

# the Mountain path



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

vol. ix, no. 1, january 1972



Vouchsafe the knowledge of Eternal Life that I may learn the glorious Primal Wisdom, and shun the delusion of this world, Oh Arunachala!

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 33

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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. IX

JANUARY 1972

No. 1

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— Editor.

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## The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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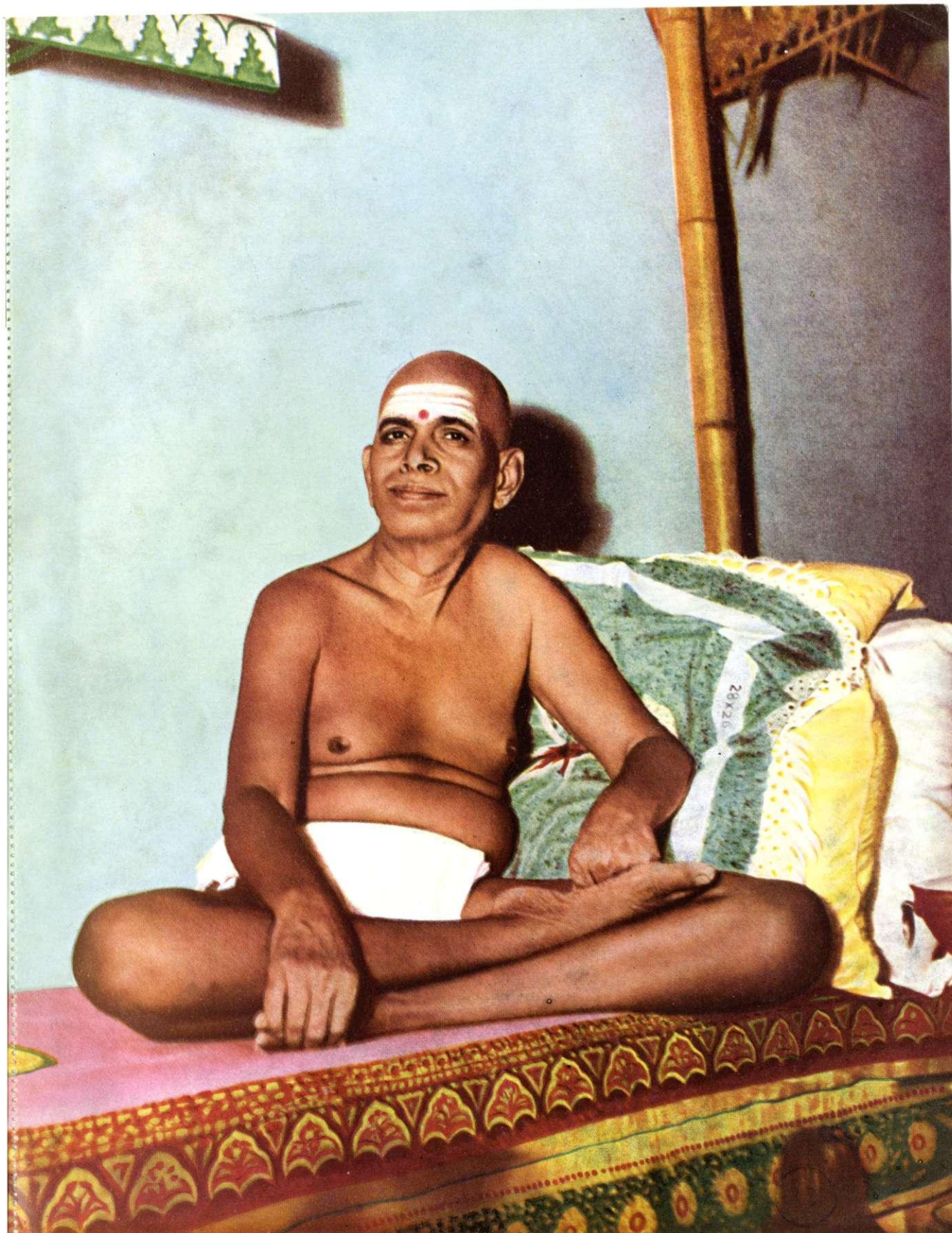
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## THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



## ***The Mountain Path***

Vol. VIII. No. 1, January 1972

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Editor : LUCIA OSBORNE

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Editorial

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# **DRUGS AND SADHANA**

**T**HERE have seldom been so ominous trends as present in our world of today. All sense of security is being swallowed up in the quicksand of the stupendous technological advances with the ever-increasing range of destructive nuclear weapons, reckless exploitation of natural resources, pollution and despoliation of natural beauty and so on. In most spheres of activity, whether in art or science or medicine, what strikes one is imbalance, over-specialization, fragmentation resulting in a lack of syncretism and unity. Amidst increasing comforts there is decreasing happiness or peace of mind.

Modern education shows the same trends of fragmentation and imbalance overfeeding thought and material perception, rational and in closed compartments, often at variance with one another, and starving the spiritual-intuitive function or the most profound urges of the human heart.

Young people, overwhelmed by this disjointed over-specialization where no unity is discernible nor any sense of direction, and where, amidst the breakdown of traditional values, there is confusion as to what is valid or

meaningful in life, are seeking a way out. Jean Houston<sup>1</sup> (Dept. of Philosophy, Marymount College, New York) mentions a noteworthy statement by a young man in reply to her query :

"Why do I want to take LSD ?<sup>2</sup> Because I'm tired of the clock time and ruled space. I feel that my life has been progressively dehumanized by the accelerating frenzy with which the events of time and the places of space bombard my mind. There are days when I just like to stop this time-space hurdy-gurdy and get off. Maybe an LSD trip can take me to that place where it finally slows down and comes to a stop. And what do I expect to find there ? No time, no space, all time, all space, and with it maybe some meaning."

One can understand this so well and sympathise, for has not to most of us the question arisen at one time or another, young or old : "Why were we born ? What do we live for ?" This may be accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of missing what is of utmost importance in life, an often inarticulate metaphysical hunger which among others is most probably the main motivation for the taking of psychedelic drugs as a way out of the morass in which the present social order seems to be bogged with disaster looming ahead.

Rationally and intellectually it is evident that happiness and peace of mind which everyone seeks because it is his true state, is bound up with stilling the mind. Why does one take drugs or drink and seek all sorts of diversions ? It helps to lull the mind and to forget oneself ; forget thoughts which trouble. There is a sort of stillness of the mind, fragmentary, unsteady ; but even so enough to feel happier. When thoughts are drugged they do not assert themselves. The contents of the mind may be magnified till all boundaries of time and space are lost or an adamic primordial view of the world presents itself to the mind or there may be rarely an unsteady glimpse, rather glimmer,

of our ever-present primordial state like a reflection of the moon in its wholeness on a momentary perfectly still surface of water amidst ripples. For the same reason people court sleep in which there are no thoughts unless dreaming, no diversity and the happy remembrance on waking of an untroubled state, though without consciousness. How much more so the bliss experienced in Oneness of Being in pure awareness or *samadhi*, a state also called 'awakened sleep'. Similarly one forgets oneself, that is one's thoughts, when concentrating on some absorbing work or pastime, be it climbing a mountain or reading detective tales—anything to divert the mind from oneself. When something we desire greatly comes to pass happiness is experienced because the contented mind is quiescent for the present till agitated again by other thought-desires.

Quieting the mind with drugs 'to know from within of what the mystics speak', as Huxley maintained or as 'a flight out of selfhood and environment', may be a shortcut, a spurious shortcut bound to end in a blind alley ; for how can one reach out towards the unconditioned perfect Freedom from a state of abject conditioning—dependency on drugs ? And yet there seems to be a positive aspect to it. The editor had occasion to speak to a number of young people who had the experience of psychedelic drugs. From their descriptions of the effects it was fairly obvious that some of these young men had very profound mystical experiences, very rarely a glimmer of Ultimate Reality or Oneness of Being, more often an intermediate state of a profound religious insight still in the realm of duality. Such an experience opens a new vista to the purpose of life and gives it a new direction. R. M. Bucke calls these glimpses induced by drugs 'a kind of bastard and artificial cosmic consciousness just as the drinking of alcohol induces a kind of artificial and bastard joy'.

<sup>1</sup> 'Religious Motivation for Taking LSD', R. M. Bucke Memorial Society for the Study of Religious Experience, Newsletter-Review, Oct. 1967.

<sup>2</sup> LSD = Lysergic Acid Diethylamide.



Let's examine it rationally. Nature's laws work with inexorable mathematical precision and justice. There is effortless order in it. The stupendous advances in modern science are due simply to the discovery of the conditions under which these laws produce certain results and by recreating them produce phenomenal technological achievements. A firebrand appears as a circle of light through movement. Tremendous acceleration of the speed of motion will so to speak solidify the illusion and that is probably how science has come to the conclusion that the atoms and molecules constituting this so seemingly solid universe are only a mass of protons and electrons vibrating with incredible speed. When the vibrations of sound become too fine they appear as silence. In this light one can comprehend why Sri Bhagavan spoke of Silence as being far more powerful than speech. In the same way the extremely subtle nature of transcendent consciousness is spoken of in Buddhism as a void which is capable of holding millions of universes.

In a mind stilled by meditation when even the thought that there is no thought ceases to obstruct our ever-present primordial state, It reveals Itself as *It Is*. When the ingestion of psychedelic substances produces in some a momentary stillness of the mind however unsteady, the same effect will be produced with perfect impartiality depending on how long the mind can remain still in a state of passivity akin to total surrender.

An amusing episode illustrates this impartiality. When Sri Bhagavan was residing on the Hill someone gave *Purnadi Lehiyam* (*hashish*) to the monkeys. Under the action of the drug, their usually so restless minds became quiet, and there they sat a whole row of them, as if blissfully contented, not jumping or even moving their heads, a state so manifestly contrary to their nature.

The experience most probably depends largely on motivation, previous spiritual effort and the presence or absence of concepts, and varies accordingly with different individuals

occurring as a culmination of a prolonged spiritual quest or an answer to a still inarticulate hazy spiritual hunger and search for a meaning to life. The removal of the impurities of the mind or conceptual thought instantaneously reveals the One Substratum of all Being, the transcendental Self, 'the Kingdom of Heaven within you'. Such a glimpse even if only in a split second of Eternity is enough to shake the belief in the reality of the sensory world all the more so, as this is corroborated by modern science which has reduced all matter to one form of energy transforming itself into all this variegated multiplicity. The one Life in all hearts is symbolized by this fundamental unity of all substances. In *The Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* Lama Govinda gives the example of a diamond and coal consisting of the same chemical substance, carbon, in its highest and lowest form. 'The diamond can cut but cannot be cut...' One of the young men who used drugs said that he could watch the arising of everything as creations of his own mind. He could watch his thoughts materialising into forms. Others found after the initial euphoria a setback necessitating increased dosage with varying physiological effects from continued use, ending occasionally in a sort of spiritual *Katzenjammer* (distressed howling of cats; aftermath of a drunken bout). Some described states of acute panic and terror which Huxley also seems to have experienced. For one user the hardest moment after euphoria was coming out of it to return to the same conditioning.

The experiences seem to vary depending on the contents of the mind. Sensory phenomena appear in a new wonderful light and ordinary objects radiate an indescribable sacred beauty. To someone else the same drug gave a violent stomach ache and yet to another a sort of anaesthesia relating to his face only, a most unpleasant experience. A state which transcends the mind cannot be gauged by the mind. The very term 'psychedelic' meaning mind-manifesting is revealing. If the mind is in a state of purity or still, the ever-present

Oneness of Being will shine forth unobstructed.  
There will be nothing illusory to manifest.

Psychedelic drugs, as for instance *Purnadi Lehiyam*, had no effect whatsoever on Sri Bhagavan who used to share whatever was offered Him with those present in the Hall. But those latter were affected in various ways, ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. As pointed out elsewhere Sri Bhagavan did not favour such forcible means. Only through sustained one-pointed heroic effort does the mind become gradually purified or still enough to hold an experience of Reality with lasting wholly beneficial effects.

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## A Song of Milarepa

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Before you have realised Awareness in itself  
Chatter not about the view of Voidness !

All that manifests  
is unreal as an echo,  
Yet never fails to produce  
An effect that corresponds.  
Karmas and virtues, therefore  
Should never be neglected.

Before the great illumination  
Shines forth in your mind, cling not  
To sweet ecstasy and Voidness.  
Though all things are Void-manifesting,  
Never wallow in pleasures, nor expect  
Your troubles to vanish without effort.

Things in themselves are void  
So never cling to Voidness  
Lest you stray into formalism.

When in the tide of mundane bliss  
One's crude, wandering thoughts subside,  
An ecstasy will then arise. But he  
Who is attached to it, will go astray.

From *The Tibetan Vajrayana*.

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It is fairly obvious from observation and from reports of doctors who direct a rehabilitation centre for drug addicts<sup>3</sup> that drugs can have also a deleterious effect physiologically and psychologically resulting in deterioration of mental powers after their initial enhancement. Whenever there is too much interference with the tempo of nature as for instance the indiscriminate use of fertilizers in agriculture to augment and hasten results, the same picture emerges : enhancement followed by exhaustion and impoverishment, be it soil or mental powers. This becomes manifest in people in great restlessness, inability for any sustained effort, inability to make decisions, great apathy as to daily problems even as to personal appearance or cleanliness. Doctors in the American rehabilitation centre<sup>3</sup> hold that drugs can cause muscular inco-ordination, induce intense hallucinations, paranoiac and schizophrenic responses and changes in the chemical processes of the brain cells not excluding the possibility of genetic damage. Be that as it may, in an age of rampant materialism when even in a country like India one comes across teachers lecturing to students on atheism, perhaps in such an age a material impetus is needed to turn one in a new direction after realising that there is a state of sublime relief from the net of entanglements in mundane life and that life has a sublime purpose to fulfil.

Those who are not spiritual enough to turn to *sadhana* through understanding obviously need such an impetus in a material form, and Mother Nature in the process of the eternal flowing of God to man and man to God will provide a means to an ultimate vision which may transform their life.

After a gruelling testing and *sadhana* Milarepa was told by his guru, Marpa the Translator, that the degenerate beings of future generations will not be able to undergo such trials (*tapas*) or make such efforts ; they will respond only to something easy. So now we have instant mind-transforming drugs in conformity with

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<sup>3</sup> *Reader's Digest*, August '71, p. 38.



the spirit of this age of instant gadgets, computers etc., by-passing effort. However, one of the inexorable natural laws is that effortlessness or spontaneity is achieved only with great one-pointed effort. If it applies to finite objects how much more so when the aim is Infinity! "When success comes almost without effort, you may take it," Sri Bhagavan said, "that the necessary effort has been made previously."

There is no easy way to Truth. The elimination of the ego is the prerequisite for enlightenment and this calls for heroic effort, the greatest effort a human being is capable of; it calls for the most arduous self-discipline till the age-long predispositions or *vasanas* are destroyed. Only in a pure mind free from *vasanas* the Self reveals Itself as *It Is*, says Ramana Maharshi. "All the age-long *vasanas* carry the mind outward and turn it to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward. For that effort is necessary. The state of effortlessness and choiceless awareness which is our real nature cannot be reached without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. This is not easy."—*Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His own words* (p. 83).

Certain drugs may provide a man with an intimation of Reality, but this experience is transient and does not still or purify the mind.

On the contrary continued use weakens the will and renders one more unstable than ever in negative passivity. At any rate drugs are a poor substitute for that 'peace which passeth understanding', the sublime happiness and certainty which accompanies all true search and striving for Reality. Man seeks happiness and perfection which is his birthright and true state veiled only by his egocentricity, and he has been provided with genuine paths to attain it.

So long as the mystical experience through mind-altering drugs is only a *primum mobile* to turn one to genuine *sadhana* and there is enough discrimination and strength of will to stop in time all is well or will be. Most of the young people who came to the editor had already discarded drugs and taken to serious *sadhana*. One or two made the impression of mental deterioration and extreme restlessness. Having gained an intimation of Reality through psychedelic drugs, the road bifurcates: the one seemingly wide and easy but leading into dependency and a blind alley, the other narrow and difficult in the beginning but widening progressively till all limitations are transcended. The scriptures describe the first as beginning like nectar and ending in poison and the other as starting like poison and ending in nectar; one leading to fragmentation, the other to Wholeness!

## A Hard Way Indeed

I bring you great and good news. There is a way from the crushing miseries of this transitory life to real happiness and it is open to all. But the way is hard and there is no magical method of making it easy. It means strenuous and constant self-examination (self-enquiry); it means renouncing all that you foolishly prize now—your present self (individuality), in fact, with all the ignorant cravings and blind urges that make it what it is. No one can tread this path for you, neither God nor man; you must tread it for yourself. So begin now. Be alert, and steadfastly alert. Make the

most sustained effort of which you are capable. Let nothing entice you to dally by the wayside; neither self-indulgence, nor the mistaken urge to self-punishment, nor vain metaphysical curiosity, nor the desire for companionship with those not yet ready to enter upon the path. Face uncompromisingly toward the goal. And victory over self—the greatest of all victories, and the key to peace and joy in this life and beyond—will be won.

—*The Way of Truth*  
which forms a part of the Sutta Pitaka.  
A summary.

# No Mirror Can Ever Shave

By C. K. Anavema Reddy

**T**HERE is a small piece of conversation from the life of Sri Bhagavan which, as far as I am aware, has not been recorded. Though brief, it has remained very vivid in my memory.

It was in 1940 that one day, one of the devotees sitting in the hall raised the topic regarding the utility of reading books on religion and philosophy. In reply Sri Bhagavan said : "You wake up in the morning and look into the mirror and the mirror shows you that you have a growth and that you have to get rid of it. You may go on looking into any number of mirrors ; every mirror will tell you the same, but no mirror can ever shave you. You have to shave yourself. Instead of wasting time looking into mirror after mirror it is best to start shaving after having looked into the first mirror and known the truth.

"So also all the books will tell you the same truth, perhaps in slightly different ways. Instead of wasting time reading book after book why not realise for yourself what was obvious from the very first book."

Here it will be interesting to note what Lord Krishna taught Arjuna with regard to the same subject. (*Uttara Gita* : II-40 & 41.)

"He who is always engaged in the study of the four Vedas and the Dharma Sastras and yet does not realise Brahman is like a ladle which does not know the taste of the dainty preparations (which it stirs).

"He who after having studied many Sastras, does not understand the essence carries only the load like a donkey which carries a load of sandalwood without knowing its essence."

Sri Bhagavan had often said that it was fortunate that he had not read any books on our Sastras as they might have given rise to endless doubts and confused him when He first had His Spiritual Experience. Whatever He had read was *after* His Experience.

Lord Krishna too is equally emphatic on this point when he tells Arjuna (*Uttara Gita* : III-2, 3 & 4.) :

"The Puranas, the Mahabharata, the Vedas, many Sastras, worldly life with wife and children are all productive of obstacles to the practice of Yoga.

"He who seeks to know everything saying 'this is known' and 'this is to be known' and so on will never come to the end of the Sastras even if he lives for a thousand years.

"Life being evanescent, the imperishable Brahman is the one thing to be known. Abandoning the collection of Sastras one should pursue what is the truth."

These words of Sri Bhagavan are pregnant with deep significance and are capable of being elaborately commented upon.

"You wake up—you look—the mirror shows you—you have a growth—to get rid of—instead of wasting time—start shaving."

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 By 'Sein'
 

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# The Greatness of Sacred Ashes (Vibhuthi)

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**I**T is difficult for the mind engrossed in forms to conceive of a formless state. The aim of all scriptures is to turn the mind inwards towards realising such a state. Sri Ramana Maharshi said that somehow a beginning has to be made towards the path of Truth and effort made to bring about such a turning point. Scriptures, ritual worship, revelations of sages and their teachings have this aim for their objectives. They are thus not goals but signposts to direct the mind towards the Ultimate in stages according to the aptitude of the seeker. Gradually the mind becomes attenuated. For the gross mind, gross forms are necessary for worship ; when it becomes subtler, *rupa-arupa* (with and without form) worship takes its place. Hence the importance of the Linga worship whose *rupa-arupa* is symbolical of the Oneness of Spirit and Matter, the Self immanent in all manifestations.

