that this is done imperfectly. Some there are who can talk and criticize endlessly but will do nothing practical to help matters. Others may imagine they have a right to comment on or to criticize the administration because of their long association or social prominence or other factors and expect to be heard with the respect and attention they think is their due.

The majority of devotees have no commitments or responsibilities to discharge and have the freedom to keep off these problems. Should the uncommitted devotee refrain from getting involved in such troubles to preserve his peace of mind? It can be said emphatically that one who is really interested in *sadhana* will try his best to avoid controversies. Spiritual earnestness means surrendering to the divine will without reservation. If one is assured of the basic necessities of food and shelter and the spiritual necessity of a centre of Grace, one doesn't need anything more. It is easy then to desist from activities which disturb one's *sadhana*.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has given us the parable of the prostitute and the sannyasin. A sannyasin lived opposite a prostitute's house and was much concerned about her ways. To impress her that she was sin-



ning he began to lay aside a stone every time she had a visitor and one day he showed her a mound which had thus collected. Horrified at her sin she repented, took the name of the Lord, and soon died. When she died she was taken to Heaven. The sannyasin died shortly thereafter but was taken to Hell. When he asked the divine messengers why he who was a sannyasin should be taken to Hell while even a prostitute could go to Heaven, they told him that the prostitute was merely following her profession but sincerely repented for it. But he (the sannyasin) by taking interest in her affairs forgot himself and lost his spirituality and that was the reason for taking him to Hell!

Once a child relieved itself right on Sri Bhagavan's body while he was holding it, and he commented: 'Where else could the child get rid of the rubbish?' This remark has obviously wider significance and connotations than meets the eye. That it was a child and the rubbish apparently of a physical kind was like a finger pointing to the real significance.

On many occasions Sri Bhagavan strongly advised that sannyasins should not give the least trouble to householders or institutions. He himself co-operated with the Ashram office

in an exemplary manner in all administrative matters. He was the first to observe any rule that was made. The stamp of the Ashram office had to be on any written or printed matter brought to him. He once did not look for hours at a newly published book laid at his feet by a devotee since it did not have the office stamp on it! Sri Bhagavan never took part in any dispute with the Ashram authorities; and asked people to approach the office if they required special arrangements with regard to food and other things.

Another instance in which Sri Bhagavan demonstrated a meaningful response to instructions of the office was when he was in poor health and the *Sarvadhikari*¹ had ordered that no one should be in the Hall between 12 noon and 2. When he learnt of the order and found the attendant closing the doors of the Hall, Sri Bhagavan came out and sat on the floor outside, remarking: "They have ordered that *nobody* should be in the Hall at this hour. It should apply to all equally. But we are not prohibited from coming out, isn't it?" This might be taken as a humorous rebuff regarding the instructions issued to avoid

¹ Sri Niranjanananda Swami, the brother of Sri Bhagavan.

what was considered to be a disturbance to Sri Bhagavan. But it is significant that Sri Bhagavan did not ignore the order and press for its cancellation or encouraged others to disobey it, clearly bringing out the point that so long a rule is there it should be obeyed in the Ashram and so He gave *darshan* outside the Hall. That He did not consider himself different from the others is another point!

Sri S. S. Cohen, a devotee of long standing and author of *Guru Ramana*, has given us the following relevant incident from his reminiscences :

"Mrs. N. Gonggrijp (vide *Guru Ramana*, p. 41, 3rd Edn.), an old friend of mine, during her visit in 1937 requested me to send from time to time to her relatives, the then Dutch rulers of Java (now Indonesia), some of the talks with Bhagavan, and asked them also to write to me. On receiving their letter from Java I typed a few pages from my notebook and enclosed them in a longish covering letter and passed the whole to Bhagavan to read, as was the custom in those days. Bhagavan read the first half, more or less, of the

letter and even corrected in red ink a minor spelling mistake. But soon he gently pushed the letter into my hand without looking at me or saying anything. I felt that he had found something displeasing in the letter. Going through the letter I found the following remark in it : 'Please do not mention my name in the reproduction of the article, for I'll have trouble with the Ashram's authorities if you do.' The article was wanted for the monthly Theosophical magazine published in Java in the Dutch language. Immediately I realised that that was the culprit. Although there was no patent criticism of the Ashram in it, it goes without saying that I cancelled that letter and wrote a new one without the offending remark about the trouble with the Ashram."

And last, a thrilling remark from Bhagavan's own lips on critics and others who engage in uncalled for activities : "They come here to bathe ; but they do not use water but put mud on themselves!" On another occasion He said that people come to the Ashram for purification and sadhana but before long get involved in Ashram affairs.

Mummon's Comment

Hundreds of flowers in spring and the moon in autumn,
A cool breeze in summer and snow in winter ;
Every season is a good season for you
Unless you cherish an idle thought in your mind.

When seeking to gain Buddhahood in one life-time,
Do not make much of your likes and dislikes in this life.
If much be made of them, you will practice good and evil of all kinds,
And if you practice thus you'll fall into an evil state.

—from *Milarepa and the Novices*.

THE WAY

By

MURDOCH KIRBY

HE : Can you see yourself as someone separate from your upbringing?

SHE : I suppose I can.

HE : Even if we can't go into details, suppose you came to the conclusion that you didn't like one of your characteristics — perhaps it got you into trouble, or made you say things you wish you hadn't — do you think you could change it, or is it so much 'you' that nothing can be done?

SHE : If I really wanted to I suppose I could try.

HE : But how could that be? If these inherited characteristics are the real, original, basic you, how can you stand back and criticise them as if you were someone else?

SHE : I don't know, but I can.

HE : Which do you think is the real 'you', the one with the inherited characteristics, or the one who is being critical?

SHE : I think it must be the one who is being critical.

HE : So now you can say 'I am me. I don't know who I am or where I came from, but I can try to be free of conditioning.'

SHE : That's a wonderful thought. Who is this 'me' who is being critical of me?

HE : Which one is asking? Do you feel you can stand back from this critical you and look at it?

SHE : I don't think I can. There doesn't seem to be anything to stand back from. It is just me.

HE : Perhaps this is a very fundamental 'you' that was born into a particular family and has grown into a particular person.

SHE : Does that mean I was something before I was born?

HE : It is said that this 'you' before you were born had a previous life and has returned to learn a further lesson. It is also said that

within you dwells the Spirit of God, or Universal Consciousness.

SHE : Tell me more.

HE : This is as far as we can go. These ideas are outside the natural order and we can't explain how they could happen. Our minds are only geared to comprehend the natural order.

SHE : But we *have* thought of it.

HE : And now we are stuck. Thinking will take us no further. The next step is one of insight or inspiration. That comes without thought when the mind is quiet.

SHE : About this 'me' which was before I was born and which, presumably, will go on after I die. You said it had something of God in it. Is that really the case or have you just invented it?

HE : I didn't invent it. It is a very old idea.

SHE : Isn't there something like this in the Bible? It speaks there of 'The Kingdom of God within you' and 'The Light that lightens every man' and 'The Holy Spirit which will lead you into all truth'. Do these all mean the same thing?

HE : And those other sayings of St. Paul, speaking of the 'Christ in you'. I think they all mean the same thing as what the Hindus call the *Atman* — the Spirit which is in man.

SHE : Do you really mean that there is God in me?

HE : Yes, tucked away deep down inside. In many people it hardly shows at all. We have to cleanse our minds and clear our own thinking for it to shine through.

SHE : Is that what people do in meditation, try to find the God within them?

HE : It is more like the truth if we say that when we want to know God, or the Ultimate Reality, we do not look it up in a book,

or send someone into the Himalayas to find out for us. What we do is to stop thinking our own thoughts and search deep down into our own heart of hearts.

SHE : Can ordinary people do this? I mean, can you just start, or should you have someone to show you?

HE : I think you should find out something about it first. In meditation I may be seeking to let the real me come to the surface. If I am basically kind and gentle then the development which comes will be a beneficial process. If, however, there is selfishness, or greed, or hate hidden away inside me then this will be the first to come to the surface, to give us a chance to get rid of it if we can.

SHE : How alarming! Do people really find out what they are really like?

HE : Yes, if they realise what is happening. If they don't it will just make them unhappy.

SHE : But this must happen to everyone. Surely everyone has some skeleton in the cupboard?

HE : Yes, but you can be prepared for it. The Hindu teaching is that there are some preliminary steps that must be taken before attempting and whilst continuing meditation. They are given as a rule of life — being always gentle, never hurting people by word or deed, being without greed, accepting one's lot and studying the scriptures.

SHE : That sounds something like the Sermon on the Mount.

HE : It is, very much.

SHE : Now tell me something about what happens after death.

HE : Well, first, I think it is obvious that we must be just the same person when we wake up on the other side; we must carry on there where we left off here.

SHE : I am sure I have heard somewhere that soon after dying we see our whole life again in a flash.

HE : I don't think it happens in a flash. In time, when we are ready, we will go back through all our life and see it all with a wider

vision. We will feel again all that we have felt and done and see how we have helped others and how we have hurt them. But then it is too late to make amends: we can only try to purge ourselves of our lack of consideration and of our malice.

SHE : Purge! That's an unusual word. Is that why it's called purgatory? Is this a kind of reward or punishment for what we have done in life?

HE : No, far from it. It is just the way the system works. If you put your hand too close to the fire it will get burned and hurt. This is not a punishment, it is just cause and effect. St. Paul said something about this. "Make no mistake" he wrote, "God is not to be fooled: a man reaps what he sows."

SHE : Is this really true? Why does everyone not know about it? Did you read not so long ago that Bertrand Russell was asked what he would say if, after he died, he met St. Peter at the Pearly Gates? His reply was "You should have given us more evidence." Wouldn't it be better if we knew for certain.

HE : If we all did what we should do just for the sake of keeping well in with God, or refrained from what was wrong for fear of punishment, then we would be doing it for the wrong reason. Also we would not have free will to choose in quite the way we have now. We can, after all, find out about these things; there is religion of some kind in every country which we can listen to if we choose.

SHE : I suppose there is, but people don't listen anyway. They don't give up smoking for fear of lung cancer, or driving fast in fog for fear of an accident.

HE : It is a bit like that. No one can find out for us, we have to work it out for ourselves. What we should do is what we know in our heart of hearts is right, and we should do it for no other reason than just because it is right.

SHE : We seem to be speaking sometimes about Christianity and sometimes of Hinduism. Which do you think is the better?

HE : Who am I to judge! Hinduism is about 4000 years old, much older than Christianity. They have made a deep study of the spiritual side of man. I am sure we have much to learn from them.

SHE : Is that all?

HE : It is not easy to sort out. The Hindus say that all the material universe is illusion, and that the only reality is God or the Self that is the core of every man. That, they say, is the only thing we should be concerned about.

SHE : Are they wrong?

HE : What we do know is that all matter is waves in space. If space stopped vibrating all matter would disappear, we would just not be here any more. The material universe really is not real!

SHE : So they are right then. If it is true that our life on Earth is illusory then it is sensible to withdraw from it and cultivate the inner life, this Ultimate Reality.

HE : That sounds reasonable and sensible, but, all the same, I find it hard to believe that we have come into life on Earth just to withdraw from it.

SHE : There must be a catch in it somewhere. We would never learn the lesson we have come to learn.

HE : It isn't quite like we said. Most of life, the Hindus say, is to be spent living in world, marrying and having a family and carrying out the normal obligations. However, let's get this 'learning our lesson' straight. When we cross over to the other side we spend some considerable time finding out about ourselves: we know then about our previous lives and see how we have learned or failed to learn our lessons. In time our desires will make us come back again to Earth to have another go.

SHE : Do you really believe all that?

HE : I think it is the only account which gives an acceptable explanation of the diversities of life on Earth as we see it here.

SHE : You said something a little while ago which struck me; something about insight

coming without thought when the mind was quiet.

HE : Yes, that's right.

SHE : Do you mean that it would really be better if we live our lives more by intuition and less by thinking, more by the heart than the head?

HE : Speaking generally, yes. Speaking particularly we must use our brains to earn our living and a lot of other things. But, on the whole in our acquisitive society, man wants too much, more money, more things, more than he needs. All these non-essential desires come from his thoughts.

SHE : Are you suggesting that man should withdraw from the 'rat-race' of life that so many people live — not just in meditation but all the time?

HE : I think the more often we realise what we are doing the better. Doesn't it make sense to you?

SHE : I suppose it does really, but isn't it a pipe-dream? Won't the world go on living as it is?

HE : Religion is concerned not so much with the people as a whole, but with the individual. As individuals we are enjoined to love our neighbour and to do what we can to help him. We all have to live the life we have come here to live, and to learn the lesson we have come here to learn — even if we don't know what it is. There is another thing about thoughts. So often we are worrying about the past, or the future, or what somebody else ought to be doing that we are not living in the present at all.

SHE : Not living in the present! We can't do anything else, can we say? Explain it. . . .

HE : You will understand if every now and then you ask yourself, "What am I doing now? Who is the silent witness in me?" A great Indian sage Ramana Maharshi asks us to find out who we really are. The only time we have to live is now. The past is past and the future may never come. In the Old Testament it says "The commandment that I lay on you this day is not too difficult for you,

it is not too remote. It is not in Heaven . . . nor is it beyond the sea . . . it is a thing very near to you, upon your lips and in your heart ready to be kept."

SHE : In my heart of hearts, is that it ?

HE : Yes.

SHE : And by insight or institution ?

HE : Yes.

SHE : I see, it is just up to me.

HE : Yes, but you are never quite alone. You can trust, can't you, what you know in your heart of hearts, and what you know by intuition ? You have always with you the very inner-most 'you'—the Light that lightens every man — the real Self. As it keeps saying in St. John's Gospel, "Only believe."

Anger confuses the mind. A confused mind forgets the lesson of experience. Forget experience you lose discrimination. Lose discrimination and you miss life's only purpose.

The wandering winds of the senses cast man's mind adrift and turn his better judgment from its course.

— LORD KRISHNA to Arjuna.

"Know well that the love of thyself is more hurtful to thee than anything in the world . . . Covet not what thou mayest not have. Be not willing to have what may hinder thee and deprive thee of liberty within.

"Why art thou spent in vain grief ? Why art thou worn with needless cares ? If thou seekest this thing or that or wouldst be in this or that other place for thy own convenience or pleasure, thou shalt never be at rest nor free from trouble of mind, for in every matter something shall be found wanting and in every place there shall be someone to cross thee."

— THOMAS A. KEMPIS.

Lord forbid it that I should cast my eyes on things that bring evil thoughts. Far better that I were blind.

Lord forbid that I should utter or hear any word of injury to another or listen to a word of contempt. Far better that I were deaf and my lips sealed.

Lord forbid that I should look with lust on those who should be sisters to me. Far better that I were dead.

Lord, let me flee from all this world of sense to find eternal peace in Thee.

— a Gujarati Song.

SRI RAMANA BHAGAVAN: His Eternal Grace

By
K. PADMANABHAN

HOW I came to Sri Bhagavan and received His Grace has been described briefly in an earlier article (April, '69 issue). That such Grace continues, though Sri Bhagavan is no longer with us physically, is evident from the experiences of a number of His devotees and I am fortunately one of them.

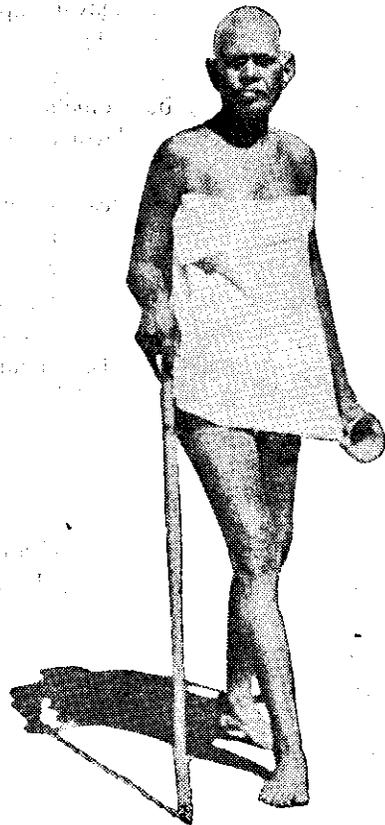
After a lapse of more than three decades I started associating myself more closely with the Ashram in 1962. With the successful completion of a layout for a part of the Ashram area I was blessed to commence a series of small cottages to serve as guest houses for women and families since only men are allowed to reside at night in the Ashram area proper.

In the succeeding years I used to visit the Ashram for short periods benefitting from the peaceful atmosphere and rendering whatever service was required. The completion of the Samadhi Mantapam and the construction of the Ramana Auditorium gave me the opportunity to stay in the Ashram for longer periods and this coincided with serving as a member of the Board of Trustees for a term of three years from 1967.

What is of more significance are the experiences which might be of interest to fellow-devotees.

The first one happened on Feb. 28, 1968. I used to go up the Hill fairly high every morning for an hour or so. On this particular morning when I was climbing up the path nearing Skandasramam I saw all of a sudden the majestic figure of Sri Bhagavan all alone coming down the Hill with long strides, stick in hand. The scene was reminiscent of a figure approaching you on the screen in a cinema. In a trice He crossed me

and when I turned back to see Him, nobody was there. I was dumbfounded for a moment and thought it was mere imagination but after a few minutes when I resumed climbing, to my astonishment the same thing happened. I was utterly overcome by surging feelings and profuse sweating and was forced to sit down. After a while I got up to continue on my way and before I could take a few strides Sri Bhagavan again appeared in the same way as before. I was trembling and tears came to my eyes. I returned to my room shaken and spent the rest of the day in silence.



The second experience happened about two months later in April, '68 in New Delhi. It was the *Aradhana Day* of Sri Bhagavan and a meeting of Sri Ramana Kendra was arranged at 5 p.m. by devotees in the hall attached to Sri Vinayaka Temple at Vinayanagar. I decided to walk the distance of about two miles from my place. Just when I was nearing my destination Sri Bhagavan appeared before me suddenly quite close and then vanished in a few seconds. For a moment I felt too weak to go on but somehow I soon found myself amidst fellow-devotees gathered for the celebration.

The third and last of these experiences happened again on June 15, 1968, when I was staying in the Ashram. I was on the point of leaving my room in the afternoon to post some letters. Before getting up from the chair I had a look at Sri Bhagavan's pic-

ture on the table and there He was alive laughing loud. I saw only His laughing countenance. This was all the more surprising, as I had never seen such a picture of Sri Bhagavan laughing that way. He would be serene or smile serenely. Again I was shaken and had to sit down for a few minutes before leaving the room.

Whatever may be the significance of these experiences I felt blessed to behold His form and wish I could have more of them. Perhaps it was meant to strengthen my faith in His continued Presence, the outer Guru leading back to the inner Guru in the heart. These experiences ceased since 1968 much to my disappointment. Was it a blessing in disguise so as to induce greater yearning for Him?

My prayer to Him is to make me see the evanescence of all forms, of all earthly life and to enable me to surrender fully to Him!

Aim at the universal vision, i.e., behold the manifested universe as the very form and image of the Lord seated in your heart. Transcend all names, forms, lights, sounds, etc., and merge yourself in the infinite ocean of divine peace and joy. Rise above the body idea, the *gunas* and all mental states and enjoy the bliss and freedom of immortality. You and the Supreme Lord are not different. You are His essence, nay His every form, because there is none and nothing but He. This is the truth. Realize.

— SWAMI RAMDAS.

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

— *Sermon on the Mount.*

Be like a tree that covers with flowers the hand that shakes it.

— *Japanese proverb.*

TIRUMULAR'S TIRUMANDIRAM

By
Dr. V. A. DEVASENAPATHI

TIRUMŪLAR'S *Tirumandiram* is reckoned as the tenth among the twelve sacred works in Tamil known as *Panniru Tirumurai*. Though these works are mainly devotional songs which were the outcome of religious experience, the *Tirumandiram* is the earliest extant Tamil work which outlines the basic feature of Śaiva Philosophy known as *Saiva-Siddhānta*. This does not mean that the *Tirumandiram* should be considered to be exclusively a *Saiva-siddhānta* text. Since it is the outcome of mystic experience, it is of no less value to aspirants whose philosophical affiliations are different from those of the *Siddhāntin*.



Tirumular

There is an account of Tirumūlar's life in the *Periya Purānam*. Briefly it is as follows : Sundaranātha, a *siddha* residing in the sacred *Kailas*, was once on his way to the Podiya hills in the South to meet his friend Saint Agastya and to spend some time with him. When he

made a brief halt at Tiruvāvaḍuturai, he saw a flock of cows grieving for their cowherd Mūlan, who had expired. Out of great compassion for the cows, Sundaranātha left his body in a secret place and entered into the body of Mūlan. When in the body of Mūlan, he took the cows, joyful at his revival, back to their village. Mūlan's wife naturally expected him to go back to his home. But Mūlan, as Sundaranātha has to be called hereafter, made her understand that he had nothing to do with her. Next day when he went to the place where he had kept his own body, he found that it had disappeared. He understood that this loss was due to the will of the Lord and that he should stay in Tiruvāvaḍuturai to record the *Saiva Āgama* in Tamil. Henceforth he came to be called as *Tiru-Mular*. Tradition has it that this Sage was in a state of trance for three thousand years, and that at the end of each year he composed one verse thus giving the world three thousand verses. At the end of this period he returned to the sacred *Kailas*, the abode of Lord Siva.

At present we have more than three thousand verses in the *Tirumandiram*, presumably due to interpolation of some verses. The *Tirumandiram* is considered to be a difficult work to understand and interpret. Some verses are very abstruse. Though on the whole the language is clear, yet, in spite of the apparent clarity, one feels that there are hidden depths. The *Tirumandiram* consists of nine sections, each called a *tantra*. The introductory portion is more like an invocation to God. It deals with the excellence of the *Vedas* and the *Āgamās*. We may note in passing that in regard to the authority of the *Vedas* and the *Āgamās*, Tirumūlar says that both alike are the word of God. The only difference between them is that the im-

port of the *Vedas* is general whereas that of *Āgamas* is special. Does it mean that therefore they are different in spirit? No, says Tirumūlar. To the great ones, they are non-different. The introduction contains also a brief reference to the biography of Tirumūlar. The first *tantra* deals with *Upadeśa*, the impermanence of the body, and of worldly wealth, non-killing, learning, abstinence from spiritous drinks etc. Tirumūlar expresses himself very strongly against non-vegetarian food, saying that the messengers of the god of death will, in the manner of white ants eating up an object, set to work on those who take non-vegetarian food.

The second *tantra* deals with a very wide range of subjects from ritual worship and ethics to metaphysics and religious experience. We may recall here some of the thoughts of the *Tirumandiram*. In regard to the existence of God, Tirumūlar has a verse to this effect :

‘Do not deny the existence of the Powerful One who in His justice has placed fire in the midst of the sea (to prevent its overflow on land). He is the Lord of gods. He bestows His grace day and night.’

Here we have an exhortation to think of the grace of God in providing for the safety of all creatures living on land. In terms of western philosophy, this is evidence of a design, i.e. seeing in the universe perfect adaptation between means and ends. Everything is so made as to fit into the general pattern to promote the well-being of all. Immediately cases of lack of such adaptation and natural cataclysms like the sea overflowing upon vast stretches of land may occur to our mind. We need not deny such cases and occurrences. However, the last line of the verse ‘He bestows His grace day and night’, calls for a suspension of judgement, at least. We are assured that God’s grace operates day and night. While we may fail to see grace even in cases of obvious benefit, it is not surprising that we deny it in cases where suffering and death seem to be unjustifiable. Yet, Tirumūlar tells us that God’s grace operates day

and night! The ways of God’s grace are past human understanding. What appears to be a case of total loss, might in the final reckoning, turn out to be one of real and lasting benefit.

Tirumūlar feels certain about God’s existence and so declares : ‘Direct your thinking as far as it can go. Speak the truth to the extent possible. Even if His existence is denied, God verily exists (He exists in a big way). Think daily of the good (divine) way.’

How is the existence of God to be realised? He is beyond the reach of speech. How then can we speak about Him? Can we see the shore of what has no shore? If we can make the mind calm and clear like water without ripples, the Lord will stand revealed. The search for God begins with pilgrimages and visits to temples. When the devotee thus starts worshipping the Lord with songs, the Lord is pleased to treat the devotee’s heart as His temple and comes to reside therein.

Tirumūlar worships Śiva as his Lord. But he makes it clear that when one takes to the spiritual path knowing its value, Brahmā and Viṣṇu will not be apart.

Since God is not only the ground and goal of our being but also our guide to the goal, we must worship Him in every way. There is congenital impurity in the make-up of the individuality or ego. The end and aim of the Lord’s activity is to enable a seeker to get rid of this impurity. Not only the Lord (*Paṭi*), but also the *jīvas* (*paśu*) and this impurity (*pāśa-āṇava* with its concomitant factors *māyā* and *karma* — all the three being collectively called *pāśa*) are beginningless. *Pāśa* cannot affect the Lord; when He draws near (to the soul), *pāśa* cannot abide in His presence.

Tirumūlar shows the value of the body in gaining salvation. ‘I thought of the body as impure. Then I beheld the substance (the Lord) abiding therein. Because the Lord has made my body His temple, I tend my body.’

Only human beings have the opportunity to work for their spiritual advancement. Hence we must make the best use of the human body,

using it as a vehicle which can be driven either towards Unity or into deeper diversity.

The importance of good conduct is stressed not only as a preliminary for all spiritual pursuits but also for material prosperity. Alike for spiritual welfare and for worldly wealth, practice of virtue must be so habitual that it takes place even in states of forgetfulness. For rain which is necessary for the growth of crops and plants which in their turn sustain life, the existence of sages, saints and virtuous men is a vital contributory factor. Their presence provides the climate necessary for the blessing of rain.

Good conduct is easy to practice. We start in a simple way by offering (even) a mere leaf to the Lord in worship, by giving a mouthful of feed to a cow, and a morsel of food to whomever needs it before we sit down for our own meal, and by abstaining from harsh speech. Our moral development which begins in this perhaps all too simple way reaches its consummation when our whole being vibrates in love for the Lord and all His

creatures. 'The Lord and love,' says Tirumūlar, 'are seen as different by the ignorant. That the Lord and love are one — none seem to realise. He who realises that the Lord and love are one and the same, will abide in the Lord as love.' Hence the purpose of all endeavour, moral and spiritual, should be to make love the core of our being. Otherwise all activity is futile. Tirumūlar puts this matter forcefully when he says : ' Unless one melts in love and one's heart becomes mellow, the Lord can never be attained.'

All the ills of our life arise from ignorance of our true nature. What is that nature? It can be defined as intelligence or love, so long as we remember that this intelligence is not mere intellect and this love is not mere sentimentality. Our basic nature which is like unto God's but is obscured by impurity is the light that is wisdom and the love that is the feeling of oneness with all existence. In promoting such wisdom and love, Tirumūlar's *Tirumandiram* acts as a sure guide to all aspirants for spirituality.

How the Rabbi of Sasov Learned How to Love

Rabbi Moshe Leib told this story :

"How to love men is something I learned from a peasant. He was sitting in an inn along with other peasants, drinking. For a long time he was as silent as all the rest, but when he was moved by the wine, he asked one of the men seated beside him : 'Tell me, do you love me or don't you love me?' The other replied : 'I love you very much.' But the first peasant replied : 'You say that you love me, but you do not know what I need.

If you really loved me, you would know.' The other had not a word to say to this, and the peasant who had put the question fell silent again.

"But I understood. To know the needs of men and to bear the burden of their sorrow — that is the true love of men."

— taken from : *Buber's Tales of the Hasidim : The Later Masters.*

TRADITIONAL SAMADHI

(Seventh Tantra of Tirumular's *Tirumandiram*)

Translated from Tamil by T. P. R.

During the last illness of Sri Seshadri Swami in 1929 and on the eve of his attaining *Nirvana*, devotees thought about the way in which his remains should be disposed of: cremation or burial. The consensus of opinion was for burial, for which a Samadhi had to be erected in a traditional way. The late Vecrappa Chettiar, who was then the Trustee of Sri Arunachaleswarar Devasthanam, approached Sri Bhagavan and asked about the conventions and regulations and the rites ordained for the erection of such a Samadhi. Sri Bhagavan, thereupon, graciously took out Tirumular's *Tirumandiram* and pointed out the relevant verses explaining the way in which it should be done. All the necessary information in detail was found in the verses beginning with No. 1910-1914 dealing with ceremonial Samadhi rites, and was gathered by the devotees for this occasion. Sri Bhagavan pointed out the mode of doing Samadhi rites on earlier occasions also.

Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi was also constructed meticulously according to the specifications given in *Tirumandiram*. We are giving below a free rendering of the relevant verses marked out by Sri Bhagavan for those interested in knowing them.

“IF a *jnani's* physical body is burnt (cremated), the whole country will be afflicted with small-pox and fire. If that *jnani's* body is abandoned so as to permit dogs and foxes to prey on it, then great fighting will ensue in the land and heaps of dead bodies of people will be preyed upon by foxes and dogs.” — Stanza No. 1910.

“If a *jnani's* body is subjected to fire, it will equal the sin of setting fire to the temple of Lord Siva. There will be no rain in the land. There will be famine in the world, and kings will lose their kingdoms.” — 1911

“To inter the body of a *jnani* will be a meritorious act. If instead of doing so, it is burnt, the country will go to ruin. If abandoned and left in the open to decompose, the welfare of the world will cease. Everywhere accidents by fire will occur.” — 1912

“If a *jnani* gives up the body and that body is buried beneath the ground in a cell (Samadhi constructed), kings and their subjects will attain a state of great happiness.” — 1913

“The pit must be dug to a depth of 6'9” (9 *chan*). The inside dimension of the cave must be 3'9” broad (5 *chan*). The seat that must fit into it should be triangular in shape. Each of its sides must be 2'3” long (3 *chan*). The cave so established constitutes *padmasana*.” — 1914

“(1) One's house, (2) A roadside, (3) A tank bund, (4) A river mound, (5) A flower-garden, (6) A fort, (7) Good earth, (8) A forest, (9) A mountain slope: these are the places fit for construction of the cave.” — 1915

“The four sides of the cave must be constructed in rectangular position. The measurement of each side should be sufficient to permit doing prostration with five parts touching the ground (*panchanga namaskaram*¹), from the spot where one stands. On the front side the Samadhi should be so located as to be 9' from where one stands. Upon the Samadhi a lotus should be installed.” — 1916

¹ Forehead, two arms, chest and navel.

“In that (Samadhi cave), five metals, nine varieties of precious gems must be spread. Upon that, the seat is to be fixed. On that, scented dust sprinkled, and it must be closed.”

— 1917

“Then fixing the ‘rest’ (*saimanal*), offering puffed rice, cooked rice, tender coconuts placed before the Samadhi, and fixing the cave frontage and direction, the lid must be closed.”

— 1920

“In the centre of the cave (pit) four squares must be marked. In that, flower garlands, mixed scents, musk, sandal-paste (powder), *punuhu* (civet musk), rosewater, must be put ; also incense.”

— 1918

“Upon that, sacred ash, scented dusts, different flowers, *kusa* grass, *bilva* leaves, must be put ; then bathed ; the Samadhi must be erected as to be three layers above the ground level.”

— 1921

“On that, sacred ash must be spread. The holy body must be lifted into a sack and sprinkling incense powders and applying *vibhuti* on it, must be firmly lodged.”

— 1919

“On that Samadhi-*peetam* a Siva Linga or a pipal tree must be installed ; the sanctum must face east or north ; devotees should render all offerings (*shodasa upachara*).”

— 1922

SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The person of spiritual vision does not believe that spiritual qualities can be purchased externally. Rather he has arrived at the realization that they come from some fountain within his own being.

In our evolution from material sense to spiritual consciousness, we learn through experience that there is an invisible substance. Some call it God. Some call it Spirit, Soul, or Consciousness. The name is not important. The important thing is that there is an invisible substance within our own being, and out of it the good things of life are formed. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for,”

By
Joel S. Goldsmith

(*Hebrews*, 11:1) which we interpret to mean that Consciousness is the substance of things hoped for, and out of Consciousness is the substance of things hoped for, and out of Consciousness, out of our Soul come the issues of life.

Those of us who have gone through life seeking satisfaction, joy, peace, prosperity, and health in the outer realm already know what a thankless job it is and how unsatisfactory the process is and to what degree we fail. That is why we are on the Path. We have found that seeking our good in the outer world has not produced what we have sought.

AS IT IS

By

Sqn. Ldr. N. VASUDEVAN

Devotee : Does Sri Bhagavan advocate Advaita ?

Maharshi : Dvaita and Advaita are relative terms. They are based on the sense of duality. The Self IS AS IT IS. There is neither dvaita nor advaita. I AM THAT I AM. Simple Being is the Self.

TRENDS in modern science turn to a closer study of as-it-is-ness. By gradual degrees, some of the world's distinguished scientists are beginning to treat as-it-is-ness as the *natural state* of Existence.

The story begins with one of the recent ramifications of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. This theory shocked us into the realisation that all classical geometry in absolute terms is wrong. They assumed the existence of a straight line ; in reality, there is no such thing as a straight line. Every thing in the universe is curved, to one degree or another, whether it is a 'thing' or empty space. A beam of light making a round-the-universe travel will make a great circle path and return to the spot where its journey began. All routes through space are curved and a curved route takes longer to traverse than one that goes directly to its destination.

Not only is space curved, but time also is curved. If a space-ship approaches the speed of light, time throughout the ship would slow down, until at the speed of light it would stop altogether. Because time runs at different speeds throughout the universe according to its environment, it must also take curved paths. Thus the laws of curved space-time form the core of the General Theory.

From here John Archibald Wheeler, Princeton University's professor of physics and co-inventor of the hydrogen bomb, branches out into a fresh direction. Because space-time is curved, it may consist of particles called "geons". "Do geons exist? Do they have mass, or do they not?" He asks, and then

hastens to answer that they exist because they are deflected into curved paths by the gravitational attraction. The countless geon particles that make up the structure of space-time "provide a complete geometrical model for mass" with tiny holes.

On the other side of these tiny holes (Wheeler calls them "worm-holes") lies the mysterious region of super-space to which all parts of the universe are connected by countless worm-holes. Super-space is a region of as-it-is-ness. For there is neither space nor time. Every event in this region occurs simultaneously and every journey across it is '*here and now!*'. It has neither past nor future. *IT IS.* This is logical because the entrant in the Super-space has left space-time behind.

Recently, Wheeler gave an astonishing description of Super-space at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. "In Super-space, the question what happens next is devoid of content. The very words, 'before', 'after', and 'next' have lost all meaning. Any use of the word 'time' in any normal sense is completely out of the question."

Is there a God or Supreme Intelligence who surveys Super-space, the worm-holes and the universe? Is He Pure Consciousness? Wheeler replies: "An intelligence which knew at a given instant all the forces by which nature is animated, and the relative position of all objects, if it were sufficiently powerful to analyse all this information, would include in one formula the movements of the most massive objects in the universe and those

of the lightest atom. Nothing would be uncertain to it; the future and the past would be present to its eyes."

Wheeler and fellow-scientists have, perhaps, taken a step towards understanding Sri Ramana: "Thou art Thyself the One Being, ever aware as the self-luminous Heart! In Thee there is a mysterious Power which without Thee is nothing. From it proceeds the phantom of the mind emitting its latent subtle dark mists, which, illumined by Thy Light reflected on them, appear within as thoughts whirling in the vortices of *prarabdha*, later developing into the psychic worlds and are

projected without as the material world transformed into concrete objects which are magnified by the outgoing senses and move about like pictures in a cinema show. Visible or invisible, O Hill of Grace, without Thee they are nothing."

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Error has no substance; it is entirely the product of your own thinking. If you know that the Mind is the Buddha and that Mind is fundamentally without error, whenever thoughts arise, you will be fully convinced that they are responsible for errors. If you could prevent all conceptual movements of thought and still your thinking-process, naturally there would be no error left in you. Therefore is it said: 'When thoughts arise, then do all things arise. When thoughts vanish, then do all things vanish.'

— from the *Zen Teaching of Huang Po*.

The Third Ch'an Patriarch.

* * *

He who sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings, hates nor bears malice to none.

— *Isa Upanishad*.

* * *

By oneself the evil is done and it is oneself who suffers.
By oneself the evil is not done by oneself one becomes pure.
The pure and the impure come from oneself.

— *Dhammapada*.

* * *

Like corn a man ripens and falls to the ground;
Like corn he springs up again in his season.

— *Katha Upanishad*.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING!

By

B. G. VELLAL

RECENTLY I read an article entitled *Amrita Nadi*¹ by Smt. Suri Nagamma, appearing in the *Ramana Jyothi* Souvenir, published by Sri Ramanasramam, wherein was shown how Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi handled the two different personalities — a learned pundit and a simple but sincere seeker of Supreme Truth. This reminded me of a very similar experience of mine.

Long ago, I once put a question to my *Sadguru* in Poona, thus: "Maharaj (*Sadguru*), what is *keval kumbhak*?"² to which he tersely retorted: "Where is the need to know what it means? Just go on with your *soham*³ discipline."

For a moment I was stunned — then I began to analyse this disaster. Does his sharp retort mean that he did not know the answer? Did I insult him in any way by putting such a question? Could it be that this piece of information was of no use? Being fully aware of his authority as a guru I was able soon enough to dispel such doubts. However, I did not feel nor look at ease. My Maharaj seemed to notice it and he then spoke to me rather gently:

"Should one at all indulge in futile enquiries and idle talk about what is the grade, quality, size or the colour of the sugarcane, what is the yield of its juice, in which soil is it grown, how often is it watered, what manure is being used, and so on and so forth when there is a cool, sweet, refreshing and satisfying glass of its pure juice in hand to sip and enjoy? Will such babble increase or decrease its sweetness? Neither! In the same way, you have the divine glass of your *mantra* already in your hand! Just keep on sipping it as much and as often as you can. Forget about the *keval kumbhak* and all the rest of it. Such details are not necessary or vital towards the actual

attainment of one's goal. On the contrary, they are likely to mislead a hazy seeker, make him extrovert and finally deprive him of experiencing the true inward Bliss."

Then light dawned on me! Obviously what the Maharaj meant was that all such superfluous questions and queries would get solved or dissolved in due course as the seeker advanced in his *sadhana*. Hence there is no need to become anxious on this account. The *Sadguru* knows the seeker inside out and his need too!

This and Bhagavan's sharp reply to his devotee on *Amrita Nadi* bring out in no uncertain terms the basically uniform approach of all spiritual Gurus in their teaching which is founded on the uniform nature of spiritual experience or realisation, although superficially they may seem to differ in their ways of expression.

The guru teaches a seeker to turn his outer gaze into an inner one — a godward gaze — so that he may one day become still in his mind and realise the Supreme state. Hence he instructs his disciple to turn inwards and to help concentration a particular spot is given. For example, Sri Ramana Maharshi suggests to concentrate on the spiritual heart located on the right side of the physical heart though it is without dimensions. Shri B. N. Mehrotra, Sitapur, in his article on "The Path of Yoga" appearing in the *Pathway to God*, November 1969, states "The Physical heart governs only the physical self by supplying blood to the body and through it to the brain. . . . The psychic heart on which the yogis contemplate is located within the cavity

¹ A yogic nerve.

² When breathing almost stops from meditation — no repetition.

³ I am He (*Brahman*).

of the physical heart but quite invisible to the senses and the mind." Sometimes different points of concentration or contemplation are given by Gurus to different seekers, such as various *chakras* or concentration on one's breathing combining the *soham mantra* with it. From what is said above, can we say that only one of those Gurus is right and the rest wrong? Let us not make the mistake of such an assertion! It is said that what the Guru enjoins is scripture and the sacred code of conduct for the disciple.

When the deliberate *Soham* meditation becomes spontaneous and effortless that is to say that when it develops into *Soham ajapa-japa*,⁴ the seeker becomes conscious that this *Chaitanya*⁵ pervades everywhere and naturally as a result thereof, the idea of *Kundalini*⁶ and the *Shat-Chakras*⁷ whose help was initially sought now becomes redundant in the all-embracing consciousness of Being. Living now constantly in the natural state of awareness or *Chaitanya*, with eyes closed or open in a state of constant spontaneous meditation, the seeker now enjoys the Divine Bliss which is nothing but the Self or *Atman* or the 'I, I' within. This state is very aptly described by a great saint Shri Kabir as *Rāma hamārā jap kare, ham baithe ārām*, meaning "My Rāma (Self or *Atman*) meditates within while I just relax!"

Smt. Suri Nagamma in her article on *Amrita Nadi* relates that in 1943 a certain well-versed pundit came to the Ashram and went on talking with Bhagavan for four full days on the subject of *Amrita Nadi* and its significance! When the visitor left she took an opportunity of raising the same point. Bhagavan explained to her that the pundit put his questions on the authority of the *Sastras* and that he merely replied to him accordingly. He however asked her not to worry about gathering all such (insignificant and superfluous)

information and advised her that what she should do was to go ahead, all-out, with self-enquiry of "Who am I?". After a few days when some one again raised the topic of *Amrita Nadi*, Bhagavan coolly replied: "Yes, that (meaning *Amrita Nadi*) is an idea — what else is it but an idea? Is not the body itself an idea?" So saying he looked at Smt. Suri Nagamma with compassion and in that Master's benign gaze all her doubts dissolved and his teaching went straight home to her heart.

All saints agree that this mundane world — this long unending serial of manifested *Samsara* or *Maya Bazar*⁸ has no reality apart from the Self. This implies that our body being subject to decay and destruction has no permanency. As such it is false and it exists only in one's own mere imagination. If so, how can the right or left heart, and the *Sahasradal Kamal*,⁹ or the *Shat-Chakras* have any real lasting existence, or for that matter any existence at all? These are also then nothing but mere imaginary projections of our own thoughts or ideas which rise on the eternally still *Atman*. However, such conceptions though they be imaginary, as well as an honest adherence to a spiritual path laid down by the Guru have a definite useful value during *sadhana* to bring the mind under control; by diverting it from its multifarious dispersive external activities and turning it inwards. In a stilled mind the Presence of God is revealed. "Be still and know that I am God" is a biblical saying which Sri Bhagavan quoted occasionally.

⁴ Repetition of a sacred word (*japa*) cf. *ajapa* — (when the repetition becomes silent).

⁵ Consciousness.

⁶ Serpent power (yogic power).

⁷ Six yogic centres.

⁸ Cycle of births and deaths.

⁹ Seventh spiritual yogic centre in the centre of the brain.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By
MADELINE MENDE

Madeline Mende passed away on April 7, 1970 at the age of 67 (see obituary in April, 1971, p. 133). In going through her personal papers a friend of hers, Barbara Slof, came across an unfinished book in which there is a description of "How I came to the Maharshi".