Similarly *vibhuti*, the sacred ashes, is one of the most sacred means of *rupa-arupa* worship. It represents Lord Siva and denotes primarily destruction (of *samsara* and *karma*) which is the greatest good or wealth—hence its literal meaning *aisvarya* or *bhuti* (wealth). Lord Siva's boon to his devotees is always *vairagya* (dispassion) and destruction of all limitations—the destruction of non-existent illusion. Everyone can apply *vibhuti* irrespective of caste, creed or religion. It has the profound symbolism of reminding one of the transience of all created things turning to ashes, an incessant process of katabolism ending in earth and ashes, the last stage of burning.

*Vibhuti* indicates *kala* (time). It does not stop there, but reminds us to make efforts to reach *Kalathitha* (Lord Siva—the destroyer of time), turning our mind in the right direction to the Unchangeable amidst change. Fire inherent in all objects becomes visible only in objects consumed by fire. It is Formlessness manifested amidst forms.



In *Arunachala Mahatmyam* by Easwara-swamy, he says that as fire first makes the cowdung cake take the form of its flame and then remains as sacred ash, so does the Lord give His form to one who attains Him in the fire of meditation and merging in Him remains as Infinite Wisdom.

Saint Jnanasambandha composed a song in praise of the sacred ash, *Tirunitruppathigam*, in which he says that sacred ash is the true form of Lord Siva. The same truth is expressed by the great sage Tayumanavar. When a disciple of this sage asked him how to attain Salvation, he was told to be always thinking of death. This would make him one-pointed and help to attain the goal. The wearing of *vibhuti* induces the thought of the end of the body reduced to ashes.

The following passages from the printed 'Talks' of Sri Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peetam are interesting:

"*Vibhuti* (sacred ash) is held as most sacred and one should necessarily have it smeared over the body (the whole of it).

*Vibhuti* in Sanskrit means wealth, and no wonder—it gives all kinds of wealth to one who wears it.

*Vibhuti*, which is actually the ash of cowdung, by itself a great cleanser, can remove the most obnoxious odour conceivable, say, even that of such a sharp-smelling substance as kerosene.

The very colour of *vibhuti*, which is white, signifies so much. It signifies nothing less than the *Paramatman* (Supreme Self). As the Gita verse states: 'Just as fire reduces firewood to ashes, *jnana* destroys all *karma*.' The sacred ash symbolizes the *jnana* which remains after all *karma* is burnt out. Anything put into a fire may turn black for a while but eventually it has to turn white. So whiteness is the ultimate state. *Ishwara* (God) is the great *Vibhuti* and has the same quality as the *vibhuti* we smear over the body. Hence the *vibhuti* we smear over the body will take us to Him.

The smearing of sacred ashes reminds us of a great principle: that whether one is a prince or pauper, one has to end up as a handful of ashes. All life is *maya*, but beginningless.

In the Gita verse quoted, the meaning driven home is not that nothing remains after *karma* is burnt out, but that what survives is the Supreme Self (when everything is put into the fire of *jnana*). So the wearing of *vibhuti* emphasises the reality of the Self and the unreality of the world and its objects."

The example of Sri Bhagavan, whose daily routine included applying *vibhuti* after his bath every morning has a special significance for his devotees and *sadhakas*, since He did not particularly advocate orthodoxy or its opposite.

Sri Bhagavan also used to take and wear *vibhuti* and *kumkum*<sup>1</sup> brought to Him on a plate after *Arati* at the Mother's Shrine on important occasions or in connection with special rituals at the Ashram. One vividly recalls Sri Bhagavan's appearance on such occasions and his characteristic posture showing attentiveness and adding dignity to the solemn scene. He used to tilt his head backwards and with a steady and even pressure of the fingers rub the *vibhuti* on the forehead till a uniform and fairly thick coating was obtained. (The tilting of the head is to avoid *vibhuti* falling to the ground which is considered improper.)

The hospital room in the Ashram in which the third operation for sarcoma on Sri Bhagavan's arm took place was not equipped with the articles of Sri Bhagavan's daily use. The attendants forgot all about *vibhuti* probably assuming that it was not needed at such a time. But Sri Bhagavan asked one of his attendants whether he did not have *vibhuti* with him (*sadhus* generally carry a tiny bag of it in the folds of their dress). The attendant did have his *vibhuti* and Sri Bhagavan applied it as usual!

<sup>1</sup> As may be seen from the frontispiece of this issue.

This extract is from an article in the  
*Newsletter Review of the R. M. Bucke*  
 Memorial Society for the Study of Religious  
 Experience in October 1967.

The author from the Department of  
 Psychiatry, McGill University, Montreal,  
 is one of the editors.

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By Raymond Prince

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## Deliriums, Drugs and Divination

THE world view of most cultures includes belief in the existence of a spirit realm. Among their many powers, spirits are considered to be omniscient and to have access to information which can promote or hinder human endeavours. At the same time they are curiously dependent upon mortals for sustenance through animal sacrifices and, for their well-being, upon human adulation.

If we try to imagine the origins of such beliefs and if we study the mechanisms by which they are perpetuated in contemporary cultures, we are impressed not so much with the deliberate use of mushrooms or psychedelic plants but by the role of altered states of consciousness that are imposed involuntarily. Dreams play some role, but these are pallid experiences compared with the vivid psychedelic experiences associated with infectious diseases.

In our world of inoculations and antibiotics we are scarcely aware of the importance and the terror of infectious diseases as they afflict unprotected communities. And in some cultures they have marked religious connotations. Certainly my own work among the Yoruba of Nigeria indicates that much of their spirit lore is supported and elaborated by psychedelic experiences during smallpox and other deliriums....

We sometimes forget that bacteria and other micro organisms causing infectious diseases are themselves plant forms or at least are close kin to plants and fungi. Is it possible that just as certain plants and fungi produce psychedelic substances, so deliriums associated with infectious diseases are due to as yet unidentified psychedelic substances produced by bacteria and viruses?....

In addition to deliriums, of course, primordial man must have made unsought contact with the spirit world during functional psychoses and during other altered states of consciousness generated, for example, by exhaustion and starvation on hunting expeditions (Ludwig, 1968).

I suggest then that experiences during deliriums and psychoses and other spontaneous alterations of consciousness must be assigned major importance in the perpetuation and also perhaps in the genesis of primitive religions. It is also possible that such experiences gave rise to the generalization that not only illnesses but other misfortunes too were due to spirit intervention. From this position it is a short step to the conclusion that in order to avert or alleviate the calamity, the sufferer must treat with the world of spirits.

But how was this to be managed? Was the priest to await his own delirium or psychosis to enter that fantastic realm? The solution for most cultures is divination—a heterogeneous collection of techniques which permit certain individuals to communicate at will with the realm of spirit.

Not all divination techniques involve an alteration of consciousness and the experience of actually entering the spirit realm. Most forms depend upon certain established tokens....

The transcendental systems alone involve an alteration of consciousness. These altered states of consciousness may be produced by the psychedelic drugs we are here considering or they may take the form of trance states produced by drumming and dancing. The trancer is often thought to be possessed by the spirit which has come to give information about the resolution of the supplicant's problem. Sometimes the spirit speaks "in tongues" so that the message must be interpreted by a third party.

Psychedelic substances have been widely used around the world for transcendental forms of divination. The soma of prehistoric India is perhaps the most famous example, and the use of hashish in contemporary India and by some Sufi groups in North Africa and the Near East also comes to mind. But the Amerindians of the New World are perhaps the most enthu-

siastic users. An astonishing variety of plants were described by early explorers and many are still in use today<sup>1</sup>.... The first point that strikes the reader is the similarity of their effects upon the users. Whether *ayahuasca* is being described, or *peyote* or *ololiuhqui*, the effects are remarkably similar. Also the similarity of the effects to the deliriums of infectious diseases should be noted. Sometimes the diviner himself ingests the active preparation. After his hallucinatory experience, he tells the supplicant how to solve his problem....

"In the Northeast of Peru, healers administer the beverage to sick people at the end of which time the cause of illness or else the person who has inflicted harm was said to be known. Those who have taken *ayahuasca* have stated with absolute conviction that there was no doubt that they had seen the person who had robbed or perjured them."

"Repeatedly I heard how in a vision induced by drinking the tea prepared from the *liana* the patient had perceived the specific plant needed for his cure, had later searched and found it in the jungle and had subsequently recovered. To the enigmatic mind of the Indian, *ayahuasca* opens the gate to the healing properties of the forces of nature at whose mercy he lives...."

#### SUMMARY

Psychedelic substances clearly have religious implications for many cultures, particularly Amerindian groups. The world views of most cultures include the belief that there exists a spirit realm which may exert a potent influence over the world of men. Of major importance in the genesis and support of this belief is the experience of the spirit world during deliriums, psychosis and other unsolicited alterations of consciousness.

<sup>1</sup> For more details and enumeration see R. M. Bucke Memorial Society for the Study of Religious Experience, Oct. 1967, p. 8.





## CHADWICK

### A Western Seeker Who Found His True Home

By N. R. S. Manian

Sri Bhagavan had this to say of Chadwick :

“ Chadwick was with us before, he was one of us. He had some desire to be born in the West, and that he was now fulfilled.”

Coming from Sri Bhagavan who was not known to make such remarks as to personal matters, it is an exceptional statement.

This explains why Chadwick was truly at home with Sri Bhagavan and Arunachala.

NOT all Westerners who came to Sri Bhagavan became as staunch devotees as Major A. W. Chadwick, later on known as Sadhu Arunachala. And he was the first to stay on permanently in the Ashram. From 1935 and until his end in 1962 he had never once left India. As a Major in the British Army he had seen service in theatres of war and was employed for some time in Chile. When he built his own room it became the first private room inside the Ashram proper.

Reading through Paul Brunton's *A Search in Secret India* he decided that Sri Bhagavan was his Guru and stuck to him steadfastly and loyally ever since. When he first arrived at the Ashram he felt remarkably at home and this is how he describes his feelings on seeing Sri Bhagavan : “ I felt the tremendous peace of his presence, his graciousness. It was not as though I were meeting him for the first time. It seemed that I had always known him, though I had not been conscious of it at the time. Now I know.”

Genial and popular among devotees he is remembered as an outstanding devotee, a perfect *sadhaka* and a source of strength for the Ashram administration. A tall and imposing figure with a beaming smile and pleasant greeting for everyone whom he chanced to pass by in the morning hours in the Ashram, he was also known to maintain a strict schedule of reading, work, meditation and other activities with the punctuality characteristic of the West. He would not be disturbed from his routine on any account and once refused to come out and meet a governor who wished to see him !

The Ashram remembers his name for many things of lasting value. One is the starting of a regular Sri Chakra Puja at the Shrine of the Mother. The other is the revival of the *Veda Patasala* which had stopped functioning soon after the *Brahma Nirvana* of Sri Bhagavan. Another achievement of his was his translating the works of Sri Bhagavan into English verse.

These he showed Sri Bhagavan who made corrections. The same have now been further improved as to style and adapted in Arthur Osborne's *Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

Even before coming to the Ashram Chadwick had practised meditation sporadically for quite some years. To quote his own words: "I had argued that since God had created the world, it was only out of Himself that He could have done so, for if there was some other apart from Himself then He could not be God, undisputed and omnipotent. So I decided that the seeker himself was God, or as Sri Bhagavan puts it, the Self. My method of meditation then, was to make the mind cease from thinking as an individual and just rest in its Godhead." Here was no beginner but an advanced seeker who had arrived at the Advaitic conviction on his own and was ripe to practise the unique method of Self-enquiry as taught by Sri Bhagavan.

Chadwick overcame many difficulties which a born Westerner faces in India. one of which is sitting on the floor! He devised a meditation belt which consisted of a piece of cotton cloth brought round from the back across raised knees. With this support he could sit comfortably on the floor for long periods. Ashram life he adopted immediately and with perfect ease, pursuing a rigorous sadhana which included wearing *vibhuti* and *kumkum*. His interest in the Veda, particularly its chanting, and *puja* (which he wanted to be performed with meticulous attention to detail) and other Hindu rituals was not casual but abiding. He proved more zealous about these than many a Hindu devotee.

Chadwick also took to doing *namaskaram* (falling prostrate in salutation) before Sri Bhagavan as other devotees but not before passing through a period of hesitation. His point was that he was a Westerner not accustomed to such a form of salutation and further what Bhagavan wanted after all was an attitude of surrender in the mind. Vain

repetition of a mere formality was not necessary. He therefore simply stood before Sri Bhagavan with folded hands. Other devotees were not satisfied and wanted to bring him in line. Choosing a convenient time they got an explanation from Sri Bhagavan himself who remarked that every *namaskaram* at the feet of the *jnani* was so many nails driven into the coffin of the ego which is the trouble with all. This convinced Chadwick. He did the *namaskaram* all right but at a place of his own choice in the Hall and not right in front of Sri Bhagavan, in the full view of others. One day however he had to do it just like others since the Hall was very crowded. Sri Bhagavan noticing this laughed aloud and pointed it out to others making a joke about the space occupied by Chadwick's tall frame while he did the *namaskaram*. Chadwick was rid of all hesitation or shyness and actually advocated the practice thereafter. He says: "Prostration done in sincerity and with real surrender was undoubtedly accepted in the same spirit. Bhagavan would say 'They don't know it, but every time they prostrate to me I prostrate to them in my heart'. Would not anybody be made humble after hearing this?"

In close contact with Sri Bhagavan from the earliest years one could see him among the little group who stayed in His presence till 9 p.m. The quiet hour of the night when there were no visitors and when most of the inmates would have retired was very precious and Sri Bhagavan mostly silent appeared even more radiant than during the day. The mode and depth of his dedication to the Master could be gauged from what he said immediately after the *Brahma Nirvana* of Sri Bhagavan. When others hastened to see the Master's body he remained quiet and said: "This is not the Bhagavan I want to see." But Chadwick's beautiful description of Sri Bhagavan's physical body is no less interesting: "Bhagavan was a very beautiful person; he shone with a visible light or aura. He had the most delicate hands I have ever seen with which

alone he could express himself, one might almost say talk. His features were regular and the wonder of his eyes was famous. His body was well formed and of only medium height but this was not apparent as his personality was so dominant that one looked upon him as tall."

Here is Chadwick's interesting account of the installation of the *Sri Chakra Meru* in the Mother's Shrine, *puja* to which is regularly done every Friday, Full Moon day and the first day of the Tamil month. "On the last night before the final day (of the *Kumbhabhishekam* of the Mother's temple) Sri Bhagavan went in procession, opening the doors of the new hall and temple, and passed through into the inner shrine where he stood for some five or ten minutes with both hands placed in blessing on the *Sri Chakra*. I happened that night to be at his side the whole time. This was unusual as I usually avoided taking a prominent part in such things but liked to watch them from a distance. However something made me stay by him and on account of that I am able to testify to his deep interest in the temple and especially in the *Sri Chakra*. It was because of this knowledge that I was instrumental after Sri Bhagavan's passing away in persuading the Ashram authorities to start the *Sri Chakra Puja*. When someone remarked how magnificent it had been and what a good thing it would be if such *pujas* could be performed regularly, Sri Bhagavan replied: 'Yes, but who will see to this?' As I have already said, it is now being done and undoubtedly has the blessings of Sri Bhagavan."

It looked as if the Vedic chanting done during Sri Bhagavan's lifetime might come to an end simply because there was no one to carry it on. Since the *parayana* was a welcome time for meditation its ending was regrettable and Chadwick averted the danger by organising a *Patasala*, a traditional boarding school, where the boys learn to recite the Vedas as well as English with some general education. It was a great expense but Chadwick collected dona-

tions for it so that it should not be a burden on the Ashram. It is being run to this day successfully.

A great contribution of Chadwick's is the help he rendered to the Ashram administration in seeing to it that the *Will* of Sri Bhagavan was respected and its provisions carried out against a storm of controversy and challenges legal and otherwise. He recognised the *Will* as nothing less than the Will of the Master whose actions could not be taken lightly. "There were strong reasons for making the Will to safeguard the future of the Ashram. It was executed in consequence of the ardent prayer of a number of disciples and devotees, who having witnessed one protracted litigation were naturally apprehensive of similar litigations in the future, and time fully justified this apprehension." Though he was fundamentally a *sadhaka* from first to last he had no hesitation in his efforts to put the administration in a position of stability. It was not material activity really since Sri Bhagavan had declared that those who were looking after the activities of the Ashram were only doing his will.

Chadwick once asked Sri Bhagavan about a novel method of suicide which he thought would ensure Liberation. "I had been cycling round Arunachala and on meeting a bus the thought occurred to me: 'Why shouldn't I concentrate on the Self and, while so doing, throw myself in front of the bus so as to attain *moksha*?' I told Sri Bhagavan when I got back, but he said it would not work. Even though I tried to concentrate on the Self, thoughts would spring up involuntarily as I fell; the mind would become very active and owing to the thoughts life would continue and I should take another body."

Chadwick's identification with the Ashram was total. He regarded it his duty to defend when necessary the position of the Ashram. He was quick and sharp in his retorts when there was any misrepresentation of the Master's teaching. Typical of this is his reaction to an



article by Somerset Maugham which contained the following passage : " When one considers how full the world is of sorrow and suffering, one can hardly refrain from thinking that Brahman might have done better to leave well alone. . . . To Maharshi the world was a place of suffering and sorrow." Chadwick says : " Really Mr. M, is this your idea of Advaita ? . . . What absolute rubbish ! Bhagavan always insisted that there was nothing wrong with the world. All the trouble lay with us. On reading S.M. one comes to the conclusion that he has again succeeded as a first class writer of fiction !"

His *samadhi* is right inside the Ashram grounds which is something special again. Besides his room is a small structure, the *samadhi* of his ego which he built symbolising the crucifixion of the ego which Sri Bhagavan explained was the significance of Christ's crucifixion and the essence of Christianity.

His last moments at the Christian Mission Hospital, Vellore, were as thrilling as revealing. In a condition of delirium he could still recognise people around. When speech had failed him even the previous day he could clearly

reply ' Yes ' when asked by a German devotee (Hugo Maier) present whether he felt Sri Bhagavan's presence. It was again a clear ' No ' when he was asked whether Sri Bhagavan was helping him. He enquired about the Ashram President and his family. And just before the end Chadwick said in a clear voice, " It is Easter ! " <sup>1</sup> When reminded it was not yet Easter he said again in a clear voice with a beaming expression on his face, " I know it will be still five days ; but it *is* Easter." His eyes closed never to open again ! His body was brought to the Ashram to be interred with rituals similar to those observed in the case of a Hindu *sadhu*.

<sup>1</sup> Easter is the day of resurrection of Christ after the crucifixion. Christ was crucified on a Friday and the resurrection came on Sunday. Resurrection symbolises the rise of the Real and crucifixion the death of the unreal. The pure ' I ' of Being is resurrection. The lesser ' I ' or ego is to be crucified in order that the real ' I ' may be revealed.

See *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 86 :

" The Master gave the true significance of the Christian faith thus :

CHRIST is the ego.

The CROSS is the body.

When the ego is crucified, and it perishes, what survives is the Absolute Being (God), (cf. " I and my Father are one ") and this glorious survival is called RESURRECTION."

## Stillness

By ' Siva '

**W**HEN the mind by realising its distinction from the concepts it has formed turns away from them by the inner quest of " who am I ? " the immediate answer will be silence—stillness, pure and simple. By giving one's full attention to it, that very stillness will still all mental activities and purge one's awareness from all diverse conceptions by dissolving them. Stillness alone and not ' stilling ' mental activity can silence and free the mind from its self-imposed thought-eradication. Stillness is a Presence. Thus being no concept itself it alone can free from concepts. It is the outstretched hand of the inner Guru to which the mind should hold on. Thus holding on—this giving

oneself to it—that listening deeply into it—is *surrender*, a state in which everything is unquestionable. The stiller the mind the more joyful peace will dawn and ultimately getting absorbed into it. It knows itself as that Bliss of Infinite Being.

Thus the way is : ' Be still and know that ' I-AM ' (is) God '.

As the seer turns to himself the seen dissolves into himself—Oneness is !

Sri Bhagavan has said :

" There is no answer for ' Who Am I ? ' The very asking is the answer."

# Blessed are the Meek

By Murdoch Kirby

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth....  
And the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters....  
And God created Man in His own image."