"An echo within ever whispers
the soul's song ;
God — Guru — ancient One of
olden time
My own Self ; whither, whence
How will It happen
Can It possibly happen to me ?

Cosmic calendar and clock decree a certain time, a certain place, when Time is ripe, when Time is right.

Then came a marked turn in my spiritual road. Truly a turning point in life itself.

Karmic predestinations : casually, informally yet preordained I occasionally met a friend in busy downtown Detroit. I mentioned Lanyon books. She swiftly stated : 'Listen, you really *should read* Maharshi's books. The Maharshi is Lanyon's Teacher. I am leaving town soon but you may use my two Maharshi books briefly for three days.'

Only three days. Of course I tried to copy parts from those precious books sensing their special rare-true value.

Two years passed. At last a few Maharshi books were available in New York. Heart and soul cheered. The books were ordered, however I wasn't home when the postman tried to deliver them. Our local post office closes at five o'clock. I arrived home at six noting that books were available for me in the post office at eight o'clock the next morning.



Madeline Mende

I stood still in eager anticipation. 'This minute, right here, I am fourteen hours from a Maharshi book.'

My own books ! spiritual feast to be savored slowly. Much of the reading was done with a sense of Light in joyous silence.

Then came the day of my life, in mid-morning, in mid-summer. On this sunshiny morning, August 1961, I sat in a lawn chair in a secluded grassy inner courtyard. Mind was still, bliss of Being amidst tears of ecstasy.

"My very dear own Guru Maharshi
my very dear own Guru Maharshi"
Six accurate, sacred sweet words stated two times from the heart.

In the words of another — "my fate and all that I was passed from that moment into the sacred hands of Sri Bhagavan forever."



“I had come Home. In my own case the precious sense of Bhagavan Presence has been with me ever since. Grace is.”

* * *

“I would just like you to know,” concludes Barbara Slof, “that it was through Madeline that Bhagavan reached out to me and to many others here in Detroit. Not rich in earthly possessions she gave all of herself. To whomever she spoke it was

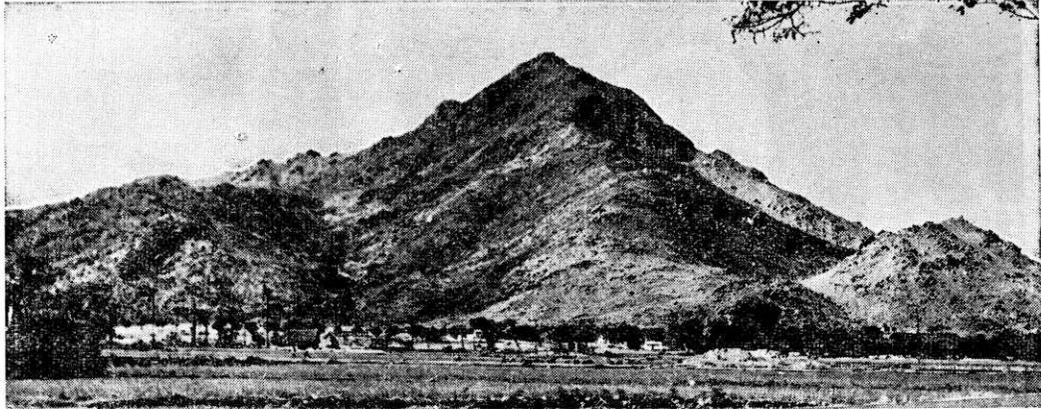
always of Being — Looking within — and Knowing oneself.

“I was with her as her time on earth drew to a close. One month before her passing she told me of a vision she had of what would happen at the moment of giving up the body. When she did finally pass on one month later it was in complete peace and very quickly. Fully conscious towards the end she said :

With Bhagavan’s GRACE — LET ME GO IN PEACE.”

‘Oh let us live in joy, in love among those who hate ;
Among men who hate let us live in love.’

— *Dhammapada.*



GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM ¹

CHAPTER VI

THE GLORY OF VARIOUS TIRTHAS (SACRED TANKS OR RIVERS) ON ARUNACHALA

Gautama continued :—

ONCE Lord Narayana reclining on the serpent Sesha in the Milky Ocean was sleeping completely oblivious of the world. Even though the aeon had come to an end (and it was time for the commencement of another one) the whole universe was enveloped in complete darkness. The eternally enlightened beings (*nityasuris*) were worried over this state of affairs. Even the *devas* are unable to see the supremely effulgent being, they thought, and how will darkness ever be dispelled if this state is allowed to continue? So they thought of (prayed to) Lord Siva, the undifferentiated effulgent Being, the Lord of the *devas*, the consort of Uma and their own Self. Thus beseeched, Lord Maheswara manifested Himself before them with the object of protecting the universe. From the effulgent Sambhu, 33 crores of *devas* emerged as sparks and scattered in all directions. These *devas* woke up Vishnu who learnt from

them what had happened and saw the darkness. He pondered : ‘Overcome by darkness (ignorance) I fell into an untimely sleep. Sadasiva, the supremely effulgent Being, seems to have revealed His form in order to wake me up, and taken upon Himself the task of creating the worlds. What remains for me or Brahma to do? I who forgot myself (my real nature) in sleep devoid of Self-knowledge am a worthless fellow.’

Thus contemplating the effulgent Linga (Sadasiva), and his own Self, Sri Hari (Vishnu) prostrated before Him and repeatedly saluted Him. By this act he tried to get rid of his sins. Whereupon the effulgent Sambhu, the protector of those who seek refuge with Him, blessed Hari (Vishnu) with his glance of grace and asked him to rise. Hari then stood up and prayed to the extremely compassionate Wearer of the Crescent Moon (Siva):

“Lord of the three worlds! Lord who is the Trinity! Lord who possesses the three gunas! Three-eyed Lord! Destroyer of the three cities (Tripura)! Being the Lord of the universe Thou performest deeds by Thy Will according to the law of cause and effect

¹ Continued from our last issue.

through the crores of *devas* who are Thy parts. I did not wish to fail in my duty by untimely sleep, O Sambhu! Kindly forgive my sin!" When Hara (Siva) saw Hari (Vishnu) lamenting in this manner He prescribed the following penance for Him :

"I abide on earth in the form of Arunachala. The moment you see it your ignorance will be destroyed. On a previous occasion I gave a boon to another Vishnu at that place. My manifestation at that time was what is known as the effulgent linga of Arunachala. That effulgent linga has cooled down like this for the sake of the world. Nevertheless, it is fiery, unmanifest and of untold glory. Since its effulgence is latent, streams, rivers and rainwater are absorbed by it. Moreover its glory gives sight to the blind, ability to walk to the lame, progeny to the childless and speech to the dumb. This Arunachala confers all *siddhis*, cures all diseases, destroys all sins and grants other boons."

After saying this Mahadeva (Siva) disappeared and Hari (Vishnu) came to Arunachala. He practised austerities and worshipped the Red Mountain (Arunachala). He visited the hosts of *devas* living in the forests around the Hill and built holy ashrams for the sages. He recreated the Vedas, Vedangas and Upanishads etc. He bathed in the Brahma Tirtha, worshipped Arunachala, circumambulated It, got rid of his sins and attained the lordship of all the worlds.

The effulgent Sun who was harassed by the *asuras* (demons) devoutly worshipped the Lord of Arunachala upon the advice of Lord Brahma. He bathed in the holy Brahma Tirtha and circumambulated this Arunachala who is the Lord Himself. Thereby he conquered all the *asuras* and gained the ability to circumambulate Mount Meru. He also acquired the power of bedimming all other luminaries.

Chandra (Moon) who was harassed by the fire of the curse of Daksha Prajapati worship-

ped Arunachala (as advised by Siva) and regained his form. Agni (Fire) although tainted by the disease of consumption under the curse of a Brahma Rishi became pure again by worshipping Arunachala.

Indra had incurred sin by slaying Vritra, Bala, Paka, Namuchi and Jrimbha who had in ancient times obtained boons from Siva and became lords of the worlds. He lost his vigour and his kingdom. He then worshipped Siva and on his advice worshipped Arunachala in a proper way and got rid of his sin. Afterwards he performed a horse sacrifice and pleasing Siva thereby regained his status of Indra.

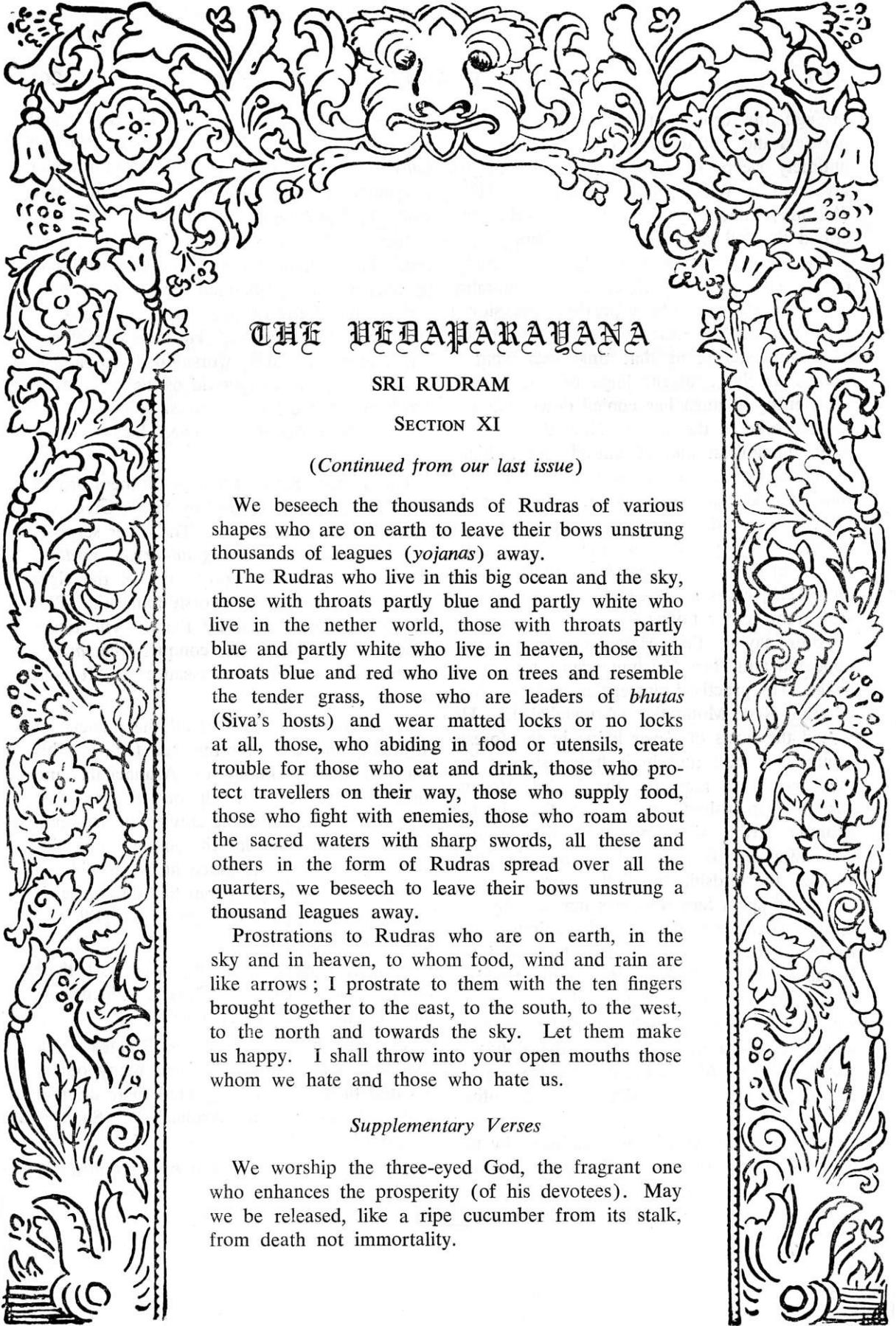
The serpent Sesha worshipped the Lord of the Red Hill and acquired by Siva's Grace the strength to bear the earth. The other serpents as well as the hosts of *gandharvas*, *siddhas*, *apsaras* and *dikpalas* (protectors of the eight quarters) obtained by worshipping the Red Hill the boons desired by them. The *devas* (gods) who wished to conquer the *asuras* (demons) paid their obeisance to It and obtained Its grace.

Surya (Sun) the lord of all the planets, in an attempt to pass over the Red Hill, lost his glory in the splendour of Arunachala and could not proceed at all on his heavenly course. He then, on the advice of Brahma, worshipped Arunachala whereupon he regained his strength by Its grace and was able to proceed on his course. From that day onwards Surya does not pass over the Red Hill; he goes around It.

In ancient days the *devas* who lost their limbs at the sacrifice of Daksha gained new limbs by the grace of Arunachala.

Sukra, Aruna, a king named Pratardana, a *gandharva* named Pushpaka and many others expiated their sins and regained their original shapes by worshipping Arunachala. Such is Its glory!

(to be continued)



THE BHADRAHANA

SRI RUDRAM

SECTION XI

(Continued from our last issue)

We beseech the thousands of Rudras of various shapes who are on earth to leave their bows unstrung thousands of leagues (*yojanas*) away.

The Rudras who live in this big ocean and the sky, those with throats partly blue and partly white who live in the nether world, those with throats partly blue and partly white who live in heaven, those with throats blue and red who live on trees and resemble the tender grass, those who are leaders of *bhutas* (Siva's hosts) and wear matted locks or no locks at all, those, who abiding in food or utensils, create trouble for those who eat and drink, those who protect travellers on their way, those who supply food, those who fight with enemies, those who roam about the sacred waters with sharp swords, all these and others in the form of Rudras spread over all the quarters, we beseech to leave their bows unstrung a thousand leagues away.

Prostrations to Rudras who are on earth, in the sky and in heaven, to whom food, wind and rain are like arrows; I prostrate to them with the ten fingers brought together to the east, to the south, to the west, to the north and towards the sky. Let them make us happy. I shall throw into your open mouths those whom we hate and those who hate us.

Supplementary Verses

We worship the three-eyed God, the fragrant one who enhances the prosperity (of his devotees). May we be released, like a ripe cucumber from its stalk, from death not immortality.

Prostrations to Rudra who is in fire, water, and herbs, and penetrates the entire universe.

Do thou praise Rudra who possesses an excellent bow and splendid arrows and who is the storehouse of all medications for the ills of the world. We worship Rudra who destroys demons (*asuras*) and prostrate before Him in order to achieve purity of mind.