Now dwelt man, hunting, sowing, hating, loving.  
Some loved hearth and home, plough and golden grain.  
Their fellows girt sword to thigh and rode,  
Sharp spear in hand, against their fellow man.

Man.

"Ever so : The farmsteads are fired, the reek of blood,  
The cry of woman and babe rings through a hate-wrought earth  
And tear-torn heaven.  
Lust and might prevail as ever."

Spirit.

"Lo, the sharper the spear, the fiercer the sword,  
The less of God in the heart of the wielder.  
Therefore they must die.  
He that draweth the sword shall perish by the sword."

It was so.

Gone the cries of hate.  
Rust the swords.  
Dust the men.  
And the quiet steadfast plough drove again over a hate-torn land.  
The grain sprang green — and gold — and harvest red.  
The hearth fires burned in the gentle homes of man.

Ever it was so.

Man saw the nations and armies rise,  
Saw the flaunt of gold and glitter of the sword,  
Heard the pealing trumpets, the blast of anger from the gun-maws of war,  
Saw the poison of man's hate drive out across the nations.

And ever hate died.  
 King, priest, soldier, tyrant,  
 Ever they died.  
 Ever in a while their works died with them.  
 Ever the gentle of heart, the patient, the brotherly,  
 The enduring, the steadfast, the indomitable terrible Meek  
 Rode over and ploughed into earth's forgetfulness man's legacy of hate.  
 Ever the quiet homes rose again  
 Ever the fatherhood, the motherhood and the babes

Truly a little child shall lead man.  
 Truly the sword shall yet be beaten into the plough-share.  
 For the plough is mightier than the sword.  
 For at long last the lion shall lay down with the lamb.

Blessed are ye — ye women and children.  
 Blessed the toiler, the ploughman and the reaper.  
 Blessed all patient hearts and they who love.  
 Blessed all ye who are meek, for the earth.  
 Shall be yours and the fulness thereof.

*(Acknowledgement with sincere thanks to White Eagle and the  
 White Eagle Lodge at Liss, Hampshire, England).*

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## The Long Way Home

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By Wei Wu Wei

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Which is the best way ?

*From where to where ?*

From where I am to where I belong.

*To where is that ?*

Let us call it 'home'.

*Blind ? or blindfold ?*

What do you mean ?

*Looking for where you are by going else-  
 where is a long way 'home'.*

But how can I be at-home when what I AM  
 is absent ?

*Absence is only relative to 'presence' :  
 Absolutely I Am neither absent nor present.*

So what-I-AM is never absent ?

*Nor present. To what could I be either ?*

But how can that be ?

*How can that not be ? Can you be either  
 absent from, or present to, what you are ?*

You mean.....

*I do.*

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# Sayings of Sri Ramana Maharshi

**B**HAGAVAN came across in *Ramana Lila*,<sup>1</sup> Venkatakrishnayya's poetic description of Bhagavan's travel from Madurai, that in the *vimanam* of his body he was traversing *daharakasa* or *chit akasa* and read it out to us. This reminded Bhagavan of certain incidents in the past year and he said: "Once when we were at Skandashram, in the month of *Thai* (December-January) we set out in a party of forty or fifty for going round the Hill one night. We all had a heavy meal before starting, with *puri*, etc., and tea on top. They had taken in addition *marundu* (*lehiyam* with opium in it as an ingredient). By the time we came near here, a Nambudiri, Atmananda Swami, began saying, 'I feel I am floating on *kshira sagaru* (ocean of milk) and that a ship is taking me

along that ocean'. Another said he felt that he was in the air flying in an aeroplane. Like that, Venkatakrishnayya says, 'I was travelling in *daharakasa*!' Meanwhile Ramanatha Dikshitar came into the hall (he has been with Bhagavan since 1912) and Bhagavan said, on seeing him: "He must have been with us on that occasion." On another occasion, when we were at Virupakshi Cave, we had set out to go round the Hill and Chidambaram Subrahmanya Sastri was the leader of the party. When we came somewhere near here, he proposed that each one should lecture for an hour going round the Hill, on '*Guru Bhakti*' and Ramanathan's was the first in turn. They had

<sup>1</sup> Sri Bhagavan's biography in Telugu.

all taken *marundu* Ramanathan began his lecture and elaborated his theme that Tiruvannamalai and Ramana, Chidambaram and Lord Nataraja, and the body and the Self are the same and went on elaborating the theme and advancing ingenious arguments in support of the same with such fervour and spirit that he far exceeded his time limit. When he was asked to stop, he pleaded piteously for a little more time. So he was allowed to continue. Even after he had taken two hours he would not finish and he had to be stopped and another was asked to speak. It was wonderful the way Ramanathan spoke. None would have expected it of him. It was the next day he composed the song *Thiruchuzhi Nathanaikkandene*."

*Day by Day with Bhagavan.* 141

\* \* \*

DEVOTEE : If one is to withdraw oneself, why is there the world ?

MAHARSHI : Where is the world and where does one go withdrawing oneself ? Does one fly in an aeroplane beyond space ? Is it withdrawal ? The fact is this : the world is only an idea. What do you say ? Are you within the world or is the world within you ?

DEVOTEE : I am in the world. I am part of it.

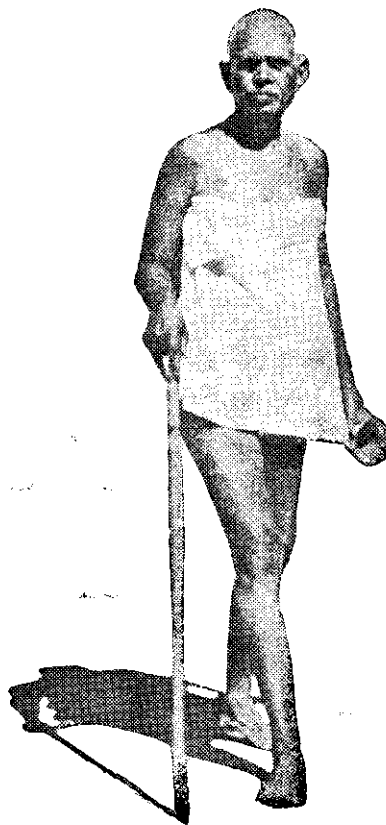
MAHARSHI : That is the mistake. If the world were to exist apart from you, does it come and tell you that it exists ? No, you see it exist. You see it when you are awake and not when asleep. If it exists apart from you, it must tell you so and you must be aware of it even in your sleep.

DEVOTEE : I become aware of it in my *jagrat* (waking state).

MAHARSHI : Do you become aware of yourself and then of the world ? Or do you become aware of the world and then of yourself ? Or do you become aware of both simultaneously ?

DEVOTEE : I must say simultaneously.

MAHARSHI : Were you or were you not, before becoming aware of yourself ? Do you



admit your continued existence before and when you become aware of the world ?

DEVOTEE : Yes.

MAHARSHI : If always existing yourself, why are you not aware of the world in sleep if it exists apart from the Self ?

DEVOTEE : I become aware of myself and of the world also.

MAHARSHI : So you become aware of yourself. Who becomes aware of whom ? Are there two selves ?

DEVOTEE : No.

MAHARSHI : So you see that it is wrong to suppose that awareness has passing phases. The Self is always aware. When the Self identifies itself as the seer it sees objects. The

creation of the subject and the object is the creation of the world. Subjects and objects are creations in Pure Consciousness. You see pictures moving on the screen in a cinema show. When you are intent on the pictures you are not aware of the screen. But the pictures cannot be seen without the screen behind. The world stands for the pictures and Consciousness stands for the screen. The Consciousness is pure. It is the same as the Self which is eternal and unchanging. Get rid of the subject and object and pure Consciousness will alone remain.

DEVOTEE : But the world exists in my sleep even though I am not aware.

MAHARSHI : What is the proof of its existence ?

DEVOTEE : Others are aware of it.

MAHARSHI : Do they say so to you when you are in sleep or do you become aware of others who see the world in your sleep ?<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

“The mind should be made to rest in the Heart till the destruction of the ‘I’-thought which is of the form of ignorance, residing in the Heart. This itself is *jnana* ; this alone is *dhyana* also. The rest are a mere digression of words, digression of the texts. Thus the scriptures proclaim. Therefore, if one gains the skill of retaining the mind in one’s Self through some means or other, one need not worry about other matters. The scriptures teach in different modes. After analysing all those modes the great ones declare this to be the shortest and the best means.”<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \*

DEVOTEE : Should we read *Gita* once in a while ?

MAHARSHI : Always.

DEVOTEE : May we read the Bible ?

MAHARSHI : The Bible and the *Gita* are the same.

DEVOTEE : The Bible teaches that a man is born in sin.

MAHARSHI : The man is sin. There was no man-sense in deep sleep. The body-thought brings out the idea of sin. The birth of thought is itself sin.

DEVOTEE : The Bible says that the human soul may be lost.

MAHARSHI : The ‘I’-thought is the ego and that is lost. The real ‘I’ is “I am that I AM.”<sup>4</sup>

\* \* \*

DEVOTEE : What should one think of when meditating ?

MAHARSHI : What is meditation ? It is expulsion of thoughts. You are perturbed by thoughts which rush one after another. Hold on to one thought so that others are expelled. Continuous practice gives the necessary strength of mind to engage in meditation. Meditation differs according to the degree of advancement of the seeker. If one is fit for it one might directly hold the thinker ; and the thinker will automatically sink into his source, namely Pure Consciousness. If one cannot directly hold the thinker one must meditate on God ; and in due course the same individual will have become sufficiently pure to hold the thinker and sink into absolute Being.<sup>5</sup>

\* \* \*

MAHARSHI : Free-will and destiny are ever-existent. Destiny is the result of past action ; it concerns the body. Let the body act as may suit it. Why are you concerned with it ? Why do you pay attention to it ? Free-will and Destiny last as long as the body lasts. But wisdom (*jnana*) transcends both. The Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance. Should anything happen, it happens as the result of one’s past actions, of divine will and of other factors.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 429-31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 428.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

# Garland of Guru's Sayings

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SRI MURUGANAR

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186.

He is the guru who, removing  
Pain and weakness, can confer  
Moksha's bliss on those caught  
In karma's coils woven by deeds  
With passion fraught,  
Reach him and beseech his help.

187.

The guru whose inner light bestows  
Visible light on sun, moon and fire  
Reveals the falseness of the world and the  
body  
To those who loud proclaim  
The reality of objects.

188.

Swiftly by his glance the guru  
Destroys without destroying  
The ego false but seeming true  
And so proves the falseness of the world  
And reveals the Self's reality.  
(The ego merges in the Self as the river in  
the ocean).

189.

The elephant in his dream beholds  
The lion that wakes him up from sleep.  
Just so the seeker in his dream-like  
Waking life of ignorance sees  
The guru and wakes from slumber dark.

190.

The deer caught in the tiger's jaws  
Can never escape ;  
Even so those on whom has fallen  
The true guru's glance of grace  
Will never be forsaken.  
They are fated to forgo their ego  
And know the supreme Oneness of pure  
awareness.

191.

When two pairs of eyes—  
The teacher's who can teach through silence  
And his worthy pupil's—  
Meet in consent,  
Spoken words are a mere waste.  
This look bestows the light destroying  
And surviving everything else.

192.

Grasping aright the ineffable grace  
Of the supreme preceptor  
Not entangled in the illusory world  
Standing there in front,  
Abidance in mere Being is true bliss.

193.

For those who seek eternal life  
The assurance stands :  
The senses five retracted tortoise-like,  
The mind returning homeward to the Self  
And dwelling there is bliss.

194.

Deeming these countless things as pictures  
In a dream without existence  
Apart from the beholder, shun  
This phantom world of names and forms  
And dwell in the blissful being  
Of awareness.

(Turning away from the world, looking  
within and realizing one's own being as  
awareness-bliss, one comes to see the world,  
not as so many names and forms, but as  
being-awareness-bliss.)

# The Concept of Progress

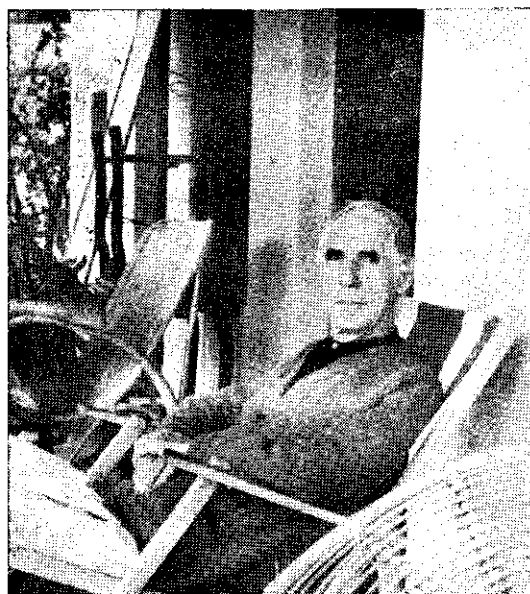
By Arthur Osborne

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**A Summary of the Miller lecture delivered by our founder-editor at the University of Madras putting this question in its right perspective. The author points out how what is considered progress in one sphere is often accompanied by regress in other spheres of more vital importance.**

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**O**NE is apt to forget that the concept of progress is a child of the nineteenth century. Eighteenth century thinkers as recent and reputed as Voltaire in France and Dr. Johnson in England had never heard of it. Nor had the ancients, whether in India, Greece or Egypt. And that is curious because if they



really were evolved from savagery, as the advocates of the theory used to hold, they would surely have been very conscious of the fact, but not at all. On the contrary, they had great respect for their ancestors and an almost guilty feeling of being unworthy successors of them.

In the West today all the gods have failed. The great plague is meaninglessness. People feel that there is no meaning or purpose in life, nothing worth living for or dying for. How then can they believe that they have progressed? Progressed to what? To this? What now have they to be proud of? More and more of them, in quest of meaning, are tempted to turn back to their own lost spiritual values or to the eternal values of Vedanta or Zen.

Science and mechanisation are a source of nervous tension rather than pride now that they have created the constant threat of destruction hanging over mankind. Historians are discovering that civilizations have fallen as well as risen and are speaking now only of cyclic progress. Even though people refuse to speak of the nuclear terror, it haunts their minds. Apart from that, too, many are finding a mecha-

nised way of life inhuman and hateful now that they have got it and are turning nostalgically to the natural ways of living of former centuries and undeveloped peoples, but find it impossible to get back to them.

That brings up the general question of the arts. A queer kind of progress that does not include art or poetry or music ! No one, I think, contends that we write better poems now-a-days than the Vedic hymns or the Greek or Hindu epics. Even the civilization of Western Europe does not claim, in its brief life, to have advanced beyond Dante or Shakespeare in poetry or drama. A modern dramatist can use a fountain-pen whereas Shakespeare had to use a quill ; but which is better, to write a modern play with a fountain-pen or Hamlet with a quill ?

Moreover, poetry is not divorced from religion. No one has progressed beyond the Vedic hymns from the Upanishads. The painters on cave walls of twenty five thousand years ago are thought now to have been shamans, and the shaman was a man who knew trance and ecstasy and had access to higher and lower states of being. Actually it is self-evident that in religion the general tendency is not to progress but decline. Every religion with a historical point of origin was at its highest at that point. No religion claims to have progressed beyond it. Buddha is said to have declared that his own time was the highest point in Buddhism and that thereafter it would gradually decline, and Mohammed similarly ; and none of their followers have ever denied that so it has been. Christians also revere the early church as the summit. Nor can any theory be put forward of a cyclic progress, new each religion being on a higher plane than the previous. The very idea is absurd, because religions are not on higher or lower planes but enunciate in one form or another the timeless Truth. And in any case they are not spaced out in history in a way that would make such a theory possible, most of them being more or less contemporary. Even

in the *Sanatana Dharma* Sri Krishna announced the same downward tendency when he told Arjuna that the imperishable truth which he was teaching him had been taught long ago to the ancient royal sages but had been lost through long lapse of time.<sup>1</sup> The Truth is imperishable, but because of their impurities, men lose their comprehension of it through long lapse of time. The decline is not unbroken ; there are periodical stabilisations though on a lower level. There is evidence of this generally in religions. Lord Krishna also declared that whenever *adharma* prevails and *dharma* is obscured He appears on earth.

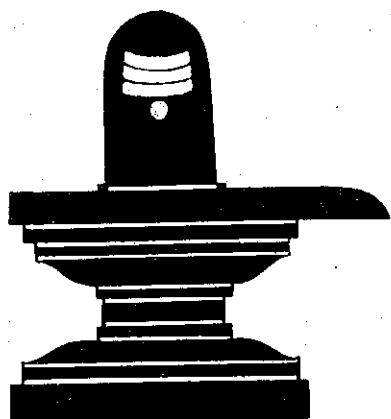
But it is not only in religion that people decline. Anthropologists have now established that this is the general tendency and that the various peoples who were glibly termed 'primitive' are in fact degenerate. I once read a newspaper report of a team of Indian anthropologists on the Andamans discovering that discarded artifacts of earlier centuries showed considerably more skill than those made today. More detailed studies have been made of other isolated communities, such as the Polynesians, and it has been found that some skills—archery, for instance, or the making of boats and canoes—have been lost altogether, while others have declined. In no case is there any record of progress.

The same is true in spiritual life also. It used to be glibly stated of such peoples that they had not progressed to the conception of a Supreme Being, but now it has been established that they either have such a conception or have had it but let it fall into disuse. Supreme Being means liberation from all conditioning not through gratifying men's desires but by stilling them. When men are set on gratifying them they cultivate lesser powers and beings and turn away from the Supreme Being. "Men who worship the gods go to the gods ; those who worship Me come to Me," Lord Krishna said.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, IV, 1-2.





## SIVALINGA AND VIBHUTI

By Lucy Cornelssen

The following hints on the meaning of Sivalinga are based on the Chapter 'Note on Sivalinga' in the late Swami Santinath's book *Experiences of a Truthseeker*; the passages on Vibhuti follows the footnotes to this topic in *Somasambhupaddhati*, a publication of L'Institut Francais d'Indologie in Pondicherry, the author of which is the French-Sanskrit scholar Mrs. Helene Brunner-Lachaux, a devotee of Bhagavan, who was a frequent visitor to the Ashram during many years, when she lived in Pondicherry.

THE foreign visitor to South India sees himself from the very first step confronted with the two greatest symbols of Saiva-worship : the *Sivalinga*, presentation of Lord Siva, and *Vibhuti*, the white marks, by which the Saivite confesses himself to be a worshipper of *Mahadeva*, the Great God.

Whereas the first of these symbols, the *Sivalinga*, is still very often misinterpreted as a symbol of the creative power of the Lord, the meaning of the second, *vibhuti*, the sacred ashes, is mostly unknown.

*Linga* is a Sanskrit term with quite a number of meanings, the first and foremost of which is 'sign of'. Smoke is a sign—*linga*—of fire ; the ochre garment is a sign—*linga*—of *sannyasa*; part of a thing is a *linga* of the whole, with which it is always associated in idea and so on. Thus *Linga* is a kind of seal, though not limited to the narrow meaning of 'creative power' in the case of *Sivalinga* ; it is *not* synonymous for *sisna* or *upastha*, the Sanskrit terms for phallus. Only in special cases, with reference to special contexts, is it used in this special, far more secondary sense.

If the term *Linga* and the form given to it really meant the creative or productive power of the Deity, this word and this form would have been more appropriately applied to Brahma, who is conceived all over India as the Creator, representing the creative aspect of the Supreme Spirit, whereas Lord Siva stands for the aspect of destruction.

To the enlightened worshipper, Lord Siva is the eternal Ideal of True Knowledge, the Ideal of perfect Self-realisation, the Ideal of Absolute Liberation. He is *Yogiswara*, the Lord of Yogis, *Tyagiswara*, the Lord of those who have renounced the world. By them Siva is conceived as the perfect embodiment of the eternally realised Ideal of renunciation—the Self. He is the Destroyer of *Kama*, the god of desire and lust, the Slayer of *Tripurasura*, the demon of the Ego.

Could one conceive that *Yogis* and *Sannyasis*, who from the very beginning of their spiritual career turn away from the world and regard lustful impulses as the worst of all hindrances to spiritual progress, might adopt as part of their spiritual self-discipline the worship of a symbol associated with the idea of generation or creation, likely to keep sex-consciousness awake in their minds? Or is it reasonable to suppose that the God of Destruction—the God, who is thought of as the cause of the dissolution of the world of diversities—should be represented by a symbol which implies the creative power and action? What then could have been the original significance of the *Sivalinga*?

From the very earliest times religious men of India associated esoteric ideas with visible symbols—*lingas*. The worshippers of Siva associated the Supreme Deity of their life, the highest object of their worship and meditation, with a *Flame of Light* (*Jyotih-Sikha*) or a *Pillar of Light* (*Jyotih-Stambha*). Light is the universal spiritual symbol—*linga*—for true Knowledge, which destroys darkness of Ignorance and emancipates one from all kinds of bondage and sorrow born of ignorance. The flame of *Tattva-Jnana* burns away all desires and passions, all attachments and aversions. Saivite yogis are in the habit of keeping a light (*Jyotih*) burning before them while they practise yoga and meditation. They testify that such a serene flame of non-material light is actually experienced within the body with the advancement of concentration.

*Yogis* and *sannyasis* adopt this symbol—*linga*—since in their view it is the most universal and non-sectarian symbol of the Absolute Reality, the Supreme Spirit. It is neither a male nor a female form; it is not a particular God or Goddess. It is a unique representation of the One, who, in the words of *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, has no body or senses, no equal nor superior, but is eternally endowed with supreme Power manifesting itself in diverse ways and with perfect Knowledge, Potency

and Activity inherent in His transcendent nature.

For general worship of Siva in the form of a flame or column of Light, stone or earth was substituted for light, and *Jyotirlinga* was permanently established in sacred places in the form of *Prastara-linga* (stone-symbol) or *Mrid-linga* (earth-symbol). Generally it is found in *smasanas* (cremation grounds) and lonely hills and forests, but many of such *smasanas* have in course of time grown into big cities—e.g. Banares—, and the hills and forests into sacred places of pilgrimage—e.g. Arunachala.

As *Sivalinga* stands for the pious Hindu as a symbol of the Supreme Spirit, *Vibhuti* symbolizes the perfect worshipper, since only he who has become perfect in purity and peace may approach the Deity.

*Vibhuti*, the sacred ashes, means 'power, splendour' (*bhasita*); it must be pure white, 'neither gray nor red nor yellow', in order to be effective.

According to the regular etymology, the term *bhasma* means 'that which is pulverized' (by fire), i.e. ashes; but according to all texts, 'sacred ashes, produced from cow-dung'.

The symbolic explanation of the term *bhasma* is given in many different ways. Some take the root *bharts*, to *efface*, and read: 'because it effaces (*bhartsati*) all sins and all impurities.' However *bhas*, can be taken as a root meaning to *radiate*, explaining the term *bhasita* accordingly. Or *bha* may point to the fact that the conditions of being and becoming (*bhava*) shall come to an end, and *sma* pointing to memory or thought (*smarana*); that means: "Remember constantly, that to stop the cycle of births and deaths is the purpose to be attained."

The ritually correct preparation of *vibhuti* must be done according to Svayambhuva in the following way. As is customary in ritual performances, three alternatives are offered: (a) the ideal rule (*kalpa*), (b) *anukalpa*, a less

strict method ; and (c) *upakalpa*, still an acceptable alternative.

According to the *kalpa* method one has to collect the dung of a cow *kapila*, or red or white or black, before it touches the ground, on leaves of the lotus, of *nenuphars* or *palasa*, or by hands ; or even within the cowshed. One takes it in reciting the five *Brahmamantras* inverted, that means *Sadyojata*, forming balls of it with *Vamadeva*, dries it with *Aghora*, burns it with *Tatpurusha* and collects the ashes with *Isana*.

According to the *anukalpa* method, one collects dry dung in the woods, powders it, preparing a kind of dough by aid of cow urine, and then burns it.

According to the *upakalpa* method, one collects from a fire in the forests or from a fire which has been kindled in a cow-shed, and then burns it.

All *Agamas* agree that ashes prepared in this way according to rule, are pure ; they need no further purification by special *mantras* ; only at the moment of actual use do they have to be consecrated by reciting the *Samhitamantra* on them. The ashes are placed on the palm of the left hand, reciting the *mantra*, touching them with the right hand ; after this an offering of a portion of the *vibhuti* is made to the *asuras* (demons) by throwing some towards the south-west quarter, the abode of *Nirrti*. Then one proceeds with one's ablutions, which means first of all cleansing the whole body with *vibhuti* from head to foot, reciting the five corresponding *mantras*. The name of this rite is *Uddhulana*.

According to Aghorasivacharya the ablution is finished by another operation : dipping the three middle fingers in *vibhuti*, one smears various parts of the body with special marks, most often three horizontal stripes, named *tripundra*. Most texts insist on the fact that the procedure depends on caste ; however, each one gives a special rule of its own. Originally they may have simply been a means

of identification between different groups or castes.

It is difficult to know exactly why they have been prescribed originally. However the *Agamas* give as the symbolism of the *tripundra* this explanation : The three lines represent Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, and at the same time the *Trisula* (weapon of Lord Siva), the three times, the three *Saktis* (potencies) etc.

On the other hand those marked spots are related to divine forms (for contemplation), the list of which of course depends on the number of mentioned points.

Finally and above all, *vibhuti*, provided by the cow and transformed by fire, is purifying, as are all products of the sacred cow and as fire is itself. The *Suprabodhagama* insists on the first aspect, and dedicates two-thirds of the chapter *Bhasmasnana* thereto, reminding one of the virtues of the cow and its six products : dung, urine, milk, butter, curds and *gorochana* (a pigment prepared from the bile of cows).

Other texts underline the second aspect. But all agree in exalting these ablutions as absolutely necessary before every ritual, the fruit of which is incomparably great. Several texts describe also the horrible punishments, to be expected by those who do not follow the rule exactly, or allow some of the sacred ashes to fall to the ground. Obviously these passages are deliberately exaggerated in order to underline the importance of the prescribed ritual.

It should also be mentioned, that the twice-born must avoid performing ablutions with *vibhuti* in the presence of the Gods, the fire, the Guru or other sages ; neither should he apply *vibhuti* being watched by someone of a very low caste, nor on a street or way or any other impure place.

In any case, Siva can be worshipped only by Siva—that means by man, who has transformed himself into Siva by the ritual of his worship. *Vibhuti* is the visible symbol of the invisible sacred transmutation.

## Effects of an Indian Drug<sup>1</sup>

By Ramamani

THE drug habit seems to have assumed serious proportions in the West. It has been there in India too but more for spiritual ends and strictly regulated. The drinking of the *soma* juice as a means for spiritual ends is a well known fact mentioned in the Vedas. Similarly *cannabis* has been used in India for centuries as a euphoriant in the form of *charas*, *ganja* and *bhung*, each one progressively less potent. An old song recited by mendicants who go abegging along the street says :

"Siva appeared before the devotee, he did,  
He asked the *bhakta* what boon he wanted, he did,  
And the *bhakta* said, 'I want half a *palam*<sup>2</sup> of  
*ganja*, it will do'."

This is a funny way of presenting it but the influence of *ganja* on genuine spiritual aspirants can be understood from it. Seeing that Sri Bhagavan suffered from severe asthma and would do nothing about it a devotee brought *Purnadi Lehiyam*<sup>3</sup> which contains *ganja*. This gave relief. But since Sri Bhagavan would not partake of anything if it was not given to others this was distributed to all present. But all could not stand it unaffected like Sri Bhagavan. Those who were sincere aspirants felt not merely an elation and indifference to environment but felt aided in their meditation. The effects varied and lasted for an hour or more. Sri Bhagavan put an end to it all and explained the merits and defects of this drug.

First, the merit of the drug is based on its ability to enhance the mood or state of mind of the user before ingestion. A profound state of meditation will be further strengthened by the use of the drug. A beneficial effect in some is that poetic powers are brought out to an inconceivable degree. Therefore the proper use of the drug rests on one's spiritual attitude. If bad or impure thoughts happen to assail the mind the drug will strengthen these as well ! Also much depended upon the way the drug was prepared. The leaves had to be fried in an earthen pot in a mild fire, washed in

running water like a stream or waterfall for two days, soaked in lemon juice and boiling milk and with other ingredients formed the drug proper. (It was observed that even qualified Ayurvedic practitioners did not make the drug along such rigorous lines of procedure or did not know about it at all).

As for the bad effects this was a heightening of negative tendencies already prevalent in some. Such people should avoid it. It forms a habit and so induces one to adopt all sorts of means for procuring the drug at all cost. Sri Bhagavan said that any physical or gross inducement on the mind is transient, variable and limited in its effect. On one occasion he said 'If you cannot give up this habit you need not come here.'

It is easy to develop through drugs a negative philosophy of escape from work and activity. Tennyson gives a fine picture of such a weak attitude in his *Lotos Eaters*<sup>4</sup>

"Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
Should life all labour be ? . . .

.....  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or  
dreamful ease.  
How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream !

.....  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil,  
the shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and  
wave and oar ;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander  
more."

<sup>1</sup> Based on a conversation with Sri Kunju Swami, a very senior devotee.

<sup>2</sup> An old South Indian standard of weight equivalent to 30 grams.

<sup>3</sup> An *Ayurvedic* medicine.

<sup>4</sup> A poem describing the effects of eating the lotus on Ulysses' mariners. Ulysses resists the effect and takes the mariners out of the island which grows the lotus.

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This controversial subject of psychedelic drugs is tackled by Lama Govinda predominantly from a psycho-analytic angle.

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## Consciousness Expansion and Disintegration

*versus*

## Concentration and Spiritual Regeneration

**W**HEN people nowadays recommend 'consciousness-expanding' drugs as a substitute or an incentive for meditation, they start from the naive preconception that expansion is synonymous with the attainment of higher values. But the mere expansion of a muddled consciousness, in which the faculties of discrimination, mental balance and understanding have not yet been developed, does not constitute an improvement and will not lead to the attainment or the realization of a higher dimension of consciousness, but only to a worse confusion, to an expansion of ignorance and an indiscriminate involvement in irrelevant impressions and emotions. Therefore, a wise person would rather follow the advice of the great spiritual leaders and benefactors of humanity, by concentrating his mind and improving its quality, instead of trying to expand it without rhyme or reason, i.e. without having developed the faculty of understanding or discrimination.

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The main medium of this so-called consciousness-expansion is LSD, and its prophets who propagate it as a substitute for meditation, are characteristically only those who have neither experience nor qualification in the field of meditation, because they have never gone through any serious spiritual training or *sadhana*, based on millenniums of experience and psychological exploration, as handed down and taught by many of the great spiritual traditions of humanity.

In the process of meditation, i.e. in the gradual achievement of integration, we are not concerned with an 'expansion' of consciousness, but as Jean Gebser, one of the most

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By Lama Anagarika Govinda

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incisive thinkers of our time, rightly says, with an intensification of consciousness: "The mistake that is made nowadays and which has its reason in the quantitatively accentuated rational attitude, consists in the opinion that a material 'more' must correspond to a 'more' in the realm of consciousness. This 'more', however, concerns only the reflecting knowledge, which has quantitative character. For this reason alone we had to insist, that we must not fall into the error of striving after consciousness-expansion, but that what matters is a consciousness-intensification. A mere consciousness-expansion leads as much to destruction as the material atomization, which to some extent has already taken shape (or rather 'Ungestalt' i.e. its 'mis-shapen form')."<sup>1</sup>

We need only look at modern paintings and drawings of so-called psychedelic art, which appear to be composed out of thousands of fragments, like a smashed and splintered mirror, in which the world is reflected and broken up into a chaos of disconnected details,—and we shall understand what this process of atomization is leading to.

However, the main difference between the states of consciousness caused by LSD and those created by meditation—and here I am not speaking theoretically, but from my own experience—is the fact that LSD totally deprives us of any control, so that we are helplessly tossed about by our emotions and deceived by hallucinations or creations of chaotic imagination, that our attention is scattered and confused by thousands of fragmentary images and sense-impressions—while meditation is a creative process, which converts the chaos of upsurging feelings, thoughts, uncontrolled volitions and contending inner forces into a meaningful 'cosmos' (a harmonized 'uni-verse') in which all psychic faculties are centred and integrated in the depth of our consciousness.

It is only the *creation of this inner centre* that makes us into consciously spiritual beings and lifts us beyond the blind drives of our animal nature, which binds us to the 'chaos' of

*Samsara* (the world of delusion). LSD, on the other hand, leads away from the centre into an ever more fragmentizing multiplicity of unrelated, eternally changing projections of subconscious thought-contents which, though momentarily capturing our attention, yet leaves us as completely passive spectators of a psychic film-show which, the longer we devote ourselves to its contemplation, the surer it will suffocate all creative impulses and all individual effort towards their realization.

In this connection we may remember the word of Goethe: "*Was du ererbt von deinen Vatern, hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen*" (What you have inherited from your forefathers, you must earn by your own effort, if you wish to make it your own.)—The "inheritance of our forefathers" is in a wider sense the inheritance of our own past and ultimately of the whole universe from which we have emerged, or as Zen Buddhists would have it, "our original face that existed before our parents were born".

This "original face", however, is far from being the face of our already completed or immanent Buddhahood, though it may contain all the potentialities of an enlightened mind. I would rather define it as the reflection of the universal depth-consciousness, in Buddhist terminology, the "store-consciousness" (*alaya-vijnana*), which contains the accumulated experiences of all forms of existence, the experiences of an infinite past, in which all possibilities of life are contained,—from the lowest to the highest states of consciousness (or, from the most primitive to the most universal dimensions of consciousness), from the blind urges of brutish or demoniacal drives and cruel passions to the most beneficial activities of divine or enlightened beings, in whom the unconscious forces and blind passions have been sublimated into clear knowledge, love and compassion.

<sup>1</sup> Jean Gebser: *Ursprung and Gegenwart*, p. 156. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1966, 2nd ed. — The bracket is mine.



To equate this *alaya-vijnana* with the "Buddha-Nature", and to believe that by merely suppressing or eliminating our thoughts and aspirations, our volition and discrimination, in short, our whole individuality and our intellectual qualities, we could attain the enlightenment of a Buddha, is a naive belief and an unfounded hypothesis, unsupported by experience and contradicting the entire Buddhist tradition which is concerned with the sublimation, harmonization and integration of all human qualities and capabilities,—a tradition which emphasizes the importance of individual effort (*virya & vyayama*), consequent religious practice (*sadhana*), cultivation of creative spiritual qualities (*bhavana*), discriminative thought (*dharmavicaya*), clear knowledge and wisdom (*prajna*), conscious awareness and remembrance (*smṛti*), perfect aspirations (*samyak samkalpa*), consciously directed concentrative meditation (*ekagrata*), love and compassion towards all beings (*maitri & karuna*), and faith (*sraddha*) towards the enlightened teachers of humanity.

Enlightenment can neither be gained by passively 'sitting', nor by violence, in the endeavour to suppress human feelings and thoughts or in the desperate struggle for the solution of some paradox problem. The key to enlightenment can neither be found in rigid concentration nor in an expansion of consciousness through artificial means.

The mere reduction of the field of spiritual vision to a single point, a single subject, concept or thought-sequence, under exclusion of all other thoughts or sense-impressions—corresponding to the exclusiveness of a perspective view-point, in which only a one-sided, fore-shortened observation of the object is possible—prevents us from observing the organic relationship of our subject with its background as well as with ourselves. This kind of concentration which is practised in science and discursive thought, based on strict logical laws, is as little suitable to lead to enlightenment as the indiscriminate expansion of consciousness of an untrained, inexperienced person, who

has neither the knowledge nor the judgement to enable him to understand or to make use of the phenomena of this expanded consciousness. He is in the same position as a scientifically unprepared and inexperienced person who would be sent into space in a rocket or spacecraft: though he goes through the same experiences as an astronaut, he would return to earth as ignorant as he left it, because whatever he has seen and experienced could not convey any meaning to him, but would only leave him confused, bewildered and terrified.

Even if the experiences, caused by drugs, were similar to those experienced in meditation or mystic visions (for which there is not the slightest evidence, because those who are using drugs, have no knowledge of real meditation), they would not convey to the spiritually untrained person anything of the deeper meaning of those visions and experiences, because of his inability to interpret the language of psychic symbols and phenomena. He would not be able to establish meaningful relations between himself (as an observer) and the observed phenomena, in other words: between the universal depth-consciousness and his individual (peripheral) surface-consciousness, because he skipped the way leading from the periphery of the normal waking consciousness to the depth-consciousness or his inner centre.

The experience of this way which leads step by step from our surface-consciousness into the depth of our mind in the process of meditative absorption is of paramount importance, because it employs and stimulates all our faculties of thinking, feeling and intuition. Those who believe that they can rely on mere intuition, before they have developed the control over the basic functions of their intellect on the level of everyday life's experience, will never be able to discern between truth and self-deception.

The mere 'expansion' of consciousness, therefore, has no value unless we have found our inner centre in which all the faculties of mind and psyche are integrated and to which all our experiences are referred as their ultimate

judge and arbiter. This inner centre is situated between the poles of the individual peripheric consciousness of the intellect and the non-individual depth-consciousness in which we partake of the greater life of the universe.

"When this centre functions rightly in the whole impression is one of evident harmony with inner life. The inner and the outer exist not against but for each other.

"Always then the presence of the basic vital centre is expressed in the easy equilibrium of the two poles and if one preponderates over the other the result is a wrong relation to heaven and earth, to the world and to the self.

"Just as failure to achieve the right centre always implies a disturbance of the living whole so the achievement of it demonstrates nothing less than that state in which the whole is kept alive in the right tension between the two poles."<sup>2</sup>

The tendency towards centralisation is not only a biological and psychological necessity, but a law of universal dynamics, pervading the entire cosmos—irrespective whether applied to spiral nebulae or solar systems, planets or electrons—every movement has a tendency to create its own centre or its own axis, as the only possible form of stability within the infinite movement of all that lives.

Where, however, life becomes conscious of itself, there a new, subtler centralisation takes place in a consciousness that creates its own focus, moving as if it were on an infinite axis from distant past towards an equally distant future (as it appears to us), or more correctly : which moves towards a present that (to us) is in a state of continual transformation.

The universal depth-consciousness is common to us all, but it depends on the individual what he makes out of it or what he extracts or distils from it and brings to the surface. Just as the waters of the ocean contain all kinds of substances in a state of dissolution, in a similar way the universal depth-consciousness contains potentially all psychic qualities. From the waters of the ocean we can extract gold as well as ordinary kitchen-salt, depending on the degree of (chemical) concentration and the method employed. In a similar way it is

possible to extract from the universal depth-consciousness either divine or demoniacal forces,—life-promoting or life-destroying powers,—powers of light or of darkness.

Those who descend into the depth of this universal consciousness, without having found their inner centre, will be swallowed by it or will be swept away to their doom, like a rudderless ship that is lost in the immensity of the ocean. Only to the wise the depth will reveal its treasures. Knowledge and wisdom, however, are founded on the patient observation of the laws of existence in the mirror of the stilled mind, in which the inner relations of all beings and all things become apparent and our intuitive awareness is brought to fruition.

If, however, intuition does not find also a clear expression in our thoughts, it can have no effective influence on our life, but is dissipated in the fog of vague feelings and dream-like phantasies and visions ; because no force can be effective, if it is not formed, i.e. concentrated and directed. On the other hand, thoughts and items of knowledge or truth which have been developed only on the intellectual level, have to be verified in life by direct experience, in order to become living reality. Only then they will have the power to transform our life and to influence our deepest nature.

People who only stick to their thoughts, remain prisoners of thoughts, just as those who live only in vague forms of intuition, become prisoners of their momentary moods and impressions.

Those, however, who are able to harmonize the faculties of clear thought and intuition, make the best use of both. They will enjoy the freedom of intuition, and at the same time they will be capable of utilizing its results in the creation of a spiritual universe or *Weltanschauung*, whose structure will be an ever-growing edifice of sublime beauty and transparency, and whose crowning pinnacle will be the radiating jewel of enlightenment, in which the structure will find its completion.

<sup>2</sup> "HARA, the Vital Centre of Man" by Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962 ; p. 83 (italics mine).