This hand of mine is Bhagavan (God). This is more than God to me. This is my medication for all ills. For it is this which touches God (while worshipping).

O Death! We pray that the thousands and tens of thousands of ropes kept by Thee for binding (lit. destroying) men, may, by the virtue of our worship, leave us untouched. We offer this oblation to Death. We offer this oblation to Death.

Prostrations to Bhagavan Rudra the all-pervasive God. Save me from death, O Rudra! Thou art the controller of the vital forces. O Destroyer! Enter into me and accept this food (I eat).

OM PEACE, PEACE, PEACE.

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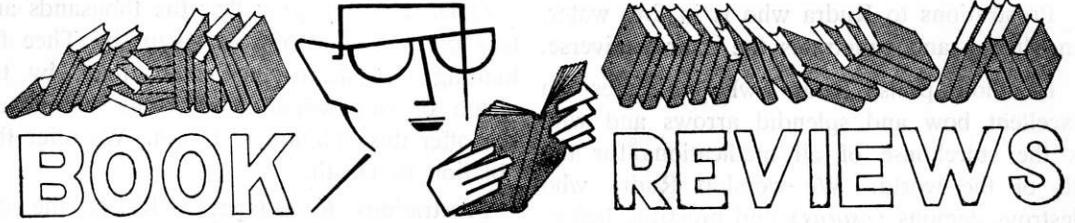
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
Sri Ramanasramam,
1st October, 1971.

V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.



JAPASUTRAM: By Swami Pratyagatmananda Saraswati. Pub.: Ganesh & Co. Private Ltd., Madras-17. Pp. 309. Price: Rs. 15.

Japasutram is a weighty work of Swamiji's in Sanskrit-Bengali running into 6 volumes. It contains over five hundred aphorisms and over two thousand explanatory verses in Sanskrit followed by a comprehensive commentary in Bengali. The treatise, however, has remained beyond the reach of non-Bengali readers. The present publication is a summarised version of the work, in English, by the author himself. It also includes very helpful expositions of the argument by Professors C. C. Chatterji, S. N. Roy, C. G. Mukherji, besides a masterly introduction by Justice P. B. Mukherji. These short papers are remarkably lucid and go a long way in helping the reader follow the terse writing of the author in his condensation of an admittedly difficult and profound dissertation.

A good part of the book is naturally devoted to the metaphysics of Sound, the character and nature of the primal Sound which is essentially spiritual, the four subtle steps it takes in its creative movement before it reaches our world of material form, i.e. *para*, *pasyanti*, *madhyama* and *vaikhari*, the precise route by which sound converts itself into light and thence into physical sound and ultimately physical form. Sound is a Power of the Infinite that has brought about this Finite. It is also the Power which — if only we know how to use it — can lead the finite back to its origin in the Infinite. And the means to tap this potentiality of Sound is the *mantra* which is a store-house of sound-power capable of bridging the gulf between the Form and the Formless, the patent and the latent, Matter and Spirit.

What are the different kinds of *mantras* that are recommended by the adepts? What is the way of repeating them? Is it necessary to be conscious of their meaning? Is it enough to choose a *mantra* to one's liking and do its japa? What are the dangers that are said to follow wrong stress in pronunciation? These and many other questions of practical import are raised and answered with a comprehensiveness and authenticity that is rare now-

a-days. To take only one point of importance to the sadhaka, e.g. reactions that follow the practice of japa at times, in the words of Dr. Govinda Gopal Mukherji:

"Japa is a very powerful action or vibration (both physical and metaphysical), consciously generated by us in the apparatus and it is bound to lead to some reaction in the system about which we must be very cautious and watchful. Firstly, the reaction may take the form of a dissipating excitability, if there is a preponderance of *rajas* in the system or it may lead to a still worse reaction in the form of inert staticity if *tamas* is the predominant factor in the 'apparatus'. When we are faced with these two types of adverse reactions we must try to neutralise them by laying stress on or enhancing the respective *soma* and *agni mantras*, i.e. the soothing and rousing components in the *mantra*. To make the matter more explicit: the Vedic Rishis in their ultimate analysis of the world or creation reduce it to two basic principles: Agni or 'Fire' and Soma or 'Nectar'. One is the consuming factor (*dahani* and *pacani*) which is at the root of all modification or change, running down (*parinama*), decay, entropy; and the other is the sustaining principle, the sap or essence (*rasa*) of life, which is immortal by nature and is therefore equated with the nectar of divine embrosia. The entire creation is an interplay of these two forces, a deadly duel between two opposing forces constantly trying to overpower each other. So long as an even balance is maintained between the two, all creation is sustained; otherwise it is bound to be consumed by the fire and must face extinction. Creation is through predominant Soma, preservation is through an even balancing between Agni and Soma and dissolution is through predominant Agni. Thus these two principles are at the root of creation, preservation and destruction. Agni in 'harmonic relation' however is the tracer of the cosmic diagram (*rupaka*) and with Soma is its colour designer (*varnaka* or *ranjaka*).

"Now in a *mantra* too we have to take note of these two components. The *Agni matra* or the heating or 'charging' factor is encased principally in the letter 'r' or *refa* or *visarga*; and the *soma matra* is contained in the letter 'm' or *anusvara* or *candra bindu*. If we have an unhealthy reaction in the form of excitability, distraction or dissipation we must immediately recognise it as due to an increase or excess of the *agnimatra* or heating element and try to counter it by putting more stress on the *somamatra* i.e. the letter 'm' and thereby generate a soothing

effect. Obversely, inert staticity, stupor, sloth and such other depressing symptoms may manifest themselves if there is too much *somamatra* i.e. soothing or sedative factor. In that case, the apparatus must be heated, charged and roused from its dull stupor by a proper application of the *agnimatra*, i.e. concentrating on the letter 'r' etc. in the *mantra*. These two principles—*Agni* and *Soma*—should be recognised in *nada* and *bindu* respectively, i.e. in the elongation of a vowel or pronouncing it in its full length and tone we have *agnimatra*, while in its compression i.e. pronouncing in a soft and fade-out manner, that is gradually diminishing tone beyond the range of audibility, we have *somamatra*. The *Omkaara* at the beginning of each *mantra*, e.g. in the *Gayatri*, should be pronounced loudly and resonantly in the *agni-matra*, while the same *Omkaara* placed at the end should be mellowed down gradually till it merges in the infinite silence, which is more potent and vibrant than all gross sound." (Pp. 275-277).

The work is replete with reasoned explanation of many concepts and precepts that one normally takes as matters of faith in spiritual life. Here is a realm of thought and experience where Science and Spirituality meet in harmony and explain each other.

BHAKTA MIRA: By Bankey Behari. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 7. Pp. 190. Price: Rs. 3.

Mira was born in 1547 in Marwar. Her father Rao Ratan Singh was a nobleman. One morning the little girl of 5 woke up "startled by the sound of a marriage procession that passed below the palace and, peeping through the barred windows of the balcony and seeing the child-bridegroom dressed artistically, she cried out, 'Mother, and where is my bridegroom?' The mother smiled at the innocence of the child and replied (pointing to the little lovely idol of Lord Krishna that was so much loved by the child), 'Giridhara Gopala is thy bridegroom.'"

How the words proved prophetic and the girl grew up into a dedicated bride of the Lord, went through all the ordeals that ignorant humanity reserves for its saviours, left her native land to live in Brindavan where she re-enacted the divine love-play with Krishna, are told by the author in graphic chapters. He devotes a considerable part of the book to expound the philosophy and sadhana of this type of *bhakti* and *samkirtan*, devotion and chanting of the Name. Illustrating from the life of Mira, he states that there are five conditions for success in this path, viz: the Name must be initiated by the Sad-Guru (like Raidas initiating Mira). It must be practised in the spirit of humility. The whole life must be pure and holy. The chanting must be done on the waves of love rising in the heart.

The author has also given 100 renderings and more of select songs of the saint; the originals in Gujarati and Hindi are reproduced in the appendix.

The book is written in deep devotion and induces this mood in the reader.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE GOSPEL OF PEACE: THE ESSENCE GOSPEL OF JOHN: Translated by E. Szekeley and P. Weaver. Pub.: Shambala Publications, Berkeley, Calif., U.S.A.

This book purports to be an authentic gospel recounting the 'pure original words of Jesus' and correcting the present gospels, which according to the author have been 'terribly mutilated and deformed'. However, enquiry among Biblical scholars reveals that this 'gospel' is not listed among authentic lists of apocryphal gospels. The editor claims that it is based on an original Aramaic manuscript which was brought from China by Nestorian priests. It is a well-known fact that the Nestorian Church, which spoke a dialect of Aramaic called Syriac, spread across Asia to China from the 7th century onwards. If the 'gospel' were authentic then it might be one of the numerous apocryphal writings which were produced in Syriac from the third century onwards. Some of these writings like the Gospel of Thomas have been shown to contain some valuable material and even possibly authentic sayings of Jesus, but they are usually of a strongly gnostic character. This Gospel might be one of these Syriac gnostic gospels of a comparatively late date, but it seems more probable that it is the work of a modern theosophist. As such it has considerable interest, though it is remote from the acknowledged Gospel. Its main theme is that of the kingdom of the Earthly Mother (as distinguished from the Heavenly Father) and of the angels of air and water and light. The teaching of Jesus which it describes is not without beauty, though it is curious to find Jesus quoting St. Paul. The teaching inculcates vegetarianism, linking it with many early apocryphal gospels, which had a strong ascetic tendency.

FR. BEDE GRIFFITHS.

SWAMI SHIVANANDA (SRI MAHAPURUSHA MAHARAJ), REMINISCENCES: Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp.: 214 + xxiv. Price: Rs. 3.

The pre-monastic name of Mahapurusha Maharaj was Tarakanath Ghoshal. Born of very pious parents, the religious sense was deeply implanted in him. Very early in life he was drawn by an irrepressible inner urge towards the sage of Dakshineswar. After he received his initiation and

sannyasa he came to be known as Swami Shivananda. By way of appreciation of his remarkable powers of self-control and severe ascetic discipline he was given the honorific title of 'Mahapurusha' by Swami Vivekananda. Mahapurusha Maharaj was thus one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

By virtue of his seniority and great organising ability he first became the vice-president of the Sri Ramakrishna Order and Mission and later its president. His personal qualities were such as to compel the respect and admiration of all who came into contact with him. A real scholar, he made no vain display of his learning.

Given to much meditation, he was reserved and withdrawn. But behind this somewhat aloof exterior there was a very warm heart overflowing with 'the milk of human kindness', ever intent on turning the 'brahmacharins' and monks to one-pointed sadhana so as to help them evolve spiritually.

He had immense faith in the latent possibilities of human nature and also expert skill in drawing them out. Numerous were the people who sought his guidance and who, in the course of time, became highly evolved spiritually. Thirteen of them have recorded their reminiscences of their Guru. Five lay disciples also have done so. These were originally published in the *Vedanta Kesari*, a monthly journal issued by the Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, Mylapore, Madras. They are now brought together in the handy volume which is under review.

The book is both interesting and edifying. The articles are well selected and expressed. Several anecdotes find mention in them and they show up the great qualities of head and heart of Mahapurusha Maharaj. Some of them are very minor ones, even trivial, but they acquire a new significance and consequently appear in a new light, in their setting. The writers very skilfully give expression to their reverence, love and admiration for their Guru.

The book is worth reading by all who are intent on their spiritual progress.

VEDANTA: AN ANTHOLOGY OF HINDU SCRIPTURE, Commentary and Poetry: Edited by Olive Johnson. Pub: Harper and Row. Pp.: 243 + xii. Price: \$ 6.95.

This nicely got-up book is an anthology containing selections from Hindu scriptures such as the Veda, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, Srimad Bhagavata and so forth. Extracts are also given from the sayings and writings of saints and sages who lived in the recent past like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi and Aurobindo Ghosh.

The selections are classified under the following five heads: Revealed Scripture, The Epics, Auxiliary Scriptures, The Mystic Poets and the Hindu Renaissance.

In each case, the selected passages or extracts are given in English translation, with a brief introduction preceding each section. The book contains a Foreword by Swami Prabhavananda under whose over-all supervision the selections are said to be made. In the first chapter entitled 'What is Vedanta', Clive Johnson, the Editor, explains that the term 'Vedanta' taken in a general sense stands for both Hindu religion and philosophy, and in a particular sense it stands for the philosophy developed by the great acharyas, especially Sri Sankara.

It is difficult to understand the guiding principles behind the selections. They are not always typical of the central thought developed in the section of the Hindu scripture to which they belong. The passage selected from the Taittiriya Upanishad, for example, contains the convocation address given by the teacher to his disciples, but it is by no means typical of the deep metaphysical thought developed in the Brahmananda Valli of that Upanishad. The passage from the Chandogya deals with the instruction given by Prajapati to Indra. This is no doubt important, but the omission of the passage from the sixth chapter which carries the Mahavakya, 'Tat Tvam Asi', is rather surprising.

Nor do we find any sense of proportion in the selections that are made. The passages selected from the Katha Upanishad occupy six pages in print, while the passages selected from the Taittiriya occupy less than half a page. Kena Upanishad, which is no less important than the Katha, is dismissed with just twelve lines.

Even the translation cannot be said to be always faithful to the original. The sloka from the Ramayana for example (II.105.7) is wrongly translated as follows: "O Rama, happy is the sovereign on whom others depend, but wretched is the one who depends on others." The correct translation is: "O Rama, happy is the man to whose needs others cater, but the lot of the man who always caters to the needs of others is rather hard."

In spite of these shortcomings, it is an eminently useful book for those who want to form some idea of the priceless treasures of thought enshrined in the classical Hindu scriptures and in the writings of recent saints and sages. The selections undoubtedly provoke further thought and kindle the curiosity to know more about them. This seems to be the chief aim of the publication and it is quite successful in that respect.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER.

LIGHT ON YOGA : By B. K. S. Iyengar Pub. : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. : 342 (Royal size). Price : £2.50 (50 s.).

Yoga is the psychic science of better life in tune with the Divine in the heart of beings. There are as many varieties of Yoga as there are planes of consciousness. Hatha Yoga perfects the body and vitality, awakening the Cosmic energy in us. Raja Yoga perfects the mind by its eight-fold sadhanas of moral discipline, purification, postures, breath control, introspection, concentration, meditation, and self-knowledge. Karma yoga prepares the human entity for Divine transformation by consecrated work; Bhakti yoga by psychic devotion opens the heart, and Jnana yoga by self-enquiry gives a finishing touch to the inner quest by Self-realisation.