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# SPINOZA

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## A Champion of Religious Freedom

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*By Gladys de Meuter*

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**Spinoza laid the foundation of his life  
on the ground of his intuitive understanding  
that to live truly is living the truth  
which means to 'Live in God'.  
This was a philosopher with an intuitive  
consciousness of Reality.**

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**B**ARUCH Spinoza was born in the year 1632 in Amsterdam. His parents were Jewish refugees who had fled from the Spanish persecution to settle in Holland.

Deeply religious, Spinoza became aware of the restrictive and dogmatic values within ecclesiastical religion which stifled the spirit and breath of the Scriptures by placing too much emphasis on the literal aspect of the law.

Adhering to the truth as it presented itself to him, Spinoza made known his disagreement with the intolerant and rigid cultures within the Synagogue. This expression of his intellectual freedom at the age of twenty-nine cost him dear. Spinoza was disinherited on the part of his family, while his philosophy was condemned as inimical and heretical. Consequently he was excommunicated from Judaism. The latter move caused Spinoza to change his name BARUCH to that of Benedictus de Spinoza which is the Latin equivalent.

Severe persecution followed, but undeterred, Spinoza continued to expound his teachings where originality of thought and its forceful expression brought about an attempt on the young philosopher's life. Outspoken and fearless as he was, Spinoza decided to leave Amsterdam to take up residence in little known villages and towns where he forthwith led a secluded life in the company of several disciples and sincere friends, among whom was a painter Hendryk van der Spijk in whose modest home Spinoza lived. It was situated in the Hague where Spinoza remained until his demise in the year 1677.

A champion of true religious freedom in state affairs, Spinoza went to court when the Synagogue decided to ostracize him since this entailed civil sanctions against him as well. The reasons given by Spinoza for leaving the Synagogue indicate that the initiative had been taken by him as regards estranging himself from the inflexible orthodoxy of his time.

He proved successful in establishing his rights as a Dutch citizen, nevertheless he voluntarily

abandoned to his quarrelsome sisters the family inheritance which they had disputed on the grounds of the Synagogue's anathema pronounced against him. It is significant that he asked only for a bed and to the end of his days lived in great modesty, the only luxury he afforded himself being a rare and selective library.

Spinoza's means of livelihood in the Hague was that of a grinder of lenses which enabled him to maintain a measure of financial freedom ; however, devoted friends contributed to their teacher's income.

It is in the home of the Dutch painter that Spinoza prepared and revised his famous work the *Ethics* which was not published until after his death.

When his *Theological Political Treatise* appeared it was severely censured and placed in the Index. Further, the States General forbade its publication, the result being that the philosopher's plea for freedom of thought both in religious and civil affairs could be read only under a false title. As has happened in the past when storm clouds gathered, erstwhile friends became openly hostile or adopted attitudes of icy indifference.

In the year 1663 Spinoza's earliest work was brought to light in Amsterdam. Entitled *Principles of the Cartesian Philosophy together with Cogitata Metaphisica*, it set the author in high repute as a master of Cartesianism, but Spinoza was unimpressed by this success and continued to expound his philosophy which, at the time, found disfavour.

In his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* published in Hamburg in 1670, Spinoza's luminous mind seeks to establish how the Scriptures are ethical in nature rather than scientific ; that Moses in the Old Testament represents the 'outer' law or exoteric aspect of religion, whereas Christ represents the 'inner' or esoteric vision. Obedience or submission to the Only Power is also of paramount importance and is considered by Spinoza to be the essence of religion. This treatise received such abuse

that it had to go in secret channels, bearing false titles when reprinted.

One of Spinoza's dear friends was the Republican leader Jan de Witt whose courageous stand for religious freedom incurred the wrath of the mob at whose hands he met his death. When the incensed murderers bore down upon Spinoza's residence, the latter soothed the agitated landlord by promising to go out to the mob should they demand his life.

Thus while the world raged about him as the passions of men rose and fell, Spinoza laid the foundations of his life on the solid ground of self-certainty which gained access to his lucid reasoning born from the innermost depths of his intuitive consciousness. This 'freedom of spirit' within him was so manifest that many came to him for succour when they were 'on their own', and to these Spinoza gave freely of his profound knowledge. He stated : "I do not make the assertion that my philosophy is the best, but I can assert that I recognize the true philosophy."

This truth which gave Spinoza an innate dignity and nobility of spirit which was apparent even to the most hostile of his opponents, was not jealously guarded by the great philosopher. His grandeur of soul is expressed in his desire to share the 'heart-treasure', for he said : "It is absolutely necessary for my happiness that I strive to bring about in others the same insights which I possess, and that their knowledge harmonizes with my own knowledge and will."

Although radiating a brilliant intellect, Spinoza was a humble man and gave counsel as much to the simple people as to the lovers of philosophical discourse. "Salvation", he once told a lady, "is to be found in your religion. There is no need to change it for another as long as you pursue a quiet life, devoted to God."

Spinoza's independence was grounded on living the truth, which for him, was to 'Live in God'. This love for truth blossomed forth

in a self-confidence and inner certainty which brought with it loftiness of spirit, liberation from egoism and self-seeking.

In simple words this remarkable man explains his reasons for pursuing a course which led him to embrace true philosophy. "I finally decided to enquire whether there might exist some real good capable of communicating itself, which would take hold of the mind singly to the exclusion of everything else; whether there might in fact be anything the discovery and attainment of which would enable me to experience supreme continuous and everlasting bliss. I mention 'I *finally* decided', because it appeared unwise at first sight, to willingly let go of what was sure for something yet still uncertain."

The philosopher continues: "Fame, wealth, sense pleasures, all appear to be certainties. Yet it is uncertain whether the highest good is to be discovered in them. Sensual pleasure leads to bewilderment and a blunting of the mind's capacities. Riches demand more riches. If in quest of honour, I must perforce agree with the opinions of men, avoiding that which they avoid, and searching for what they search, if I am to embark earnestly on the quest for the only true good then I must turn away from all these things. They so preoccupy the mind with their demands that the thought for any other good has no place. It is thus that my search for the truly good requires me to renounce a good which is uncertain by its nature for a good which is at first uncertain as well."

The philosopher affirms that love for the imperishable confers upon man a lasting and exquisite joy.

Characteristic of Spinoza's philosophy is his moderate attitude towards 'worldly things', which, he tells us, are not harmful provided they are not regarded as ends in themselves.

The political and theological thought in Spinoza's teachings is incorporated in the 'Whole', or 'Unitive Vision', which came to

Spinoza through 'intuitive awareness'. The serene consciousness of the ever-present Reality of Divinity illumined the works of this philosopher of whom Schleiermacher wrote: "The Infinite was his beginning and end." Novalis considered Spinoza to be 'a God-intoxicated man'.

A lover of peace, Spinoza made use of a seal bearing the Latin inscription CAUTE which he placed as signature to his letters. In dignified calm the brilliant exposition of the philosopher's thought was placed on paper to be brought to light after the demise of the author. Thus, despite the narrow vision of his contemporaries Spinoza's spirit soared beyond the confines of man's pettiness to illuminate and enlighten those whose 'hearts were athirst', and therefore capable of 'receiving'.

After Spinoza's death, his works were published. Notably, the *Ethics*, the *Letters*, *Compendium of a Hebrew Grammar*, the *Political Treatise* and also *On the Improvement of Understanding*. It was in the year 1852 that the *Treatise on God and Man and Man's Happiness* was discovered.

Spinoza's philosophy was a way of life which he lived true to his vision. Good and evil exist insofar as the soul allows itself to be touched by either.

The *Ethics* deals with epistemology, theology, metaphysics. God in His Essence 'can be conceived only as *existing*.' From this 'EXISTING' follows creations and creatures, established in an everlasting necessity. The latter must simultaneously entail freedom in its perfection, since no 'thing' can bind IT except IT-SELF. Spinoza termed the Primal Cause or BEING, the ONE ABSOLUTE SUBSTANCE from which emerges finite 'affections' and 'modes'. The One Substance possesses infinite attributes—the philosopher clarifies these attributes by naming them as two universal functions 'Extension' and 'thought', which are clearly stated to be two aspects of the One Substance. Component things which are limited and which

possess a finite existence are but modes of these main attributes.

Spinoza terms 'that which is subject to change', "being in *alio*", not to be confused with the infinite Substance which is "Being in *se*". Craving for total fulfilment is the spur, the desire which subjects 'being in *alio*', to the swaying passions of pleasure, cravings, sorrow, poverty, stormy emotions.

Fulfilment signifies bliss ; its absence, melancholy. Spinoza, with his concise mind names the alternating pendulum between joy and sadness, together with its gamut of emotions as 'affections of thought', this 'mode', or *natura naturata*, which again is not to be confused with Pure Thought, namely *natura naturans* or the One Substance.

Ignorance is the result of lack of perfect knowledge, and brings with it limitations which cause evil to appear in man's life as a reality, which in TRUTH it is not.

Deluded by the appearance of evil man is held in bondage to his passions and desires. Freedom from suffering is possible only as more perfect knowledge of God is attained by *servitus humana*. As abundance of wisdom is conferred upon the truth-seeker fulfilment comes to him as joy : the 'sense of wholeness or completion' unites the blissful surge of life to the divine heights of true love. True life is True Love indissolubly bound.

The human mind reaches its peak of attainment in the 'intellectual love of God', whereby it contemplates divine Perfection wherein everything finite and therefore necessarily limited, forms a harmony where the many are united in the One. To reach this understanding of truth is virtuous, since knowledge of truth begets love for it, and love for truth even in part, benefits the whole.

True vision of truth which is termed 'intellectual love of God', causes man to rejoice in virtue 'not only because it allows him to control his cravings : but because he truly derives joy from it, thus he is able to control his passions.' That which is mortal in man are his modes and affections which include the memory and imagination of his earthly mind. That which is immortal is the Idea in Essence, which, although seemingly undergoing the transition pertaining to the temporary world, nevertheless emerges intact and wholly incorruptible.

Spinoza, noble philosopher that he was, outlined with admirable precision his crystal-vision of truth. To fully appreciate the priceless legacy he has left the world, close study of his works is required ; nevertheless, gleanings of his genius is apparent in even a few excerpts :

"After having been taught through experience that all the normal surroundings of worldly life result but in futility and vanity ; realizing that none of the things feared by me were in themselves either good or bad, except inasmuch as the mind was allowed to be stirred by them, I resolved finally to seek earnestly whether there exists some true good containing within

## Play Eternal

By Torben Huss

Sounds Sights Sensations  
—myriad happenings  
playfully performed  
on the scene of Life.  
Countless waves  
of waning worlds  
pulsating the screen  
of vast Awareness.  
Currents of thoughts  
ebbing and flowing  
in the Infinite  
of Pure Existence :  
Ceaselessly  
being borne  
by the breath  
of the windless  
Eternal. . .



itself power to communicate itself, which would have an effect on the mind singly, to the exclusion of all else ; whether there exists in fact anything the discovery and achieving of which would confer upon me uninterrupted, supreme and everlasting contentment.

... It must be borne in mind that the terms '*good and evil*' are only applied in a relative manner, so that one and the same thing may be termed good or bad, according to the relative viewpoint, in the same manner that it may be termed perfect or imperfect.

1. It is wise to speak to the multitude in the way which is intelligible to them so that they may receive truth according to their capacity.

2. It is wise to allow ourselves pleasures only insofar as is necessary for the preservation of health.

#### *On Memory :*

... If we should enquire what is memory it can be said to be naught else but the actual sensation of impressions impinging themselves on the brain, together with the accompanying thought of a definite duration of the sensation."

#### *On the Improvement of Understanding*

##### *Concerning God :*

"1. That which is SELF-CAUSED is the ESSENCE involving existence, or THAT the nature of which is conceivable as being alone EXISTENT.

2. By God, I mean an absolutely infinite BEING—namely, a SUBSTANCE consisting in an infinity of attributes, of which each attribute expresses infinite and eternal essentiality.

... God is ONE. In the universe only ONE SUBSTANCE can be recognized. This Substance is absolutely infinite as has previously been mentioned.

... Whatever is, has its being in God. Without God nothing can either be or be conceived.

... I repeat that all things are in God, and that all events come to pass solely through the laws of God's infinite nature.

... I truly think that I have outlined with sufficient clarity that it is from the supreme Power, God, or His infinite nature, or because of an infinite number of things, namely, all which have of necessity flowed forth in an infinite variety of manner or which follow always from the identical necessity ; in the same manner as from the nature of a triangle which illustrates from eternity or for eternity, that the triangle's three interior angles are equal to two right angles. The Omnipotence of God has therefore been manifest from all eternity, and will remain for all eternity in the same active state.

... God is the Indweller—He is not the transient cause of things.

In the foregoing I have expounded on the properties and nature of God. I have shown that He necessarily EXISTS, that He is ONE ; that HE IS, and that He acts solely by the necessity of His Own Nature ; namely, He is the free Cause of all things, and how it happens that He is so ; that all things have their existence in God, and depend solely therefore, on Him ; that without God nothing could either exist or be conceived ; lastly, that all things are pre-determined by Him, not through the free will of God or through His absolute fiat, but from His very nature or infinite Power."

#### *The Ethics*

##### *Of the Origin and Nature of the Mind :*

"... We have shown that the mind is united to the body from the simple fact that body is the object of the mind. It follows for the identical reason that the idea of the mind must necessarily be united with its object, namely with the mind, in the same way as the mind is united with the body.

... It follows therefore that when the human mind cognizes things after the common order of nature, it has no adequate but only a befuddled and fragmentary understanding of itself, its own body, also inadequate knowledge of external bodies."

*On Intuition :*

"This kind of understanding proceeds from an adequate idea of the absolute essence of certain of God's attributes to the adequate understanding of knowing, of the Essence of things.

... No science pure and simple and worthy of the name—can exist without taking to itself in verity the real and actual last end of human life. 'Independent moral philosophy' is ignorant of this end."

\* \* \* \*

In Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico Politicus* the ethical nature of the Scriptures is skilfully illustrated, and the masterful, commanding tone resonant in the Old Testament where the 'Thou shalt not' tends to evoke awe mingled with respect, is explained by Spinoza as being the means to waken man to the sublime grandeur of self-surrender, for it is only when one has obeyed that one is fit in turn to command. This treatise, so little understood, was heavily censured when it appeared in print in Hamburg in 1670. For the inscription Spinoza chose the beautiful words of John : 'Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us because he hath given us of his spirit.'

Severely criticized, this work was nevertheless furnished with false titles and published in Leyden and Amsterdam in 1673.

In the above-mentioned Opus, Spinoza sought also to create a true picture of the Old Testament by laying stress on the abundant Grace which is radiated from the Heart of Love as intuitive awareness, which is the Gift of True Life conferred on him who has surrendered self to the Christ Consciousness within.

Spinoza's innate nobility of character and his dignity of bearing, was the outer reflection of an inner glow, one which derived its fire from self-certainty. This inner independence which drew others to him as moths are attracted to the flame, encompassed sincere seekers with compassion as Spinoza sought to dissi-

pate their dark ignorance by allowing them entry into his illumined world.

When he had finished the *Ethics* he desired that it be printed only after his death and that the identity of the author remain unknown, for Spinoza considered Truth to be impersonal. Generous with the gems of truth he had discovered, Spinoza carried on a heavy correspondence. He was very popular with Collegians, and derived pleasure from philosophical discourse.

While pursuing his daily task of lens-grinding, this humble man was an honest citizen, loyal friend, and fearless exponent of Truth. This Truth carries on its winged flight the Sacred Song of Transcendence, a melody forged from the brilliant thought of Spinoza, lover of God, of whom may be quoted the words of Carlyle :

"The lightning-spark of Thought, generated or say rather heaven-kindled, in the solitary mind, awakens its express likeness in another mind, in a thousand others minds, and all blaze up together in combined fire."

## Moment of Silence

By Kavana

I walk the Way  
of Wandering, amaze,  
to near and distant  
abodes of Heart ;  
to welcome any  
Moment of Silence,  
when the Pure Radiance  
of Bliss  
mirrors the Endlessness  
of Being. . . .

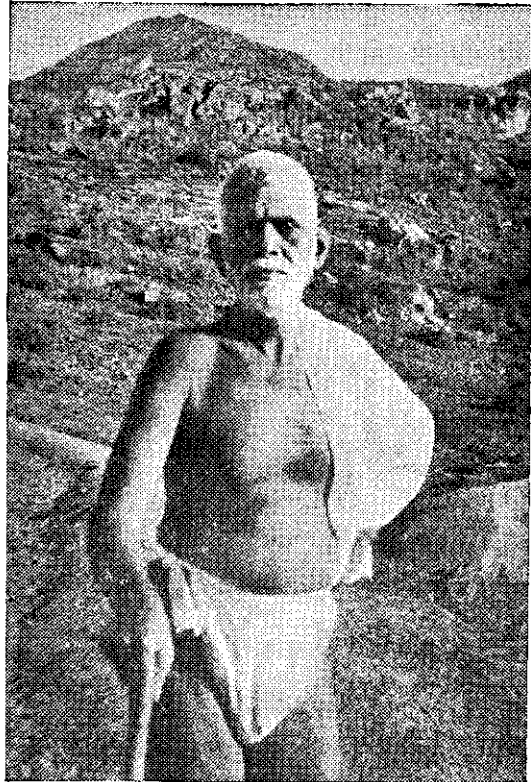
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By Y. N. (alias Bhaurao) Athavale

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## How I Came to Bhagavan

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**B**EFORE I had the first *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan in 1942, I was brought up in a religious and spiritual atmosphere at home. Ever since 1914, I used to visit Alandi, near Poona, to have *darshan* of the Samadhi of the Maharashtrian saint, Jnaneshwara. About ninety years ago, there stayed in Alandi a great realized saint and Yogi, Swami Narasimha Saraswati. My grandfather was his staunch disciple and the Swami's grace has been showered on our family ever since then up till now. Even though the Swami left this world and was enshrined in Samadhi before my birth, I knew that many devotees had the good luck to have his *darshan* even after his Nirvana. I also felt ardently that I should have his *darshan* in flesh and blood and I used to pray to him for many years. In spite of many happy incidents of his grace in our family, my yearning for his *darshan* remained unsatisfied and I was rather insistent on it. I was not satisfied with

his *darshan* in a dream and so continued to pray for the same off and on.

From 1939 to 1942 I suffered from Sciatica due to over-exertion in my engineering work and became very weak. As I did not like in this state to be a burden to my old father, I went to Vai, a sacred place on the bank of the Krishna, about fifty miles away from Poona, rather dejected about my health. Still I used to pray to the Swami of Alandi to give me *darshan*. But because my prayer was not granted and I was not feeling well, I made a slight change in my prayer that I should at least have a *darshan* of a great Mahatma like the Swami before my death. After a month or so, in February 1942, when I was in a state of utter depression, I had a wonderfully vivid vision-like dream at dawn.

In a cave of a mountain, a great Mahatma was staying and throngs of people of different

religions and castes, Sannyasis, Yogis and householders were going up the mountain towards the cave, to listen to the speech of the Mahatma. I was one of them. The cave was spacious enough to hold about 150-200 people who had assembled there and were sitting close to one another in a crowd. I also sat there among them, waiting. I waited for an hour or so and still the speaker was not seen nor heard. Naturally I was bored and asked the people around me, "How is it that the lecture has not started yet? Where is the Saint?" Near me sat an old man with matted hair. Afterwards I came to know that his name was Kavya Kantha Vasistha Ganapati Muni. He raised his hand and said to me, "Silence of the Master is his speech and the disciples have no doubts left." I was wonderstruck to hear this, as I could not understand who that silent Master was and could not follow his silent speech. So again I asked, "Where is the Master?" He replied, "He is sitting quite near you." I began to search among the people near me and found a slender young man of twenty-two years wearing a white cod-piece and a smile on his face. I bowed down to him immediately and asked whether I could know his name and would understand the silent speech. He pointed his finger to his heart and said in Marathi, "This is known as Ramana Maharshi." Having said this he smiled in a charming manner and instantly I woke up in delight. I took it to be the answer to my constant repeated prayer, felt happy and began to reflect.

Though a resident of Poona, I did not hear much about Ramana Maharshi's greatness then (in 1942) as his name was not then well-known in Maharashtra. In big libraries there were one or two books of Paul Brunton, but very few people would read them. Some few educated pilgrims visiting Rameswaram might have heard his name in the Madras province. But in a distant town like Vai, nobody knew Bhagavan's name and hence it was very difficult to account for my vision. For about ten or twelve days I was eagerly longing to get

some information about him. All the while, I was praying. All of a sudden, one day a gentleman of my acquaintance from Poona happened to meet me and having seen the photograph of Narasimha Saraswati Swami on my table, instantly remembered some thing and told me that recently, during his pilgrimage to Rameswaram he heard from some pilgrims about Sri Ramana Maharshi, and went along with them to Tiruvannamalai and had his blissful *darshan*. He further told me that Bhagavan was a Siddha Purusha (a Liberated Being) like this Swami and advised me to go and have his *darshan* once.

Thus unexpectedly my dream was accounted for and immediately I sent money by telegraphic money order for two or three books of Bhagavan. My curiosity and longing were intense. In four or five days the books came but before I could read them, a friend of mine took them away and when I wrote to him, he ordered for them again, and in the next week I got them. Their reading increased my longing to see Bhagavan. Even though I had become very weak due to the disease, my earnest desire to have Bhagavan's *darshan* did not allow me to keep quiet. I started in that very condition by rail and reached Tiruvannamalai station on the third day at dawn. I hired a horse-cart and reached Sri Ramanasramam at 6 a.m. The driver showed me that Bhagavan was coming facing us. My joy knew no bounds. As I prostrated before him, Bhagavan approached me and said, "Have you come from Poona? You seem to be quite exhausted." I was wonderstruck to hear that, as I had not written to the Ashram about my whereabouts and the date of my coming there. Thereafter arrangements were made for my stay.

In the afternoon, when I sat before him in the Meditation Hall, he enquired about my health. I replied that I had been terribly suffering from Sciatica for three years, had no sleep, no desire for food and was growing from bad to worse in spite of the treatment of the best doctors. I further told him that my father

was old, my children were young and my young wife helpless, and being extremely pestered by the disease I continued praying to Swami Narasimha Saraswati of our family and as a result was blessed by Bhagavan's *darshan* in a vision-like dream and hence had come there. I handed over the Swami's photograph to Sri Bhagavan. He smiled and indicated his divine intimacy with the Swami. He graciously said to me, "You can stay here in peace. Your disease is not incurable." He quoted a verse from the Bhagavad Gita (II : 14) : "O son of Kunti, the contacts between the senses and their objects, which give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc. are transitory and fleeting. O Arjuna, bear them" and pacified me. I felt extremely relieved. In three or four months I was completely cured of the disease by his grace.

Thereafter I used to see him three or four times in a year up to 1950, and came in his

close contact. He rejuvenated me physically and spiritually and brought me eternally into the fold of his benign Grace, to describe which I have no words. On receiving a telegram I came to the Ashram on the day of his Mahasamadhi. My emotions and feelings were checked somehow during the day he left the body. But next day, at night, when everybody was asleep, I began to weep bitterly feeling very uneasy that I shall never henceforth see Bhagavan in an embodied form and enjoy the bliss of his presence. All of a sudden in the dead of night, some footsteps were heard and lo ! there came Bhagavan with a lantern in his hand ! He straightaway approached me, removed the curtain and said to me in a soft, gentle, loving voice "Oh ! why do you weep ? Did I not tell you that I am here ?" I controlled myself and bowed down to him. By the time I raised my head, he had disappeared, leaving me in utter surprise and desolation ! My thousand homages to Ramana Bhagavan !

## Question of Motivation

**T**HERE is a sense in which the question of motivation for the taking of psychedelic drugs is irrelevant and unimportant, for the foremost question in the minds of everyone are the effects of these drugs. Therefore the motivation for taking them is secondary. If results are good, the motivation makes little difference ; and the same can be said if results are unfortunate. . . .

But we have often heard the statement made that the kind of experience resulting from the taking of psychedelics is a function of set and setting. This is at least partly true. . . . Hence if one is concerned to discover how to make use of the drug experience in a wholesome way, one must be interested in motivation as well as in any other factor that influences the

process. But is a religious result dependent on religious motivation, or can a religious result follow with no desire for a religious experience ? . . .

Then there is the very common motive, particularly on the part of those who are aware of problems and have heard other people extol the value of LSD as a substitute for psychoanalysis or other arduous forms of therapy. While on the part of some this motive may have escapist overtones, pointing to an easy way out of their problems, most of these people are likely to find the experience not an end but merely the beginning of arduous therapy and self-examination which may be remarkably effective in some cases. But those who see in LSD a 'magic' substance bearing in its nature psychotherapy and religion are usually doomed to disappointment. . .

*Motivation for Ingesting Psychedelic Drugs :  
Special Reference to the Religious Dimension*

By W. H. CLARK

**I** KNEW full well that Sri Bhagavan gave no formal *upadesa* (initiation) but I kept on asking for it whenever an opportunity presented itself. Invariably Sri Bhagavan used to reply : “Who is the Guru and who is the *sisya* (disciple) ? They are not two. There is but ONE Reality. It is in you and It can neither be given nor taken. But you may read books for intellectual understanding.”

On March 12, 1934 after prayers at the Shrine of Sri Mathrubhuteswara I went to the Old Hall. Only Madhava Swami the attendant was with Sri Bhagavan. When I made my usual request Sri Bhagavan laid aside the newspaper he was reading and sat in *padmasana*, quite absorbed. I then recited a (general) hymn of praise to the Guru in Telugu and also *Aksharanamalai* in Telugu (the hymn on Sri Arunachala by Sri Bhagavan). Sri Bhagavan turned to Madhava Swami and said : “She

## LIGHT GIVES LIGHT

By Madhavi Ammal

has done her prayer to Sri Arunachala.” This struck me as meaning that Sri Arunachala will give the initiation and also that Sri Bhagavan and Sri Arunachala are not two. Sri Bhagavan resumed his state of absorption and I had my persistent request for *upadesa*. But he continued to sit motionless. Finally I begged of him : “Am I not a competent person to receive *upadesa* ? Sri Bhagavan should himself tell me about this. Even if Sri Bhagavan confirms this how is it that I adopted him as my Guru immediately on hearing of him (She was just told that a Rishi lived at the foot of the Hill) ? Will it all be in vain ?” Immediately on my speaking thus I found a bright light emanating from Sri Bhagavan’s holy face, and the effulgence filled the whole Hall. I could not see

Sri Bhagavan’s body but only the brilliance. I shed tears in profusion. The whole incident could have lasted just two seconds ! I prostrated to Sri Bhagavan. There was a smile on His face but no movement otherwise. After a while Sri Bhagavan turned to me as if to ask “Are you rid of your mania”. Yes, I was. He then took a piece of paper, wrote a *sloka* (verse) in it and gave it to me saying : “You can make use of it in meditation.”

This is the *sloka* :

“I adore Guha the Dweller in the Cave of the Heart, the Son of the Projector of the Universe, the Pure Light of Awareness beyond thought, the Wielder of the weapon of *Jnana Sakti* and the Remover of the ignorance of blemishless devotees.”<sup>2</sup>

Srimathi Madhavi Ammal,<sup>1</sup> a staunch devotee, was fortunate in having many opportunities to talk to Sri Bhagavan freely and appeal to Him direct for *upadesa*. Sri Bhagavan made things easy for her in many ways, one of which was talking to her in her native Malayalam. He gave a patient hearing to her tales of woe which were many. This is visible in a film on Sri Bhagavan which is screened occasionally at the Ashram. The devotee seems to have almost wrested the *upadesa* from the Guru by her perseverance according to the following narrative of hers !

And again he smiled graciously.

This was wonderful *upadesa* indeed by a Master rare to see. My Master taught me the great truth that there is only ONE. The proper Guru is one who shows what is. This was but a practical demonstration of the saying : “The Master’s face reveals Brahman. You attain Brahman through Grace.”

<sup>1</sup> Introduced to our readers in the Oct. ’71 issue, p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> This is the stanza to be recited while contemplating the *Sakti Pani* aspect of Lord Subramanya. The stanza was translated into Tamil by Sri Bhagavan at the request of a devotee incorporating the name RAMANA in it.



# “BLESSED ARE THE POOR”<sup>1</sup>

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By Michael N. Nagler

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THE ancient Greek poet Pindar has left us a fragment of his words of praise for initiates into the mystery religions of his day, which translates :

He is blessed who sees these things before  
going beneath the earth ;  
He knows the end of life,  
He knows its God-given beginning.  
(Fr. 137, Snell)

This fragment represents perhaps the earliest literary record, in the West, of man's passionate search for happiness. Who is the happy man ? Readers of THE MOUNTAIN PATH will recognise this question as the same which serves as a springboard for the most famous description of true happiness in the Hindu scriptures, the last eighteen verses of Chapter II of the *Bhagavad Gita* (reduced to writing perhaps a century after the time of Pindar) :

“Tell me of the man who lives in wisdom,  
Ever aware of the Self, O Krishna,  
How does he talk, how sit, how move about.”<sup>2</sup>

And what the *Gita* is among the revelations of Sri Krishna, the *Sermon on the Mount* is among the recorded words (*logia*) of Jesus. Spoken when the impress of the divine personality was reaching its worldly climax, before a great throng of thirsty seekers after happiness who had gathered to hear Him near the town of Galilee, these words were preserved we know not quite how until their recording by the Gospel writers Matthew and Luke. One can only think with gratitude of the fuller and more immediate recordings we possess in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*. Yet these Words carry something, at least, of the authentic teaching. For Jesus would often use the background of the Jewish Law as a help which men should respect but not superstitiously fear, as when He said : “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (*Matthew* v. 38-9). So also in the Sermon He speaks with equal authority against a broader background, not only the Judeo-Hellenic tradition, but of everything men have prized in their misguided search for joy in the external world, reminding them that the real Kingdom of Heaven is within.

The opening words are paraphrased below so as to bring out a possible meaning of the Greek text of Matthew (itself a version of Jesus' Aramaic) ; they have been an inspiration to mystics as far apart in time and place as Meister Eckhart and Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>3</sup> May the whole be of some inspiration to all of us, in our search for the joy of *nirahamkara*, self-naughting !

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<sup>1</sup> *Matthew*, V. 1-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 53 : Translation of Eknath Easwaran (published in *The Little Lamb*, Spring, 1969).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Eckhart's most famous sermon, “Blessed are the Poor,” e.g., in *Meister Eckhart*, by Raymond B. Blakney (New York, 1957), pp. 227-32. Gandhi's talk will be found in *Gita The Mother* (Indian Printing Works, Lahore, 1946-7), pp. 21-5.

Blessed in spirit are the poor, because the Kingdom of  
Heaven is for them.

Blessed are the suffering, for they shall be consoled.

Blessed are the gentle, who shall come into the whole world

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for goodness ; they  
Shall have their fill.

Blessed are the compassionate, for compassion will be shown  
To them.

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

Blessed are they who make peace, for they shall be called  
God's children.

Blessed are all who are persecuted for being good to others,  
For their own is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are you, even when they insult you, and persecute you  
And say every slander against you because of Me.

Be happy and take joy in the great reward in your Heaven  
Within—for this is how they persecuted the teachers of the path before

You are the salt of the earth ; if the salt itself goes stale,  
What can there be to flavor it ? Its only virtue  
Then is to be thrown out on the path for other Men to walk on.

You are the light of the world ; a city cannot be hidden  
Once it is built high on the hills,

Nor do we hide a lighted candle under a basket ; we set  
It on a candlestick to shine on everyone in The house.

May your light shine like this before all people,  
That they may see your good work and be impressed,  
By your Father that you have in Heaven.

Never believe that I have come to subvert the Law or  
The teachers ; I have not come to destroy at  
All, but to fulfill.

For you may believe me, until this heaven and earth  
Have passed away, not so much as one dot from  
One 'i' of the Law, not so much as one cross  
From one 't' will pass away, before it all comes true.

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# PLEASE

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By G. N. Daley

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THE scriptures are the all important watershed of the soul seeking to return to its source, the ocean of the Self, and as each raindrop falling on to a hillside automatically surrenders itself to the pull of gravity so should each soul without restraint of procrastination surrender itself to the inner gravitational pull of the Self. The scriptures are the streams and rivers which will carry the separated soul back home to God just as streams of water eventually carry each raindrop which falls from the sky to its place of origin, the ocean. The scriptures contain many revelations of the truth concerning the nature of man, the nature of God and of their 'relationship'. These revelations are often presented in language and concept which hide and obscure the truth or the reality, therefore the more deeply we understand the language and concept the more closely do we draw ourselves to the truth and to our own true nature. It is therefore a good practice to sit quietly at regular times and meditate upon some scriptural text or revelation and like the raindrop on the hillside surrender to the mechanics of the watershed by focussing the whole of our awareness on to the thoughts chosen for meditations in order that the essence of the inner meaning may be clearly understood.

A start could be made by a series of meditations upon the Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and

Siva in order to discover what they really are, what their functions are and how we relate to them, and perhaps more importantly we may find out *Who* they are. Function-wise perhaps our most important relationship with them is our very existence on this planet, for through the function of Brahma our bodies are created, it is the function of Vishnu the sustainer to support these bodies until the function of Siva the destroyer manifests itself when we leave the body for the last time. Thus does our life cycle on earth depend upon the properties and functions of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Further meditation will show that everything which either has existed, that now exists and ever will exist is given form and existence, is sustained and finally falls away because of the properties of this Trinity, even our feelings and thoughts, our pleasures, possessions, attachments and pains. All come, all endure for a while, and all go. Thus do we all as ego, together with all else which becomes manifest, fragment, dissolve and disappear, and even as this is happening Brahma continues to create and Vishnu to sustain, and this is really wonderful so long as you are not *attached* to it any more than is Brahman. And here a fresh thought, 'Brahman' enters into the meditation. What or Who is Brahman and how does He 'relate' to the Trinity and to you and me? Brahman as the Supreme Self is the awareness within the properties, the functions and the

mechanisms of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, He is also the awareness within the mechanisms of our own egos. Thus we can now begin to meditate upon that which is real and dismiss from the mind any thoughts which are unreal for it is said that even the gods must die, and how true this is because even they are created, sustained and destroyed since they exist in and are a part of the mechanism which is governed and administered by Those Heads of the Spiritual Hierarchy, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, who will also eventually become re-absorbed in the One Self.

Now that the sword of discrimination has been sharpened and it is seen that even the 'bodies' of the gods are not real and will eventually be destroyed it is time to begin to hack away at the ego by seeking an answer to the question, "Who am I?" It is so obvious that the mechanism of neither a god nor a man is the real Self, but only form and function which

is constantly changing. In fact unless surrender to Brahman, the source of all awareness is complete and total, or the quest "Who am I?" is pursued continually and without pause there will continue to exist a sense of separateness, of incompleteness and of still seeking. Either allow complete surrender to dissolve the ego, live automatically without adhering to possessions or attachments of any kind (like the raindrop), or else use the sword of discrimination, the question, "Who am I?" and keep on hacking away at the ego until neither concept nor attachment remains. To ask "Who am I?" is a far greater priority than meditating on the functions and the beingness of the gods, in fact it is the final needful act that can bring liberation. Please, please let go, let it all pass—it will anyway—your awareness will always be there as witness until there is neither witness nor anything to witness—find out by asking, "Who am I?"

## The Syncretic Vision

ONE of the most prominent religious-type motivations expressed for taking psychedelic drugs is to achieve an integral perspective on the world and in so doing to shake off the encumbrance of the analytical mind. This is especially true with college students overwhelmed by the disjointed and disparate experience of contemporary liberal arts education, experiences in which economics has nothing to do with history, which has nothing to do with maths, which has nothing to do with science, which has nothing to do with English . . . . They seek the psychedelic experience as that which will give them 'reality' and give it 'whole'. I am reminded of a young man in a leading eastern college who took LSD in an attempt to work his way out of the conundrums of a philosophy course. In a letter to the dean explaining his action he noted that

his metaphysical anguish began when he was reviewing for two diametrically opposed viewpoints. Persuaded by the arguments of each, he was haunted by the apparent polarity and longed for one dazzling 'intuition of the whole' wherein the contradictions would be resolved and transcended. This integral intuition he hoped to achieve in an LSD-provoked identification of his mind with the 'cosmological plan'. Unfortunately the chemical evocation of this master plan proved too formidable and he describes his illicit LSD experience as an accelerated meditation that ran away with itself. According to his room-mate, he became violent, had to be forcefully controlled, and the police were called. The young man was suspended from college.

—*Religious Motivation for taking LSD by*  
JEAN HOUSTON

**A**LTHOUGH Ribhu taught his disciple the Supreme Truth of the One Brahman without a second, Nidagha, in spite of his erudition and understanding, did not get sufficient conviction to adopt and follow the path of *jnana*, but settled down in his native town to lead a life devoted to the observance of ceremonial religion.

But the Sage loved his disciple as deeply as the latter venerated his Master. In spite of his age, Ribhu would himself go to his disciple in the town, just to see how far the latter had outgrown his ritualism. At times the sage went in disguise, so that he might observe how Nidagha would act when he did not know that he was being observed by his Master.

On one such occasion Ribhu, who had put on the disguise of a village rustic, found Nidagha intently watching a royal procession. Unrecognized by the town dweller Nidagha, the village rustic enquired what the bustle was all about, and was told that the king was going in procession. "Oh! it is the king. He goes in procession! But where is he?" asked the rustic.

"There, on the elephant" said Nidagha.

"You say the king is on the elephant. Yes, I see the two" said the rustic, "but which is the king and which is the elephant?"

"What!" exclaimed Nidagha, "you see the two, but do not know that the man above is the king and the animal below is the elephant? Where is the use of talking to a man like you?"

"Pray, be not impatient with an ignorant man like me" begged the rustic. "But you said 'above' and 'below', what do they mean?"

Nidagha could stand it no more. "You see the king and the elephant, the one *above* and the other *below*. Yet you want to know what is meant by 'above' and 'below'?" burst out Nidagha. "If things seen and words spoken can convey so little to you, action alone can teach you. Bend forward, and you will know it all too well."

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## RIBHU GITA

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The *Ribhu Gita* is the Sixth Part of the *Itihasa* (legendary or mystical account) known as *Siva Rahasya*. It is stated to be the teaching imparted by Lord Siva to the sage Ribhu and by him to Nidagha and others. Sri Bhagavan held it in high esteem. It was often sung in his presence or referred to by Him in the course of His talks. He is stated to have once said that by the reading of the 26th Chapter of it repeatedly one could go into *samadhi*. This Chapter is published here for the benefit of the readers of *The Mountain Path*. The translation has been made from an old Tamil version. The story about Ribhu and Nidagha is taken from *Maharshi's Gospel*.

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The rustic did as he was told. Nidagha got on his shoulders and said "Know it now. I am *above* as the king, you are *below* as the elephant. Is that clear enough?"

"No, not yet", was the rustic's quiet reply. "You say you are above like the king, and I am below like the elephant. The 'king', the 'elephant', 'above' and 'below', so far it is clear. But pray, tell me what you mean by *I* and *you*?" When Nidagha was thus confronted all of a sudden with the mighty problem of defining the 'you' apart from the 'I' light dawned on his mind. At once he jumped down and fell at his Master's feet saying: "Who else but my venerable Master, Ribhu, could have thus drawn my mind from the superficialities of physical existence to the true Being of the Self? Oh! Benign Master, I crave thy blessings."

## RIBHU GITA, CHAPTER XXVI

### Inhering in the Undifferentiated and Non-dual Reality

1. I shall now expound to you the method of inhering in the All-inclusive and undifferentiated Reality. This teaching is secret and difficult to understand with the help of the Vedas and other scriptures. Even *devas* and *yogis* who hold it dear acquire it only with great difficulty. Follow what I say and, inhering in Reality, be happy.

2. My son ! Realised sages say that absolute inherence in Reality means becoming one with the immutable, tranquil and non-dual Brahman which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss and the Self of all, and making the wandering mind one with it like the proverbial milk and water, absolutely free from all concepts.

3. When one scrutinises this variety of manifestation one realizes that it does not really exist and that everything is the undifferentiated Supreme Brahman which is not different from the Atman and oneself. Let this knowledge become firm with you by constant practice. Then, discarding everything, become one with the Supreme Brahman and, remaining as that, be happy.