The well-known Hatha Yogin B. K. S. Iyengar has done a significant service to humanity in compiling this great work on Hatha Yoga and its techniques. He has put forth in this monumental work his dedicated experience of more than twenty-seven years in the field. In following closely the authority of the Hatha Yoga Dipika (Light On Yoga), Yogi Iyengar gives us an outline of Patanjali's Raja Yoga too, describing the stages of Sadhana for the quest of the Self. Swatma Rama's Hatha Yoga and Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga complement each other and form a single approach towards Realisation.

Yogi Iyengar describes in detail the meticulous process of different asans profusely illustrating the modus operandi. The description, technique and the effect of all asans and their therapeutic values are clearly given in simple, clear style. Appendix I divides the asans into three groups, the primary, intermediary and advanced courses and gives the time limit to master each asan step by step. Appendix II gives the reader the groups of asans for different functional ailments and diseases like anaemia, arthritis, blood pressure, asthma, heart trouble etc. A monumental volume on Hatha Yoga, by a master of renown, with 600 illustrations, carefully edited by Gerald Yorke is bound to become very popular and helpful.

YOGA FOR BUSY PEOPLE : By Howard Murphet. Pub. : Orient Longman, Madras. Pp. 127. Price : Rs. 4.

Yoga has become today, all over the world, a popular expression for better living. It is a psychic force that can bring better health and well-being to humanity.

Mr. Howard Murphet justly says "Yoga is something to *do* and there is theory in it just as there is theory in playing the piano or cultivating

a garden. The different paths of Yoga meet at a point where union is achieved."

This handy book in simple style is bound to improve physical health, revitalise the body and develop inner strength and stamina. It gives easy poses to cure psychosomatic troubles. It begins with rhythmic breathing and rushes through simple tone-up exercises to the head-stand poses. The author advocates fruits, salads, nuts, yoghurt, butter-milk and vegetables for eating with moderation. The line drawings of important poses are clear. The book makes pleasant reading.

YOGI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI.

SWAMI BHARATI KRISHNA TIRTHA : SANATANA DHARMA. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Price : Rs. 3.

This is an edition of the verbatim reports of the lectures on the different aspects of the Hindu religion delivered by Swami Bharati Krishna Tirtha (Sankaracharya of Puri) during his Indian and American tours. The book contains 15 discourses dealing with such important topics as the Sanatana Dharma, its meaning and consistency with reason, the basic unity of all religions, the immortality of the soul, God and man and Sankara Vedanta. The Swami's penetrating erudition together with his versatile knowledge of modern science makes the lectures authoritative and interesting. In his lectures, he convincingly affirms the unison of the Sanatana Dharma with reason and with the latest discoveries of science. Strongly aware of the need for making the Hindu religious tenets convincing and intelligible to all, his aim in all the lectures is to clear the misapprehensions regarding many of our theories and practices in Hinduism. His theme in most of his lectures is to prove that Hinduism is not a bundle of superstitions of a far-away epoch unsuited to the time-spirit of the present age nor is it a mass of unreasonable or unprovable assumptions or dicta. In his lecture on the meaning of Sanatana Dharma he clearly proves that the modern orientologists apply wrong canons in evaluating our religion. He points out that eminent sociologists in Europe and America are gradually becoming aware of the real merits of the much-maligned *varnasrama dharma* and our social settings. He proves on rational lines the immortality of the soul and the principle of *mithya* or *maya*.

It will be very instructive for the layman to read these lectures many times and ponder over them. This will make him understand our religion in all its pristine purity.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

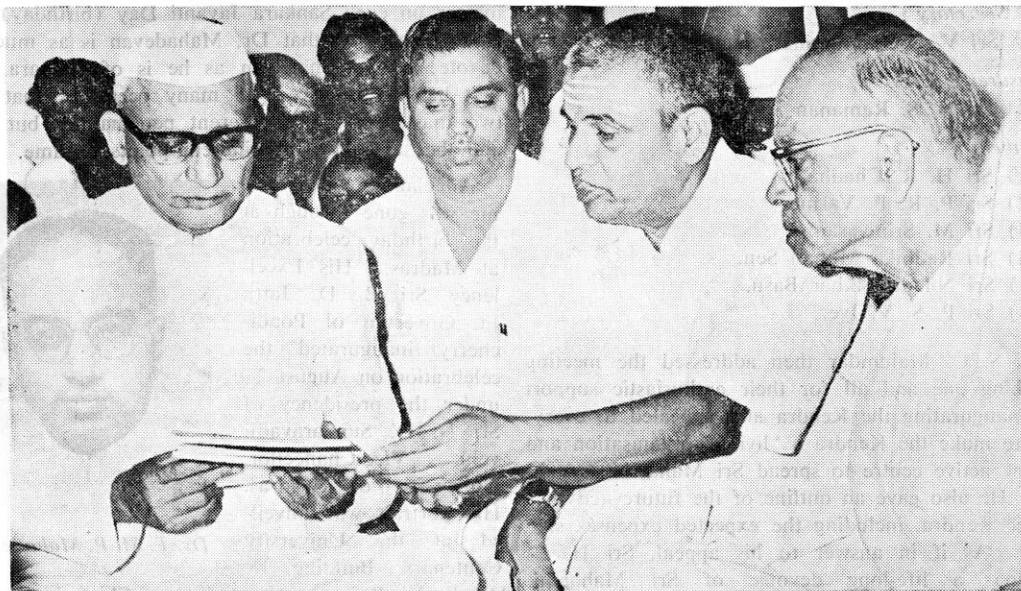


GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU VISITS THE ASHRAM

A NOTABLE event this time was the visit of His Excellency Sri K. K. Shah, Governor of Tamil Nadu on the evening of August 1. The party consisting of the Governor, members of his family and Government officials was received by Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri V. Ganesan, Sri Thirthagiri Chettiar and others. Sri Thirthagiri Chettiar, Trustee, Mrs. Osborne, our Editor, Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer, a senior devotee, Sri S. P. Mukherjee and others were introduced to the Governor. The party went round the Ashram and spent a few minutes in contemplation both at the Nirvana Room and the Old Hall. Arati was done at the Mother's Shrine and the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan. Holy Prasad was presented to the Governor and his wife

The Governor talking to Mr. Charles Reeder of U.S.A. (From left to right): Sri K. K. Shah, Governor of Tamil Nadu; Sri R. Dharmalingam, M.L.C., Chairman of Tiruvannamalai Municipality; Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam; Sri S. P. Mukherjee; and Mr. Charles Reeder.





The Ashram President Sri T. N. Venkataraman presenting copies of *The Mountain Path* and other books to the Governor. (From l. to r.): Sri K. K. Shah, Sri R. Dharmalingam, Sri T. N. Venkataraman and Sri T. P. R.

while the priests chanted the Vedas invoking divine blessings. Sri T. P. R. gave an account of the devout efforts that made the construction of the *Ramana Auditorium* possible and the Governor listened with great interest. Sri R. Dharmalingam, M.L.C. & Chairman of Tiruvannamalai Municipality accompanied the Governor.

Later when devotees had an opportunity to meet the Governor they were happy to note his deep insight in matters spiritual. They particularly appreciated his emphasis on absolute surrender and unwavering faith as two cardinal principles in the teaching of Sri Bhagavan.

“SRI RAMANA KENDRA” INAUGURATED IN CALCUTTA

A centre in Calcutta to propagate the sublime teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was inaugurated at a function on the evening of August 29, at the ‘Bharati Tamil Sangam’ premises. Altogether 75 devotees of Sri Bhagavan were present. The meeting, among other items, resolved to organise a permanent centre in Calcutta to be hereinafter called *Sri Ramana Kendra*, for propagating the teachings and philosophy of Sri Maharshi.

Sri M. Srinivasan, who welcomed the gathering said that though the annual Ramana Jayanthi celebrations were being conducted for over two decades

by the Bharati Tamil Sangam, there was no real centre in Calcutta to spread the message of Sri Maharshi. It was, as such, a long-felt need, he added, that the devotees had now joined to fulfil.

Hon’ble Chief Justice Sri P. B. Mukherjee, a great devotee of Sri Maharshi, took the chair. In a moving address the Chief Justice recalled the days he had spent at Sri Ramanasramam and the wonderful peace and serenity he enjoyed in the presence of Sri Maharshi. He said that Sri Ramana simplified religion and blazed a trail short and concise in the spiritual quest. He urged that *Sri Ramana Kendra* should make potential seekers take to the meditative way of life, specifically the enquiry, “Who Am I?” as taught by the Maharshi.

The proceedings started with an invocatory prayer of Sri Bhagavan, sung by Smt. T. S. Lakshmi and Smt. Alagusundaram.

Provisionally a committee has been approved consisting the following :

President :

Hon’ble Chief Justice Sri P. B. Mukherjee.

Vice-Presidents :

(1) Sri Swami Ekatmananda of Advaita Ashrama
(subject to his approval).

(2) Sri D. V. Rajan.

General Secretary :

Sri S. C. Majumdar.

Joint Secretary :

Sri V. R. Lakshminarayanan.

Treasurer :

Sri N. S. Ramanan.

Members :

- (1) Sri H. R. Chadha.
- (2) Sri P. R. P. Varma.
- (3) Sri M. Srinivasan.
- (4) Sri Radhika Mohan Sen.
- (5) Sri Niladri Sikhar Basu.
- (6) Sri P. S. V. Iyer.

Sri S. C. Majumdar then addressed the meeting thanking one and all for their enthusiastic support for inaugurating the Kendra and appealed to everyone to make the Kendra a 'living' organisation and a very active centre to spread Sri Maharshi's teaching. He also gave an outline of the future activities of the Kendra, including the expected expenses side of it. As if in answer to his appeal, Sri H. R. Chadha, a life-long devotee of Sri Maharshi, promptly announced to contribute Rs. 1,000 for the Kendra; a generous and fruitful gesture indeed!

A message from Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, conveying his prayers for the gracious blessings of Sri Bhagavan for the success of the Kendra, was also read out.

In conclusion Smt. Lakshmi and Alagusundaram, with several other devotees, sang in a chorus the famous 'Arunachala Siva' hymn, as was sung in the presence of Sri Bhagavan at the Ashram every evening. This created a very holy atmosphere in the meeting hall, and every one felt the benign grace and presence of Sri Bhagavan.

Dr. MAHADEVAN FELICITATED ON COMPLETION OF 60 YEARS

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan whose 61st birthday was celebrated at Madras recently is a well-known philosopher and a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He is the Director of the Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy in the University of Madras. Devotees of Sri Bhagavan respect him as a very learned and unassuming person. He speaks on the teachings of Sri Bhagavan whenever opportunity arises and devotees at the Ashram have had the benefit of listening to him on several occasions. Besides writing articles he has made a full-length commentary, *Ramana Maharshi and His Philosophy of Existence* on the *Ulladu Narpadu* of Sri Bhagavan.

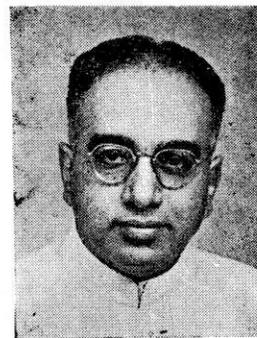
He is equally devoted to Sri Sankara and makes a practical contribution towards the propagation of his teaching by way of publishing a work of the

master on each Sankara Jayanti Day (birthday). It is not surprising that Dr. Mahadevan is as much a devotee of Sri Bhagavan as he is of Sankara. In fact he has observed on many occasions that the two masters are not different personalities but one and the same born at different points of time.

An elaborate programme was gone through at the birthday celebration at Madras. His Excellency Sri B. D. Jatti, Lt. Governor of Pondicherry inaugurated the celebration on August 2 under the presidency of Sri N. D. Sundaravadi-velu, Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras. His portrait was unveiled at the University Centenary Building by Dr. P. V. Rajamannar, a former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court on August 21. We are very happy to congratulate Dr. Mahadevan and wish him many happy returns of the day!

Besides writing standard and erudite books on Advaita he trains a number of students (many from abroad). We pray that his great service may continue to be available for a long time to come!

We cannot omit to mention here a recent remark of His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peetam on the peculiarity of the word MAHADEVAN. Spelt backwards it reads NAVEDAHAM which means 'I do not know.' The *Upanishad* says that one who says 'I do not know' really knows (Brahman). One who feels 'I know' does not really know (Brahman). NAVEDAHAM therefore is a sign of true knowledge and admirers of Dr. Mahadevan will find it a good description of him!



Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

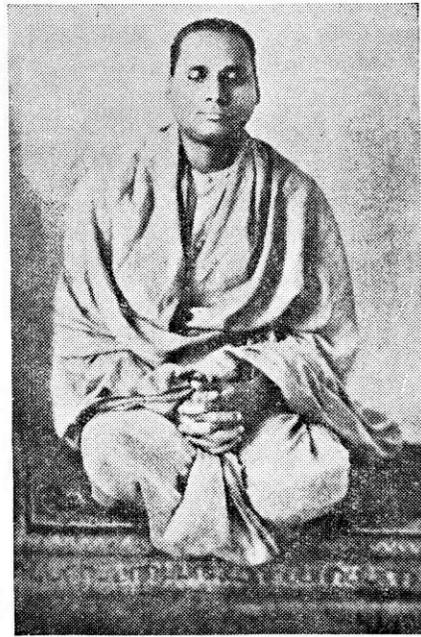
SRI BHAGAVAN'S PORTRAIT

Recently, when the Ashram President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, visited the Gurudev Ashram at Ganeshpuri, near Bombay, he was very warmly received by Sri Swami Muktanandaji Maharaj. While going through the Ashram and its routine, one of the members of the Ashram pointed out the pictures of sages and saints hung on the walls of the meditation hall and told the President that the very small picture of Sri Bhagavan was presented by a devotee, but that a bigger one from Sri Ramanasramam would be very welcome. On return, the President arranged for a large coloured photo of Sri Bhagavan by our *sadhaka*-artist Sri Sai Das,

with Arunachala in the background. On an auspicious day the photo of Sri Bhagavan in a fitting frame arranged by Sri Sunil Damania, Bombay, was taken to Sri Gurudev Ashram by Sri N. D. Sahukar and his wife, Mrs. Mani Sahukar, accompanied by Sri P. V. Somasundaram. It now adorns the meditation hall at the Gurudev Ashram.