4. Abide as That which does not, when scrutinized, show any duality in the form of these various objects or the least trace of cause and effect ; that in which, when the mind is absorbed in it, there is no fear of duality at all—and be always happy, unshakable and free from the fear arising from duality.

5. Abide as That in which there are neither thoughts nor fancies, neither peace nor self-control, neither the mind nor the intellect, neither confusion nor certainty, neither being nor non-being and no perception of duality—and be always happy, unshakable and absolutely free from the fear arising from duality.

6. Abide as That in which there is neither any defect nor good quality, neither pleasure

nor pain, neither thought nor silence, neither misery nor austerities,<sup>1</sup> no 'I am the body' idea, no objects of perception whatsoever—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

7. Abide as That in which there is no work, physical, mental, verbal or of any other kind, neither sin nor virtue, neither attachment nor its consequences—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

8. Abide as That in which there are neither thoughts nor a thinker, neither the arising nor the preservation nor the dissolution of the world, nothing whatsoever at any time—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

9. Abide as That in which there is neither *maya* nor its effects, neither knowledge, nor ignorance, neither *jiva* nor *Isvara*, neither being nor non-being, neither world nor God—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

10. Abide as That in which there are no gods and their worship, none of the three gods<sup>2</sup> or meditation on them, no Supreme Siva nor meditation on Him—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

11. Abide as That in which there is neither maturing *karma* nor *bhakti* nor *jnana*, no fruit of action to be enjoyed, no supreme state separate from it, no means of attainment or object to be attained—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

12. Abide as That in which there is neither body nor senses nor vital forces, neither mind nor intellect nor fancy, neither ego nor ignorance, nor anyone who identifies himself with them, neither the macrocosm nor the microcosm—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

<sup>1</sup> which are practised for getting rid of misery.

<sup>2</sup> Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Destroyer.

13. Abide as That in which there is neither desire nor anger, neither greed nor delusion, neither ill-will nor pride, no impurities of mind and no false notions of bondage and liberation—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

14. Abide as That in which there is no beginning or end, no top or bottom or middle, no holy place or god, no gifts or pious acts, no time or space, no objects of perception—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

15. Abide as That in which there are none of the four spiritual qualifications,<sup>3</sup> no competent guru or disciple, no steady knowledge, no realized stage, no liberation of either kind,<sup>4</sup> nothing whatsoever at any time—and be always happy, free from all traces of thought.

16. Abide as That in which there are no Vedas or other scriptures, no one who thinks, no objection or answer to it, no theory to be established, no theory to be rejected, nothing other than one Self—and be always happy, free from (without) the least trace of thought.

17. Abide as That in which there is no debate, no success or failure, no word or its meaning, no speech, no difference between the *jiva* and the Supreme Being, none of the manifold adjuncts—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

18. Abide as That in which there is no need for hearing, etc.,<sup>5</sup> no samadhi to be practised, no differences of the same kind (*sajatiya*) or of a different kind (*vijatiya*) or within itself (*pragata*) no words or their meanings—and be always happy, free from the least trace of thought.

19. Abide as That in which there is no fear of hell (*naraka*), no joys of heaven (*svarga*), no worlds of Brahma or the other Gods, nor any object to be gained from them, no other world, no universe of any kind—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

20. Abide as That in which there is nothing of the elements nor even an iota of their derivatives, no sense of 'I' or 'mine', no fantasies

of the mind, no blemish of attachment, no concept whatsoever—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

21. Abide as That in which there are none of the three kinds of bodies,<sup>6</sup> none of the three kinds of states,<sup>7</sup> none of the three kinds of *jivas*,<sup>8</sup> none of the three kinds of afflictions,<sup>9</sup> none of the five kinds of sheaths,<sup>10</sup> no one to identify himself with them—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

22. Abide as That in which there is no sentient object, no power to hide Reality,<sup>11</sup> no difference of any kind, no power of projecting unreal objects,<sup>12</sup> no power of any other kind, no false notion about the world—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

23. Abide as That in which there are no sense organs or anyone to use them, that in which transcendent bliss is experienced, that which is absolutely immediate, that by realizing and attaining which one becomes immortal, that by becoming which one does not return to this cycle of births and deaths—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

24. Abide as That, on realizing which and experiencing the bliss of which, all joys appear to be the joys of That, that, on clearly knowing which to be oneself, there is nothing apart from oneself, and all kinds of *jivas* become liberated—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

<sup>3</sup> (a) Discrimination between the real and the unreal, (b) Absence of desire for the joys of this world as well as the next, (c) Possession of the six virtues like sense-control, mind-control etc., (d) Yearning for liberation.

<sup>4</sup> Liberation while still alive and liberation after death.

<sup>5</sup> Hearing (*sravana*), reflecting (*manana*) and practising (*nididhyasana*).

<sup>6</sup> The physical, the mental and the causal.

<sup>7</sup> Waking, dreaming and sleeping.

<sup>8</sup> Those who are fully eligible to advance spiritually, those who are not so eligible and those who are not at all eligible.

<sup>9</sup> Afflictions of the body, afflictions caused by the gods and afflictions caused by the elements.

<sup>10</sup> The physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the blissful.

<sup>11</sup> *Avarana Sakti*.

<sup>12</sup> *Vikshepa Sakti*.

# GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

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## *Arunachala Mahatmyam*

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### CHAPTER VI (Contd.)

#### THE GLORY OF VARIOUS TIRTHAS

##### Sacred Tanks or Rivers on Arunachala

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**T**HE land within a radius of two *yojanas* of this place is famous as *Sivabhumi* (the land of Siva). Those who live within this limit never fail to attain Liberation. In olden days the 'Seven Rishis' who were under a curse worshipped Arunachala regarding Him as the Lord. The Lord of Arunachala thereupon lifted their curse. They then dug a very holy tank near the hill, which removes all sins.

A sage (*muni*) who was lame came to Arunachala hoping to regain his legs. Praying mentally he, with crutches in hand and knees worn out, proceeded to the bank of the river Sona to quench his thirst. Having left his crutches on the bank he began to drink the water. At that time someone pretending to be quenching his thirst threw the crutches into the water and after asking him angrily, "How dare you come to Arunachala with crutches? Why do you want them?" he disappeared. The lame man at once regained the use of his

legs, and picked up his crutches himself. He saluted Arunachala and proceeded towards his house. He rejoiced at his sound limbs and handsome appearance. Other noble devotees of Siva who saw this marvel saluted the lame sage who had regained the use of his legs. He then went back the way he came.

Vali who was the son of Indra tried to pass over Arunagiri while jumping from Udayagiri (the hill of sunrise) to Astamanagiri (the hill of sunset) but lost his strength and fell down to earth. Then Indra, his father, came and told him : "This is Sonagiri." Upon this Vali worshipped the Linga of effulgence and regained his strength. Nala, who was the soul of Dharma, worshipped this hill and ruled justly over the 'friends of men' created by him. Ila

was transformed into a woman for entering the wood of Gowri. Not knowing why this had happened to him, he asked his preceptor (*purohita*) and, on his advice, worshipped Arunachala and became a man again. Soma, being advised to think of Arunagiri always, did so and, obtaining by the strength of his austerities the Lord's grace, got rid of his curse and also attained a state unattainable even by the immortals (*amaras*). As Bharata cast off his body at the time of death with the thought of the fawn (he had brought up) he did not attain Liberation and was born as a deer. Hari (Vishnu) felt great sorrow on account of his separation from his consort. But, on the advice of the sage Bhrigu, he worshipped Arunagiri and got over his sorrows in all his incarnations. By the grace of the Lord of Sonasaila, Sarasvati, Savitri, Sri Devi, Bhoo Devi and other goddesses and the rivers got over their sorrows.



Surya abides under the shelter of Arunachala in the east, Visvamisra in the south, Varuna in the west and Trisuladeva (the Lord of the trident) in the north. These four gods dwell on the hills which are at a distance of two *yojanas* and do obeisance to Arunachala. The gods who dwell in the four corners of Arunachala bow down to Siva in the form of Sonachala from their places.

On its northern peak there is a banyan tree. Maheswara always sits beneath it in the guise of a siddha. Its shade always extends to a long distance around it. Even the gods look upon it in wonder. This hill (Arunachala) shines with eight lingas placed in the eight quarters and is worshipped by the protectors of the respective quarters. There are places here built by devas for the kings who are devotees of Siva and carry out his commands. There is a wish-fulfilling *bakula* tree at this place. Vamadeva who is well-versed in sastras meditates upon the Lord under it. Agastya and Vasishta worshipped the Lord of Aruna. Each consecrated a linga and adored it with pure austerities. In ancient days Sonanada the son of Hiranyagarbha performed severe austerities and made the Ganga appear here. That holy river now flows here as the Sona river. The sacred river named Vena flows round the hill. Bhagavan Marut bathed in the holy tank of Vayu in the quarter belonging to Vayu and became the life-breath (*prana*) of the world.

On the northern side is situated the holy tank of Kubera containing the golden lotuses of a sweet fragrance. In the quarter belonging to Isanya (north-east) is the holy tank of Isanya. The lotus-eyed Vishnu bathed in the holy tank on the western side and was (in consequence) adored by the goddess Kamala (Lakshmi). The nine planets acquired their status as a result of bathing in it. Those who bathe in that holy tank obtain the blessings of the nine planets. Durga, Vinayaka, Skanda, Kshetrapala, Sarasvati and other gods and goddesses dwell round the holy tank of Brahma and pro-

tect it. The Ganga, the Yamuna, the Godavari, the Sarasvati, the Narmada, the Sindhu, the Kaveri, the Sonanada and the Sona all adore Arunagiri unseen at all times on all sides.

All the holy waters of Svarga and earth which are capable of destroying the sins of the body (*atmakshetra*) abide here by the grace of Sonesa. It is well known that by bathing in the holy tank of Agastya on the southern side one acquires a knowledge of languages. Agastya bathes in it in the company of sages in the month of Bhadrapada and worships Arunadri. By bathing in the holy tank of Vasishta on the northern side one understands the meaning of the Vedas. Vasishta comes here from Mount Meru in the month of Asvija and, after bathing in it, meditates upon the Lord of Sona. In the month of Kartika the Ganga and all the other holy waters arrive here together and worship Arunadri with devotion. By worshipping the holy tank of Brahma in front of Arunadri great sins like killing a Brahmin are expiated. The Grandfather (Brahma) comes here daily in the month of Margali from the world of Brahma and, after bathing in it, offers flowers to Arunachala. In the month of Pushya, Mahendra comes here with the devas and, after bathing in it, salutes Sankara.

There is also a great *tirtha* named 'Saivam' in front of it (Arunachala). Rudra bathes in it holding in his hand the *Brahmakapala* (the skull of Brahma). Sambhu graciously dwells in it in the company of his followers in the month of Magha and thereby absolves people of their sins. Agni bathed in the auspicious Agni Tirtha situated in the quarter of Agni (south-east) and obtained Goddess Svaha (for his consort). Kama likewise bathed in it in the month of Panguni and, by worshipping Sonadri, became the lord of all pleasures. Brahmarishis always dwell joyfully at the Vaishnavateertha (sacred tank of Vishnu) on the south-east. Lakshmiapati (the Lord of Lakshmi, Vishnu) goes there in the month of Chitra and, after bathing in it, meditates upon the Lord of Arunadri. It is by doing so that he became the Lord of all the worlds,

The Surya Tirtha (sacred tank of Surya, the Sun) situated in the quarter of Kubera (north) is capable of curing all diseases. Bhagavan Surya comes there in the month of Vaikasi in the company of Valakhilyas and the Vedas and, after bathing in it, adores the Lord. The Asvini Devas bathed in the extremely pure Asvini Tirtha (sacred tank of the Asvins) situated in the quarter of Isa Brahma Uttara (north-east) and became pure. The Pandava Tirtha (sacred tank of the Pandavas) situated at the foot of Sonagiri is well known for its auspicious qualities and is capable of fulfilling desires and bestowing Liberation. The Pandavas bathed in it and became the lords of the world. Bhoo Devi (Goddess Earth) was blessed with all herbs, fruits, etc., as a result of bathing in it along with all the devas in the month of Jyeshtha and adoring Siva.

The Vaisvadeva Tirtha (sacred tank of the Visvedevas) situated in the quarter of Soma Surya Uttara (north-west) is famous for bestowing overlordship of the world. The Visvedevas, although very powerful, could not obtain their share of sacrifices. They therefore bathed in it in the month of Ashada and adored Siva and thereby overcame their disability. By bathing in the famous Indra Tirtha (sacred water of Indra) situated in the east, Goddess Lakshmi was wedded to a noble husband. By bathing in the Skanda Tirtha on the north, Skanda became very powerful. Agastya Kumbhaka and Kumbha always dwell in the Kumbha Tirtha on the west, famous for its holiness. The Ganga worships Arunachala at its feet, the Yamuna in the middle and the Narmada (Somodbhava) at the top.

There are many other tirthas also. Even the Rishi Markandeya did not know them all. That king of sages pleased the Lord by the greatness of his austerities, and lovingly begged for the following boon. Markandeya said : "Bhagavan Arunadri ! There are thousands of *tirthas*. They will not be visible to persons of little knowledge. How can men find them all in one place ? It is not possible for a man

### THE KNOWER

What cannot be thought with the mind, but that whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit ; and not what people here adore.

He comes to the thought of those who know him beyond thought, not to those who imagine he can be attained by thought. He is unknown to the learned and known to the simple.

— *Kena Upanishad.*

to worship them one by one. You must withdraw all your effulgence within yourself and stand as the Sonadri worshipped by all the devas who are afraid of approaching you."

I (Gautama) too, by virtue of my austerities, adored Siva who is Sonagiri and worshipped the invisible linga for the benefit of the entire world. A celestial pavilion was constructed here by Visvakarma. Various festivals and all kinds of enjoyments were introduced. Sages found several kinds of scriptures dealing with *dharma* and conducted the worship of Siva in accordance with them.

I too worshipped it (the Hill). I also appointed seven noble maidens sprung from the sacrificial fire for the worship of Siva. In olden days the Lord of Sonasaila was specially worshipped by many kings who had regained their kingdoms after conquering their enemies.

The glory of this experience (of adoring the Hill) is wonderful and sin-expiating. This linga in the form of a hill is taintless and is named Annamalai. The Lord of this Arunagiri who grants boons should always be meditated upon. It is the good fortune of noble souls who have acquired boundless merit that they can adore the Lord of Arunachala who protects his devotees and absolves them of sins the moment they think of Him. May you too meditate upon him and achieve your object.

(to be continued)

# VEDAPARAYANA

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## SRI RUDRAM

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### Chamakam

#### SECTION I

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**O** AGNI and Vishnu ! Be gracious to me.  
May I praise you more and more. Come  
with food and riches.

Let me not lack food. Let orders be issued  
to serve me food. Let the food be pure. Let  
my appetite be good. Let me accept the food.  
Let me perform sacrifices. Let me chant with  
the proper intonation. Let me chant hymns  
of praise. Let my exposition be skilful. Let  
me appreciate skilful exposition by others.  
May I be enlightened. May I attain heaven.  
Let the upward breath, the downward breath  
and the breath which pervades my body func-  
tion properly. Let the vital force function  
properly. Let my perceptive faculty be good.  
Let my speech, mind, eyes and ears be  
unimpaired. Let my organs of knowledge and  
action be unimpaired. Let my vital energy

be unimpaired. Let me have the power to  
quell my enemies. Let me live long. Let me  
live to a ripe old age. May I realize the Self.  
Let my body be healthy. May I be happy.  
Let me possess bodily armour. Let my limbs  
be whole and sturdy. Let my bones and joints  
be strong. Let all the organs in my body be  
healthy.

#### Section II

May I be distinguished in every way. May  
I be a chief of men. Let me feel righteous  
anger. Let me display my anger when required.  
Let my thoughts be inscrutable. Let me have  
plenty of pure, cool water. Let me always be  
victorious. Let me enjoy the fruits of victory.  
Let me be honoured by others. Let me acquire  
houses, lands etc. Let me have healthy sons  
and grandsons. Let my progeny increase.  
May I be rich. May I be distinguished by my  
learning. Let me speak truth always. Let  
me have faith. Let me possess movable and  
immovable property. Let me be affluent.  
Let me attract others and bring them under  
my power. Let my body be attractive. Let me  
engage in games, dances etc. and enjoy the  
pleasure arising from them. Let the children  
already born to me live long. Let the children  
that may be born hereafter live long. Let me  
chant the hymns praising gods and acquire  
merit thereby. Let the wealth already acquired  
by me and those which may be acquired  
by me be secure. Let the place where I and  
my relatives live be easily accessible. Let the  
path leading to it be safe. Let me reap the  
reward of the religious rites already performed  
by me and the rites which may be performed  
hereafter. Let me acquire wealth by proper  
means. Let me be efficient. Let my power  
of understanding ordinary matters as well as  
the highest truth be good.

#### Section III

May I be happy in this world and the next.  
May I possess desirable objects. May I desire  
to possess them. Let my desires be fulfilled.

Let me have loving relatives. Let me possess auspicious objects. Let me possess spiritual blessing. Let me possess a suitable place of residence. May I acquire fame. May I be lucky. May I acquire wealth. May I have a preceptor to guide me. May I have paternal support. May I have the ability to protect my possessions. May I never be perturbed. Let me be friendly to all (or possess the goodwill of all). May I be honoured by others. May I be learned in the scriptures. May I possess the ability to teach. May I possess the ability to take work from my sons, servants etc. May I possess ploughs and other agricultural implements and the ability to maintain them properly. May I perform religious works like sacrifices and enjoy their fruit. Let me be free from chronic diseases like consumption and acute diseases like fever. May I always possess suitable medicines. May I live long. May none be my enemy. May I be free from fear. May my conduct be always proper. May I have a good night. May I have a good dawn and a good day.

#### Section IV

May I have food in plenty. May my words be pleasing. May I have milk, cream, ghee and honey in plenty. May I have opportunities to eat and drink with my relatives. May I cultivate my lands. May there be rain. May my lands be fertile. May my trees and plants grow well. May I possess gold, precious stones, pearls etc., in plenty. May I be strong physically. May I have plenty of grains. May I have more and more of them. May I have them always. May I grow less important grains (like millets) as well as the more important grains (like wheat and rice). May I never go hungry. May I grow rice, barley, black gram, sesame, green gram, peas, wheat, red gram, wild rice, fine rice, *sama* rice and red rice.

#### Section V

May I have stones, earth, hills, mountains, sand, trees, gold, iron, lead, zinc, rock salt, copper and other metals, fire, water, plants,

herbs, cultivated crops, crops growing wild, domestic and wild animals suitable for sacrifice. Let the wealth already acquired by me as well as that which may be acquired hereafter be secure. May I and my sons and relatives be prosperous. May I possess movable and immovable property. May I perform religious works. May I be efficient. May I gain the reward of my acts. May I be happy. May I know how to attain happiness. May I attain happiness.

#### Section VI

May the gods Agni, Soma, Savita, Sarasvati, Pusha, Brihaspati, Mitra, Varuna, Thvashta, Dhata, Vishnu, the Asvins, the Maruts, Visvedevas, Prithvi, Antariksham, Dhyau, Diks, Moordha and Prajapati be auspicious to me. May Indra (to whom offerings are made during sacrifices along with each of these gods) be also auspicious to me.

#### Section VII

May I possess sacred vessels<sup>1</sup> named Amsu, Rashmi, Adabhya, Adhipati, Upamsu, Antaryama, Aindravayava, Maitravaruna, Asvina, Pratiprasthana, Sukra, Manthi, Agrayana, Vaisvadeva, Dhruva, Vaisvanara, Ritugraha, Atigraha, Aindragna, Vaisvadeva, Madutvatiya, Mahendra, Aditya, Savitra, Sarasvata, Paushna, Patnivata and Hariyojana.

#### Section VIII<sup>2</sup>

May I possess the sacred twigs, the sacred grass, the sacrificial altar, the platforms for the sacrificing priests, the ladles for pouring the offerings, the vessels for keeping the *soma* juice, the stones for pounding the *soma* creeper, the chips fallen while shaping the sacrificial post, the pits dug in the earth, the planks used for pressing out the *soma* juice, the pots called *drona*, *vayavya*, *bhootabrit* and *adhavaniya*,

<sup>1</sup> The vessels mentioned in this section are used for keeping the *soma* juice to be offered to the various gods at Vedic sacrifices.