A REVERED PILGRIM

Swami Omkar of Santi Ashram, Totapalli Hills, Andhra Pradesh along with a party of his disciples visited the Ashram on July 15. All arrangements were made for the comfortable stay of the party who had come to pay their homage to Sri Bhagavan. They spent a happy time in the holy and peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram and the Swami felt most inspired. He wrote in the Visitor's Book: "Bhagavan Maharshi is immortal. He is alive *now* more than ever. May we all feel his Presence — the indwelling light — every moment of our lives. Sri Bhagavan's love of humanity, his great affection



Sri Swami Omkar



On behalf of Sri Ramanasramam, Sri N. D. Sahukar and Smt. Mani Sahukar, presented a large coloured photo of Sri Bhagavan Ramana to Sri Swami Muktananda Maharaj, at Sri Gurudev Ashram, Ganeshpuri.



Sri V. K. Kadav (second from left) receiving the portrait of Sri Bhagavan from Sri P. V. Somasundaram (second from right).

even for dumb animals touches our heart. God is Love and Love is God. Inhale and exhale peace, thy birthright, with every breath. May God's richest blessings ever be upon all the devotees and dedicated workers who are walking in the footprints of Sri Bhagavan. May every devoted visitor who is blessed to visit this holy place convey Sri Bhagavan's message of universality and express the same in his daily life."

A DEVOTEE HONOURED

We are happy to introduce to our readers a sincere devotee of our Master, *Sri Vishnupant K. Kadav* of Bombay. After losing his father early in life, he had to leave school and start life as a newspaper-boy. By sheer hard work, struggling night and day at various odd jobs, he once got employment with a firm of block-makers and mastered the trade. His honesty and pleasant manners brought him the goodwill of leading men in several walks of life. He took part in politics during India's freedom struggle. Now he owns an

important block-making and processing firm in Bombay and is a Justice of Peace.

A turning point came in his life when he heard of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and immediately came to this Ashram. Sri Bhagavan was most gracious to him and endearingly called him 'Vishnupant.' That was in 1944. Alone or with members of his family he paid several visits to the Ashram and was present on the occasion of Sri Bhagavan's Mahanirvana in 1950. He has named his mansion 'Guru Prasad' and feels Sri Bhagavan's guidance in every instance. His devotion expresses itself in being helpful to the Ashram. Blocks for the Ashram's publications were made by him free of cost, specially for the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* (1946), *Ramana Pictorial Souvenir* (1967) and *Ramana Jyothi Souvenir* (1970).

On his completing this year his 60th year the Ashram sent a large coloured photo of Sri Bhagavan which was presented to him by a Committee of devotees in Bombay at a meeting gathered to honour him.

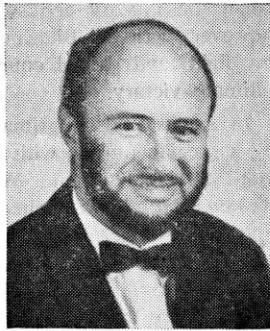
PILGRIMS

Mr. Mark Joseph Morrison of Sydney, who stayed with us for ten weeks had his introduction to Sri Bhagavan from his Guru, Swami Ghanananda of the Ramakrishna order who after a *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan had referred to him as 'Pure Gold'. Mr. Morrison came here with a letter of introduction from the President of the Ramakrishna Centre in London, Swami Bhavyananda, who wrote . . . "I had the rare privilege of meeting Bhagavan in 1941. I had his blessings, which has carried me a long way in my personal spiritual life."

"Possibly some of the readers of *The Mountain Path* may have reservations regarding visitors to Sri Ramanasramam who write of their 'days in paradise' at the Ashram where a sage lived twenty or so years ago, and may further tax the readers' credulity by going into raptures over a rocky mountain.

The aborigines of my birthplace, Australia, who are considered to have descended from the Proto-Dravidians, regard as sacred the independent mountain of bare rock in the central region of that land. Thus for some time I had been keen to visit Arunachala for this reason also.

It is understandable that Sri Bhagavan's teachings with emphasis on Self Enquiry should be of more interest to those on the *jnana* path; but in practice, this technique can be used to advantage by every *sadhaka*. Furthermore that a *bhakta* can feel affinity with Sri Ramana and his teachings is exemplified by his devotional poetry and by the remarkable fact of his consecrating the *Sri Chakra*. The *bhakta* will find himself so much in his element that when the dreaded day of departure arrives, he will probably feel that Sri Ramanasramam is more suited to *bhaktas* than it is to those on the path of *jnana*. There is Skandasramam, the Samadhi Mantapam, the Old Hall where one can practise Self Enquiry in ideal conditions; there is the celebrated circumambulation of Holy Arunachala, with numerous shrines on the way providing a stimulating opportunity for spiritual disciplines; and there is also the impressive *Sri Chakra Puja*,¹ in addition to the programme of daily pujas.



Mr. Morrison

Sri Ramana's devotees, those who were at the Ashram when he was in the body, still feel that the old atmosphere is there. This is more than corroborated by the consensus of opinion of those *sadhakas* who have come in recent years to Arunachala. Just sitting in front of the superb portrait of Sri Bhagavan in the Old Hall, bathing in his all-encompassing grace and receiving spontaneous solutions to those 'insoluble' problems of life is enough for successful *sadhana*.

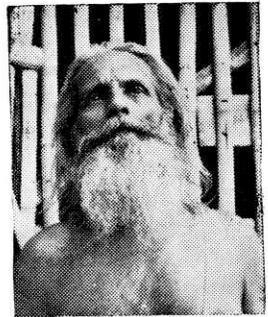
Crowning the whole setting is Holy Arunachala — a beacon and a magnet. Those that are strongly psychic will talk of 'vibrations' and 'auras' but one does not have to be particularly sensitive to realise that the mountain has a 'mystique'. Within a day's travel by road or by rail are several of the famous Dravidian temples — stupendous monuments to man's love for God — but very much closer is Tiruvannamalai's Sri Arunachaleswara temple which is a 'spiritual powerhouse.'

Sri Ramanasramam has an ideal setting for *sadhana*. After what has been said and written for so long by so many, one more such testimony may not add much, still, if possible, why *not* respond to the 'Call' and come to Arunachala?"

* * *

Sri Madguni Shambu Bhat (for a note on whom see *Ashram Bulletin* of July '66, p. 295) is staying here for the past few months. He wants to convey his experience :

"The spiritual fire was lit in me by Sri Bhagavan. I had my first *darshan* of him in May 1948 and visited the Ashram for the second time in 1963. In 1970 I stayed for a fortnight in the Ashram and then moved to Benares planning to spend the rest of my days there. While at Benares I was going through the section on Arunachala in the *Skanda Purana* (Sanskrit original) and I found it stated that Siva-centres including Varanasi (Benares) were only the abodes of Lord Siva while Arunachala was Lord Siva Himself! This thrilled me and I immediately returned to Arunachala. The suddenness of my trip and the warm



Sri Shambu Bhat

The suddenness of my trip and the warm

¹ For an account of which see July, 71 issue, p. 164.

welcome at the Ashram had an exhilarating effect on me.

"The Ashram permitted me to stay for some time. Feeling the sure guiding hand of Sri Bhagavan was a happy experience. I used to visit the Arunachaleswara temple almost daily. One early morning an *Arunachala Gayatri (mantra)* was revealed to me. The same day Sri Bhagavan appeared in my dream, embraced me saying: 'Sit down, sit down', and made me sit on a chair he was himself occupying. I woke up with a start and went round the Hill immediately.

"I then moved to Pandava Tirtha near the Ashram and did puja to the deity in the temple there. Finally I moved to the Dakshinamurthy temple adjoining the Ashram and it is my present abode.

"The spiritual path is certainly not a bed of roses. But Sri Ramanasramam which plays its part in it invites us: 'Here is a boat bound for the Destination and it is open to you to board it or not', it says. Only, faith and devotion are necessary.

"I feel grateful to the Ashram management for all the hospitality and kindness it has shown me."

* * *

Mr. James Parker-Washington of the States, spent several months in our midst, fulfilling an ardent heart's desire of his. His one-pointedness and great sincerity bore fruit testifying to Sri Bhagavan's saying: "Earnest effort never fails"! He writes:

"From the very moment I looked into Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's EYES a vibration like an inner electrical current permeated my whole being. His countenance, serene, so holy and compassionate filled me with a great peaceful wonder and delight. Then turning the pages of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, His divine message began to captivate my heart. Caught in the sacred jaws of the Supreme Master Tiger, Sri Ramana, I became thenceforth the blest prey of Arunachala-Siva! This unforgettable initial experience took place at Thanksgiving time (Nov.) 1967 in U.S.A.



Mr. Washington

In the subsequent months, His great teaching an life as embodied *Nirguna Brahman*, became the essence and meaning of my existence.

Thus by Jan. 1971 by the Grace of Sri Ramana I was able to come on a pilgrimage to Sri Ramanasramam, where His Divine Presence in human form guided seekers from all corners of the world for over 50 years, and which continues to do so in the potent Silence permeating the whole place, particularly His Holy Shrine, the Old Meditation Hall, and the Arunachala-Siva Linga Hill.

During my seven months' residence there, it has definitely become clear to me WHO and WHAT my GURU is. He whom I regarded as a human enlightened teacher has, by my daily sitting in meditation, attendance at *pujas* at the temple and His shrine of Grace, *pradakshina* (circumambulation of the Hill), etc., gradually unfolded His true state. There were particularly intense internal periods, when the illusory ego sought its usual supremacy; however, with Sri Bhagavan's Grace I was aided in my fight, and gained courage and confidence in the ultimate victory.

In August, this pilgrimage was further highlighted by a special journey with a fellow-devotee, Sri Madguni Shambhu Bhat. We went to Madurai to *Ramana Mandiram*,¹ where, sitting there in meditation in the upper room, I was vouchsafed a glimpse of His Timeless-Spaceless-Oneness. The pilgrimage continued to Tiruchuzhi, Sri Ramana's physical birth-place. Here too one will surely have the experience of spiritual warmth and Grace. At both places, those in residence there are kind and helpful to visitors who are warmly welcomed.

To conclude I must thank the entire body of Sri Ramanasramam's management and staff — in the kitchen, dining hall, office, priests, garland-makers, ground and sanitation workers, etc. for their selfless service and solicitude for the welfare of seekers.

In deepest gratitude this humble devotee happily and blessedly declares: *Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya, Arunachala-Siva Maharshi . . . Jai!*"

* * *

Sri M. K. Bilimoria, a Parsi devotee from Bombay, spent about a month in the Ashram in June-July. He writes:

"I first came to the Ashram in 1949 and had the greatest privilege of meeting the Maharshi. I could come again only now to His abode. However, even on the second day of my arrival at the Ashram I was pleasantly surprised to find that over twenty years' accumulated GRACE was showered upon me with compound interest almost overnight — such

¹ at 11, Chockappa Naicken Street, Madurai.

was the impact of His Presence! I spent nearly seven hours a day in meditation, while in Bombay I could hardly sit even for a few minutes peacefully! In seven serene weeks in the Ashram, I spent 28 nights in Skandashram up on the Hill, where the Master lived for seven years from 1915. It is a holy place very conducive to meditation. My stay on the whole was of immense importance to my sadhana. I am thankful to all in the Ashram for the kind treatment they accorded me."

NAVARATHRI

The festival of Nine Nights (*Navarathri*) was celebrated, as usual, at the Ashram, commencing on Sept. 20, with *laksharchana*, different decorations every night to the Goddess, *Yogambal*, *Saptasati Prayana* and *pujas*, and was concluded on the evening of *Mahanavami* — Sept. 29. These varied decorations of the same Goddess symbolize unity in diversity. Scores of devotees from far and near participated.

OBITUARY

We regret deeply to record the death of 'Thanigaimani' Sri V. S. Chengalvaraya Pillai on August 25, at the age of 89. Another old devotee is removed from our midst and absorbed in Sri Bhagavan. Old devotees will recall the intensity of his devotion to Sri Bhagavan. He had the benefit of association with Sri Bhagavan from very early years and would be in tears at the mere mention of His name! He encouraged the publishing of the works of Sri Muruganar, whom he admired greatly.

A Tamil scholar of outstanding merit Sri Pillai had done great service with regard to editing and writing commentaries on sacred works in Tamil. He was engaged in preparing a concordance of *Thevaram* and other works. A commentary on *Tirupugazh* and a properly edited version of *Murugavel Panniruthirumurai* may be cited among his achievements, and his very appreciative introductions to *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* and *Guruvachaka Kovai*, two renowned works of Sri Muruganar.

He is survived by his wife, son and two daughters. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to his family!

* * *

We record with deep regret the passing away of Sri C. V. Kuppaswamy Iyer on July 11, after a short illness. An old devotee of Sri Bhagavan for four decades he was a very familiar figure at the Ashram. Always closely associated with all Ashram work and activities he was more so in his later years — after retiring from the Government service.

Resident devotees have lost in his death a genial companion and visitors a reliable guide, to whom he was of great assistance. It is indeed a hard blow for his children who lost their mother also four days earlier, on July 7! May these devotees rest in peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY New Additions

- The Revelation of Baha'U'llah and the Bab : Book 1* : By Rubi Muhsen Afnan. Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016, U.S.A.
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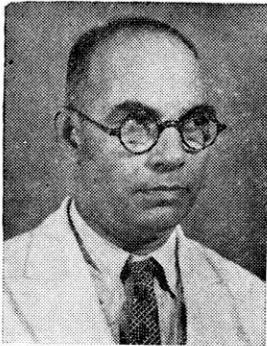
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

TIRUVANNAMALAI, S. INDIA

INTRODUCING.....

Smt. MADHAVI AMMA and Dr. P. C. NAMBIAR

BORN of pious parents in Cherukunnu in the present Cannanore District of Kerala State, Smt. Madhavi Amma has been of a religious and philosophical temperament from her childhood. Her father, Raman Nambiar, was known for his erudition and was well-versed in Sanskrit and Advaita philosophy. *Yoga Vasishtha Maha Ramayana* was



Dr. Nambiar

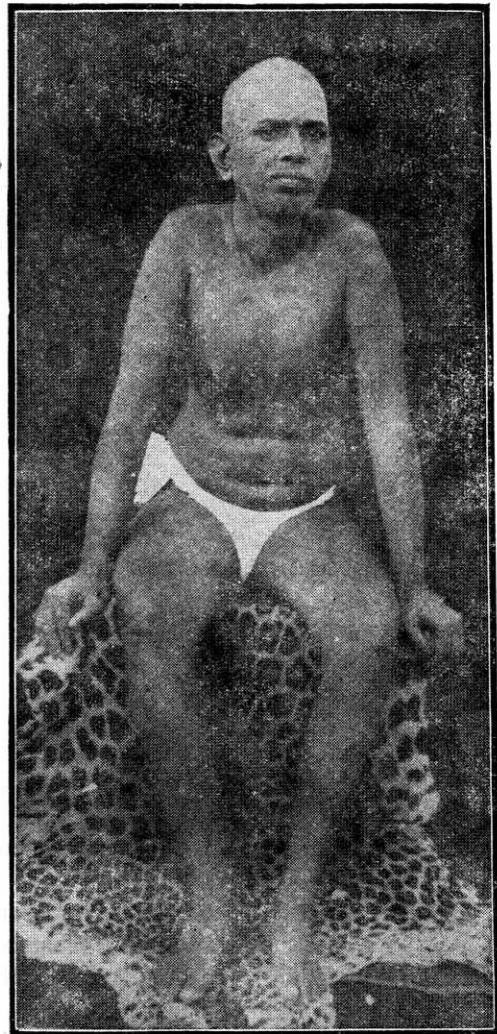


Smt. Madhavi Amma

his forte, which he continued to read and quote from, till his death at the ripe old age of 97 in 1959. Smt. Madhavi Amma is married to Dr. P. C. Nambiar (F.R.C.S.), a Surgeon in Madras Medical Service and had the opportunity to live in various districts of the then Madras Presidency and also in Assam where her husband served for some years after superannuation. In all such places she frequented temples and other holy places.

Smt. Madhavi Amma came to Tiruvannamalai in 1933 when her husband was posted as Medical Officer in charge of the local Government Hospital. She had heard of Arunachala, the sacred Hill, Sri Arunachaleswara temple below it and of Sri Ramana Maharshi who lived in the Ashram nearby. Her brother, Sri K. K. Nambiar (introduced to our readers in the Oct. 1965 issue, p. 274) already had *darshan* of Sri Maharshi the previous year, an account of which was published in an article by him in the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*.¹

Three days after her arrival at Tiruvannamalai, Smt. Madhavi Amma went to Sri Ramanasramam to have Sri Bhagavan's *darshan*. Sri Bhagavan wel-



comed her with a benign smile and spoke to her in her native tongue, Malayalam. From that day onwards she made regular visits to the Ashram, sometimes with her husband and most often with her little son, Madhavan, who used to prostrate before Sri Bhagavan and sit with closed eyes, imitating other devotees around him!

¹ Published by and available from Sri Ramanasramam.

During her stay at Tiruvannamalai she and her husband, Dr. Nambiar, had the rare privilege of attending on Sri Bhagavan during some minor ailments.

Smt. Madhavi Amma had composed many verses and songs in praise of Sri Bhagavan and used to sing them in the Old Hall in Sri Bhagavan's presence. Some of them were published in the form of a booklet in Malayalam in 1936 and presented to the Ashram Book Depot.

Even after the transfer of Dr. Nambiar from Tiruvannamalai, Smt. Madhavi Amma visited the Ashram several times, sometimes with her brother Sri K. K. Nambiar and his wife, Smt. Janaki Amma. She was away in Assam with her husband at the time of Sri Bhagavan's *Mahasamadhi*. After her

return she came to Tiruvannamalai and stayed for some weeks at the Morvi Guest House, visiting the Mathrubhuteswara shrine and Sri Bhagavan's *Samadhi* Shrine of Grace, every day and spending the time in prayer and meditation.

Smt. Madhavi Amma had some domestic tragedies. She lost her son-in-law, and two of her sons, but her devotion to Sri Bhagavan gave her the courage and fortitude to bear the calamities with philosophical resignation.

She now lives in Bangalore with her husband and her widowed daughter and grandchildren and visits the Ashram whenever she gets an opportunity to do so. Smt. Madhavi Amma's devotion to her Guru, Sri Bhagavan, is a good example to be emulated by fellow-devotees!

Dr. Steiner's mantra for healing Antagonism

By
CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

"Concentrate upon your heart in the sense that your heart is the bearer of the Christ. Feel your heart filled with Christ light. Concentrate upon the healing forces of Christ love. Then radiate these streams of golden rays to the heart of the other person. Do not do this in an abstract way. But very concretely and visually as from heart to heart. Put into it nothing subjective. Only pure love in the Christ sense. That is Christ love. This produces amazing results. First within yourself. By strengthening the Christ light within yourself and by eliminating antagonism. Second, there are results upon the other person who becomes different within a short time."

In the light of the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi that the non-physical heart on the right side of the body ('the heart of the wise man') is the centre and seat of the Self this *mantra* assumes a deeper significance.



..... to the EDITOR

EFFORT AND GRACE

Mr. Osborne in his book *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words* has remarked: 'The *sadhaka* in the process of Self-enquiry can go deep within himself only to a certain level. Thereafter the spirit takes over and takes the *sadhakas* to the goal.' I do not have the book with me and am quoting from memory.

No authority has been quoted for this statement. I find a similar statement in WHO's commentary on *Forty Verses* in Tamil. You will grant that this is a fairly important point for a *sadhaka* to know. I wonder how this point has not been mentioned by Bhagavan in his works. . . .

A subsidiary question arises: How does a *sadhaka* recognize the point up to which he can delve within by his own unaided effort? Does the Spirit in all cases help him to the goal or does it pick and choose, as some *Upanishads* say?

Can you or any of the direct disciples of Bhagavan enlighten the succeeding generation on this point?

S. KUPPUSWAMI,
Madras.

The authority for this statement is Sri Bhagavan Himself. In The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words He says as quoted on page 85: "Now it is impossible for you to be without effort. When you go deeper it is impossible for you to make effort." In Paul Brunton's Maharshi and His Message Sri Bhagavan explains the same point, and also in 'Talks' as introduction to Sat Darshana Bhashya.

A sadhaka need not concern himself with the question of recognising up to what point he can turn inwards by his own effort. When he has reached the limit of his effort by steadfast, one-pointed sadhana something from the depth of his being, in

other words Grace, takes over and all the rest happens spontaneously without any room for doubt.

The question why the Atma should choose one rather than another is clarified in the article 'Effort, Grace and Destiny' by the founder-editor in the April 1967 issue of The Mountain Path in which he says: "Who is the 'you' that has to make effort, and who is the 'God' or 'Atma' that chooses and bestows Grace on one rather than another?"

"The essence of man is pure Spirit or, which comes to the same, pure Being or pure universal Consciousness . . ."

If through Self-enquiry or any other path a seeker realises or has a glimpse of his true state of Oneness of Being or even understands it only intellectually the question of picking and choosing will not arise. Who is to choose whom?

Grace, like the sun, shines on all equally. 'Grace is the Self. It is within you. You are never out of its operation' says Sri Bhagavan. It is up to us to turn our eyes towards the sun or leave a dark place to see that it is there, or empty our heart of all that obstruct and hide its ever-present Glory.

EDITOR.

SUPPLEMENTARY SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Thank you for your informative reply to the question concerning meditation on the heart. If you have the time, I would like you to clarify one or two more points concerning Bhagavan's prescribed methods. Any information you can give will be deeply appreciated.

(1) Ramana mentions that one should avoid creating any new *vasanas*. Does this mean to avoid engaging in any pursuit which would demand a

great deal of conceptual learning, such as the game of chess?

(2) Have you ever heard the *mantra* "Om Ramana Om"? I was told to repeat that *mantra* and place it between the eyebrows as a supplement to *vichara*.

(3) After several weeks I still feel very little upon concentrating on the heart (on the right side). Does the effect come only with long practice or should I simply forego the concentrating and just do *vichara* without giving the heart a physical location?

FRED ACKERMAN,
U.S.A.

For a spiritual seeker it is advisable to engage only in such activities which have fallen to his lot or simply to perform his duty in life. It will cease of its own accord when he is ready for a life of pure contemplation. Pursuits demanding conceptual learning and thought outside the orbit of what he considers his duty are not conducive to stilling the mind, whereas the unselfish performance of activities for the sake of, for instance, maintaining one's family and helping those in need of help, purifies the mind and brings one nearer the goal.

(2) Sri Bhagavan mentions breath control for those who have not the strength or aptitude to follow the enquiry method. Simply watching the breath is also a form of pranayama which helps to quieten the mind and involves no risks in the absence of a proper guru to guide in controlling and regulating the breath forcibly. "When we watch wherefrom the 'I' thought, the root of all thoughts, springs, we are necessarily watching the source of breath also, as the 'I'-thought and the breath arise from the same source." (Day by Day with Sri Bhagavan, p. 41)

(3) One can always repeat and it will be beneficial to repeat Bhagavan's name or even better remember Bhagavan in the heart. Bhagavan did not give any mantras nor did He enjoin concentration between the eyebrows, let alone placing a mantra there. Actually He discouraged concentration between the eyebrows which may lead to unnecessary complications.

(4) The spiritual heart has no location. The right side serves as a focussing point perfectly valid on the relative plane till it is transcended in realising its all-pervasiveness. The *vichara* is all-sufficient but it can be supplemented with watching the breath or remembering Bhagavan in the heart till pressure in the head subsides.

EDITOR.

ON TAKING A MANTRA

We are most anxious to have an answer to the following question: Is it the right thing to perform the *Gayatri Rahasya Mantra*? Bhagavan, we know, was against concentration between the eyebrows . . . Also we know nothing of the pronunciation of this *mantra*.

We do have the feeling that we must go on with Bhagavan's Self-enquiry only.

Congratulations on *The Mountain Path* which we continue to find enlightening and a great help on our spiritual path . . .

ANNE HALL and E. HALL,
Melbourne.

It is Bhagavan's Grace which enlightens our spiritual paths by various means and instruments.

As to the question re. the Gayatri Mantra it would be more in keeping with the spirit of this mantra to concentrate on the heart which symbolises the sun. In any case the spiritual heart is the safest place for concentration. Mantras are constructed by arranging the letters of the alphabet in certain combinations by a person who knows through revelation the subtler properties of the different sounds. Only adepts who can know the effects produced by sounds and their combinations on all the planes are qualified to pass on a mantra to some devotees for whom the effect will be beneficial. The repetition of a chosen mantra may have far-reaching results either way. The vibrations are meant to purify and unfold higher levels of consciousness so it is very important to know the right pronunciation and be the right recipient.

If you have the feeling that you must go on with Bhagavan's Self-enquiry only it is a sign that His Grace has qualified you to do so. AUM (OM) is the substratum of all sound and can be repeated any time audibly or in silence. This would supply the necessary continuity and relaxation. Bhagavan said that OM is everything. It is another name for Brahman.

EDITOR.

REACHING THE CENTRE?

A sense of weariness and impatience on catching sight suddenly of this mind, which once more off on its self-willed wanderings, was consuming so many precious minutes . . .

Then the flashing on the mind, almost simultaneously, of a second picture — the joyous practice of that surrender to Him. At once the question

arose: but if the surrender is made from this to That, from *here* to *there*, what hope can there be of ever losing the mind, since it is *here*, not the *there* which must of course outlast all else.

Immediately the realization came that, in practising this surrender one must place *Him* most scrupulously at the centre, finding *this* at the periphery. But since whatever is at the centre must certainly be '*this*' a new puzzle appeared: how could there be two *this-es* — amounting to two 'I's'?

And so the question arose for the first time out of direct experience: WHO AM I? No further illumination coming as to this, it was evident one needed to put this question again and again. So then a further question arose: who is to *put* this question while there still seem to be two of us? And the answer was simple: the One at the centre is alone capable of putting it. The one on the periphery must listen wholly attentive.

"Who am I?" what amazing, marvellous words! At once an injunction, a directive, a warning — and a message of love.

So begins a new joyous practice combining both enquiry and surrender in one . . .

S. H., London.

"Surrender is to give oneself up to the original cause of one's being . . . One's source is within oneself" says Sri Ramana Maharshi. In surrender the illusion of a separate individuality evaporates and one merges in the Source which is all-pervasive so that the question of here and there or this and that does not arise and need not concern a seeker beforehand having understood the illusory nature of this which surrenders. It is like waking from a nightmare to discover that one has never ceased to Be the Source.

As to the enquiry 'Who am I?' having understood intellectually that there is only the Self yet there is no doubt that I exist, Who am I, then? It becomes not so much a matter of repeating this question again and again as an almost wordless urge to know. When the intensity reaches the incandescence of white heat and our effort its limit then from the depth of our being something else (Grace) takes over and there is Certainty.

The enquiry starts always from the relative plane of ignorance, from the 'periphery'. 'The One at the Centre' is pure awareness and has no need to put questions. Ultimately there is neither periphery nor centre when realisation dawns but till it does they serve as focussing points like the stick to stir the funeral pyre which also gets consumed in the end.

EDITOR.

SRI RAMANA, THE MOTHER

While going through the old issues of your valuable journal, I noticed in one of the editorials (Oct. 1964), Arthur Osborne specifically mentioning that "Sri Ramanasramam never had an Ashram Mother". But a Sad-Guru is both Father and Mother to the seeker, isn't it so? If so, Sri Bhagavan is also the Ashram Mother. Any comments?

R. KUMAR, Calcutta.

Quite so. The founder-editor also said that Sri Bhagavan was so universal that he was both Father and Mother to His devotees.

EDITOR.

"You have come all the way to Tiruvannamalai for *ekantavasam* (to live in solitude) and that in the immediate presence and vicinity of the guru, yet you do not appear to have obtained that mental quiet; you now want to go elsewhere and from there you will desire to go to some other place. At this rate there will be no end to your travels. You do not realise that it is your mind that drives you in this manner. Control that first and you will be happy wherever you are. You know the story of a man trying to bury his shadow and finding that over every sod of earth he put in the grave he had dug for it, it only appeared again, so that it could never be buried. Such is the case of a person who tries to bury his thoughts. One must therefore attempt to get at the very bottom from which thought springs and root out thought, mind and desire."

— SRI BHAGAVAN in *Crumbs from His Table*.

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SRI RAMANASRAMAM VEDA PATASALA

AN APPEAL

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The Ashram authorities appeal to philanthropists and interested persons for donations to cover the stipends for the candidates.

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May 1, 1971.

PRESIDENT,
Board of Trustees,
SRI RAMANASRAMAM.



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