<sup>2</sup> This section describes the various requisites of a Vedic sacrifice.

the raised platform called Agnidhra, the platform for keeping the sacrificial offerings (*havirdhana*), the pavilions for ladies (*griha*), the pavilions for the public (*sadas*), the offering named *purodasa* made of broken rice, and the sacrificial blocks called *pachatas*; May I have the sacred bath at the close of the sacrifice (*ayabhrta*) and burn the sacred fuel (*svagakara*).

#### Section IX

May I light the sacrificial fire. May I perform the religious rite known as gharma and the sacrifices known as Arka and Surya. May I make the offerings due to Prana. May I perform the horse-sacrifice (*Asvamedha*). May the gods Prithvi, Aditi, Diti and Dyaus be auspicious to me. May the poetic metre known as Sakvari be properly recited. May the fingers (parts of the Cosmic Person) and the directions of space be suitable for my sacrifice. May the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda, the hymn known as Stoma be properly chanted at my sacrifice. May austerities be practised by me properly. May the seasons be favourable for my sacrifice. May I practise the bodily austerities (like fasting at night).

May my crops flourish with rain falling night and day. May the chants called Brihat and Rathantara be properly chanted at my sacrifice.

#### Section X

May I by virtue of my sacrifice possess calves not yet dropped, calves which have been dropped, calves less than a year old, a year and half old bull calves, a year and a half old heifers, two year old bull calves, two year old heifers, two and a half year old bull calves, two and a half year old heifers, three year old bull calves, three year old heifers, three and a half year old bull calves, three and a half year old heifers, four year old bull calves, four year old heifers, stud bulls, barren cows, fully grown bulls, cows which have had a miscarriage, draught bulls and milch cows. May I live long. May my upward breath, downward

breath, equalising breath, eyes, ears, mind, speech and body function properly as a result of my sacrifice. May I perform more sacrifices as a result of this sacrifice.

#### Section XI

May I be endowed with one,<sup>1</sup> three, five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen, fifteen, seventeen, nineteen, twentyone, twentythree, twentyfive, twentyseven, twentynine, thirtyone and thirtythree as also four, eight, twelve, sixteen, twenty, twentyfour, twentyeight, thirtytwo, thirtysix, forty, fortyfour and fortyeight. May I possess food. May it be produced in plenty. May it be produced again and again. May I perform sacrifices. May the Sun, the ether, that came out of it, that appeared last, that appeared in the world, the world and the king be auspicious to me.

Ida invokes the gods, Manu performs sacrifices, Brihaspati chants mantras which produce joy. Visvedevas recite hymns. O Mother Prithvi (Earth) do no injury to me. I shall entertain sweet thoughts, do sweet deeds, make sweet offerings, speak sweet words, and speak honeyed words to the gods and attentive men. May the gods make them faultless. May they be approved by the *pitrs* (manes of ancestors).

OM Peace ! Peace ! Peace !

<sup>1</sup> The odd numbers one, three, five etc. are pleasing to the gods who number thirty-three (crores) while the even numbers like four, eight, etc., are pleasing to the beings on earth.

The numbers are sometimes interpreted as follows: 1 represents *prakriti* (nature), 3 the three *gunas* or modalities, 5 the five elements, 7 the seven organs of knowledge (along with the mind and the intellect), 9 the body with its nine openings, 11 the ten vital airs and the *sushumna nadi* upon which they depend, 13 the *devatas*, 15 the *nadis*, 17 the organs of the subtle body, 19 the medicinal herbs, 21 the vital parts of the body, 23 the deities who cause serious diseases, 25 the divine damsels in the body, 27 the *gandharvas*, 29 the *devas* in the lightning, 31 the worlds and 33 the *devas*.

4 represents the goals of human life, 8 the Vedas and Upavedas, 12 the six angas and six sastras, 16 the siddhis, 20 the elements, the senses, the physical and subtle bodies, 24 the syllables of the Gayatri metre, 28 the metre called *ushnik*, 32 the metre known as *anushtup*, 36 the metre known as *brihati*, 40 the metre known as *pankti*, 44 the metre known as *trishtub* and 48 the metre known as *jagati*.

RAMDAS SPEAKS: Vol. I (Rs. 2.50), Vol. II (Rs. 3), Vol. III (Rs. 3), Vol. IV (Rs. 3).  
Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7.

These four volumes reporting the talks and discussions of Swami Ramdas during his world tour make excellent reading and do full justice to the multi-faceted spiritual tradition of India. Every conceivable topic that could interest the seeker of higher values has been touched upon with an understanding and light that makes it spiritually rewarding to read these books.

Swami Ramdas followed the Way of Love and *nama-japa*, meditation on and repetition of the Name of God, was his *forte*. Speaking on *Japa*, he observes: "What is needed is that we should repeat the *mantra* with all love, faith and devotion. Even if we repeat it according to certain rhythm and pronunciation suitable for that particular *mantra* it may of course produce some harmonious vibrations in us, but surely it will not lead us to higher experience of union with God. We can derive real benefit only if we have intense love and devotion. The *mantra* purifies us thoroughly and attunes our mind with God so much so that we forget the body-idea and realise our oneness with Him."

*Bhakti*, Love for God, is of six kinds: "Looking at God as your Lord and worshipping Him as an image. In such a devotion your heart is filled with the sweet emotion of love and you experience joy. This is *shanta bhakti*. The second is *dasya bhakti*, joy in serving God, looking upon Him as Master. The third is *sakhya bhakti* in which you become a friend of God. The fourth is *vatsalya bhakti*, you look upon God as your child. The fifth is *madhurya bhakti* where the relationship between the devotee and God is sweet and loving beyond compare. They feel one with each other, and still maintain a separateness for the sake of enjoying the bliss of the play of love. The sixth is *sakhi bhakti* or *gopi bhakti*, rightly taken to be the highest form of *bhakti*. Whenever Radha and Krishna, after a long separation, were brought together by the efforts of the Gopis, they used to identify themselves alternately with Radha and Krishna and enjoy the bliss resulting from the meeting and also feel immense delight by being merely witnesses to their beatific reunion."

Among the many important subjects dealt with is that of Kundalini and the opening of the *chakras*. "It is not the physical body through which the Kundalini rises. It is psychic and has nothing to do with the spinal column. The *sushumna* through which she rises is not a part of the physical body. Surgeons have tried to find out, but failed. "When

## BOOK REVIEWS



### Swami Ramdas Speaks

the Kundalini comes to any one centre, certain peculiar symptoms become manifest in him. From the *Muladhara* when it rises to the *Swadhisthana*, the aspirant develops dispassion for worldly objects and enjoyments. When it reaches the *Manipura*, it is said that the man rejects everything relating to the enjoyments of his senses and his mind becomes more and more resolute to reach the Divine. When it comes to the heart centre, the *Anahata*, he develops one-pointed devotion to God, and love and compassion for all the creatures in the world. When the Kundalini reaches the *Vishuddhi Chakra*, at the throat, the aspirant is averse to talking about anything but God. From there it reaches the *Ajna Chakra* between the eye-brows, and he sees visions of divine forms, lights and flashes. When it reaches the highest *chakra*, the *Sahasrara*, at the crown of the head, the aspirant loses consciousness of the body and goes into *nirvikalpa samadhi*, in which he realises that he and God are one."

There are interesting references to other saints and Yogins, in the East and the West. Speaking of his own contact with Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, he records: "Ramdas met Ramana Maharshi in the year 1922. Thirty-three years ago Ramdas left his

place as a fakir, a wandering mendicant. He was continuously repeating 'Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Ram'. With this *mantra* on his lips he wandered from place to place and was led by a Sadhu to Tiruvannamalai where Maharshi lived. Maharshi was sitting on a raised seat. He had only a loin-cloth and nothing else on his body. Ramdas paid his respects to him and sat down. A few minutes afterward Ramdas got up, went near Maharshi and standing before him with folded hands prayed for his grace. Maharshi then looked into Ramdas's eyes intensely for one or two minutes. Ramdas's whole body thrilled and he felt a joy which he could not express in words. Maharshi poured light and grace into Ramdas profusely through his eyes, and shook his head as much as to convey that he had answered Ramdas's prayer. He did not speak a word. From there Ramdas went straight to the Arunachala hill and remained in a cave for twenty days. Day and night he was repeating the *Ram Mantra* without break. After twenty days, when he came out of the cave one morning, he saw the light of God everywhere. His eyes were filled with that light and he was full of joy and ecstasy. He now sees God everywhere and everybody as God."

**BUDDHIST POEMS :** By Christmas Humphreys.  
Pub.: George Allen & Unwin, London. Pp. 59.  
Price : £0.98.

Comprising a representative selection from the sensitive poetry written by Dr. Humphreys during the past fifty years of his life, this volume contains the cream of his thinking on a variety of subjects, viz., nature, war, love, Zen, void, self etc. Steeped as he is in Buddhist thought and meditation practice, it was inevitable that the Buddhist perspective should provide the background and the theme for most of his poems.

Some of his lines recall pregnant passages from the ancient Upanishads :

"It lives and moves. It changes not. It is,  
Within without, to all men visible.  
In laughter, love and in our vanities  
It is, divided, indivisible.  
It is beyond, and more. It has no being."  
(In search of nothing')

Compare :

"That moves and that moves not; That is far  
and the same is near; That is within all this  
and That also is outside all this."  
(*Isha Upanishad*, 6)

In the poem 'Beyond' which is partly autobiographical, the author had, it seems, concluded with the following line :

"The search is ended; there is no beyond."

On reading it "An elderly Buddhist friend, puzzled, said, 'So there is no beyond?', I tore my hair and added a couplet."

And the couplet runs :

"Save in the vast immeasurable bliss,  
Beyond beyond, of here and now and this."

**TEN SAINTS OF INDIA :** By T. M. P. Mahadevan. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 147. Price : Rs. 3.

Introducing the *Ten Saints of India*<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mahadevan enters into a useful discussion as to who is a saint, who a philosopher and who a sage. He points out the fallacies in common thinking on the subject and shows how a genuine saint is all together — a sage, a philosopher, a mystic. "The term 'saint' will cover all these types of spiritual genius : *jnanis* like Suka, *bhaktas* like Narada, *raja-yogis* like Viswamitra, and *karma-yogis* like Janaka. These, however, are not exclusive types; Suka, the wise, was a devotee as well; Narada, the devotee, possessed wisdom too; and the same is the case with Viswamitra and Janaka. All of them had wisdom, devotion, self-control and the spirit of service." (p. 4)

While on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the writer describes a memorable meeting that brought the same into limelight :

"In 1903 there came to Tiruvannamalai a great Sanskrit scholar and *savant* Ganapati Sastri known also as Ganapati Muni because of the austerities he had been observing. He had the title *kavya-kantha* (one who had poetry at his throat), and his disciples addressed him as *nayana* (father). He was a specialist in the worship of the Divine as Mother. He visited Ramana in the Virupaksha cave quite a few times. Once in 1907 he was assailed by doubts regarding his own spiritual practices. He went up the hill, saw Ramana sitting alone in the cave, and expressed himself thus : 'All that has to be read I have read; even *Vedanta-sastra* I have fully understood; I have done *japa* to my heart's content; yet I have not up to this time understood what *tapas* is. Therefore I have sought refuge at your feet. Pray enlighten me as to the nature of *tapas*.' Ramana replied : 'If one watches whence the notion "I" arises, the mind gets absorbed there, that is *tapas*. When a *mantra* is repeated, if one watches whence that *mantra* sound arises, the mind gets absorbed there; that is *tapas*.' To the scholar this came as a revelation; he felt the grace of the sage enveloping him. He it was that proclaimed Ramana to be *Maharshi* and *Bhagavan*." (pp. 128-9)

A book that purifies the heart and elevates the mind.

<sup>1</sup> (1) Tirujnana Sambandhar; (2) Tirunavukkarasu; (3) Sundaramurti; (4) Manikkavachakar; (5) Nammalvar; (6) Andal; (7) Sankara; (8) Ramanuja; (9) Sri Ramakrishna; (10) Ramana Maharshi.

**SOME STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS:** By R. R. Diwakar. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Pp. 39. Price: Re. 1.

The author's treatment of the subject of consciousness, in these two lectures, reveals a happy blend of Eastern thought and the trends of psychology of the West. The theme is the development of consciousness so as to arrive at a fuller inner knowledge. Man is today in the forefront of the evolutionary advance of Nature only because — despite his lesser physical strength as compared to the animal evolution — he has the capacity of conscious self-direction; it is to be developed and organised so as to be an effective factor in one's life. In most it is a potency left unexploited.

Diwakarji discusses eleven states of consciousness, viz. the *normal waking state*; *day-dreaming*; *dream-state*; *imagination*; *inspiration*; *exaltation/ecstasy*; *sleep*; temporary states like *Swoon* when one is rendered unconscious due to some physiological condition; *turiya* or the fourth state, constant abiding in the Self; the state of transcendence, *turiyatita*. The actualisation of this state while living in the body is the *jivanmuktavastha*, liberation while yet in body.

In the course of this fruitful discussion the author refers to the question of drugs as aids to the development and liberation of mental consciousness. Rightly he points out — with the testimonies of eminent authorities — that the effect of drugs is temporary and unhealthy while that of conscious development as in Yoga is permanent and wholesome. We may add that the effect of drugs is to weaken and destroy the *conscious-will* that chiefly distinguishes man from other creatures. It dehumanises him and thrusts his state backwards in the evolutionary progression. It is because this central co-ordinating factor of will in the mind is weakened that all kinds of non-regulated movements of the sub-conscious, imaginative and the subliminal ranges of one's being rush forth and have a field day. The reaction is one of exhaustion, of mental chaos, not one of gathered strength, of perennial joy.

Yoga, it has been pointed out in these pages, is a way of methodical and successful development of one's self-knowledge. The aim of Nature is indeed precisely this; Yoga is an accelerated process towards this end, while Nature's process is slow and largely unconscious. By an inner discipline and enlarging self-awareness, self-upliftment, self-enlargement, it is possible to arrive at the highest development of consciousness — unitive and liberated — that man is capable of. Diwakarji repeatedly draws attention to certain features of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga in this connection and calls for a determined effort

for the evolution of a consciousness in which "eternal delight and supernal ecstasy is a permanent possession and all manifestation, thinking and action are but sport, *Lila*."

A profound subject delightfully presented.

M. P. PANDIT.

**YOGA SELF-TAUGHT:** By Andre van Lysebeth (translated by Carola Congreve). Pub.: Allen & Unwin Ltd., U.K. Pp. 260. Price: £ 3.00.

The spread of *Hatha Yoga* in the West has resulted in innumerable publications on the subject and a vast number of the so called 'yoga schools'. Many are the dangers and misgivings of following *Hatha Yoga* techniques without sufficient guidance.

*Yogasanas* to be effective demand precision in every detail or it may work counter to the end in view. Yoga aims essentially at the revitalization of the body and the purification of the para-nervous system amongst its many variants.

This book fills a gap in giving detailed guidance and descriptions of main postures for beginners with more elaborate variants for those more advanced, how to practice them in safety with the help of instructions and expositions complete in every detail as to the physiological and mental effects to be derived from this technique. The *asanas* are given in stages of ever increasing difficulty ensuring an easy flow and maximum benefit from their mastery. Yoga does not sanction acrobatics. One should aim at perfect ease and relaxation of muscles with minimum force in the dynamic stage leading to mastery of mind and body!

These well balanced and intelligent expositions with the fullest possible details of instruction at every stage and many excellent photographs indicating both the right and wrong postures should prove most useful for those wishing to learn *Hatha Yoga* on their own.

L. OSBORNE.

**INSTEAD OF A BIOGRAPHY:** By Gustav Emil Mueller. Pub.: Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 237. Price: \$ 5.95.

Dr. Mueller, a philosopher who follows Plato in using philosophy as dialectic, has in this well-chosen and deftly arranged anthology achieved a minor literary triumph while presenting his life and thought as an epitome as well as criticism of contemporary history. A German Swiss who became an American citizen, Dr. Mueller is equally at home in the New World and the Old, in English and German, in poetry and drama as in philosophical prose. The letters and lectures that make up the present volume combine the precision and authority of the philo-



sopher with the movement, colour and body of a poet's prose. The reader cannot easily forget the rhapsodies on the dog Argos, or the freighter which is so much more organic and human than a liner, or the game of chess and the walking stick, or the pipe and the guitar.

The author's thesis is that "in the New World as in the Old the human spirit is one and indivisible"; his method is "immanent criticism, criticism from within," amounting almost to self-criticism. The living unity of opposites, the fruitful tension between two poles both accepted as valid, constitutes our human life, for man is stretched between existence and idea, between "I" and "the notion of 'I'", between life as the content of thought and thought as the content of life.

Dwelling on the gifts of Greece to the ancient world and of Switzerland to the modern world, Dr. Mueller interprets history not as a current of events, but as "ocean waves, moving but static at the same time"; the only progress is "progress in the consciousness of freedom." Man finds freedom in wholeness and oneness, through religion which binds him to the Absolute in the language of personifying faith and worship and through philosophy which binds him to the Absolute in the language of logical reflection. As pieces of a shattered mirror reflect the same Sun, different symbols and approaches point to the wholeness and holiness of being. The Absolute incarnates itself in its own opposite, the finite and suffering human creature. Though human problems are "sharable and mutual," we must respect the "otherness of others."

Secular ideologies destroy human values; all pragmatisms are equally false. Every exclusive loyalty breeds "an empty and negative hysteria of hatred." Idealism transcends the narrow confines of "blood and soil." Nazism absolutizing a nation and Marxism absolutizing a class are artificial pseudo-philosophies which, erecting a fact into a principle, poison the well of truth and tend to divide humanity.

K. S.

JAPA : By M. P. Pandit. Pub.: Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2. Pp. 41. Price : Rs. 2.

This booklet is divided into two parts. In the first part the author explains how the *mantra* that we repeat in *japa* comes to be charged with spiritual power. The seers of old perceived that Reality reveals itself as primordial sound in manifestation evolved from this sound-substance. Each form in creation has its sound equivalent which the seers have crystallised into *mantras*.

If a *mantra* is repeated particularly with full awareness of its meaning with a heart overflowing with love and adoration for the Deity which according to the author represents the *mantra* then its true nature will be revealed and the devotee merges in the Beloved. This is the perfection of *mantra japa*.

The author elucidates with intuitive understanding the various *mantras* in use so that they seem to come to life.

The second part of the booklet sets forth the special form of *Gayatri* used by Sri Aurobindo and gives its rendering in English.

This little book is a powerful vindication of the *mantra* and can be heartily recommended to those drawn to the practice of *mantra japa*.

THE TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD OF SUBLIME EDUCATION : By M. R. Desai. Pub.: Susheela Desai, 306, E. Ward, Kolhapur. Pp. 96 & xvii. Price : Rs. 10.

As the title of the book indicates, the author looks upon the *Taittiriya Upanishad* as setting forth the theory and practice of education. "This Upanishad is an edict on education" (p. 3). . . . "The avowed purpose of this Upanishad is education". . . . "The first five *anuvakas* (of the *Sikshavalli*) deal with the explanation of what education is" (p. 11). . . . "The hermitages were the training school, and the seer-sages Principals" (p. 29). . . . "Education in these hermitages is a unique heritage, precious possession and proud wearing" (p. 31).

The author sees in this Upanishad the *Shatcakra Yoga* and the steps leading to the final union in the *Sahasrara Kamala*. "The sage is speaking of *Raja Yoga*. He is outlining the stages of progress. First the serpentine is to be awakened with the proper observance of *yamas* and *niyamas*. When the serpentine rises beyond the first palate, it starts yielding boons. The controlled *siddha* taps super-sensual powers" (p. 36). "Where that thin end of the hair takes a sudden turn and leads for the *Sahasrara*-lotus centre at the skull bone, it brings in its wake clarity of understanding" (p. 37). "The creeper of life, properly nourished, yields sweeter and sweeter flowers till it acquires the supreme sweet perfume of the *Sahasrara*, the thousand-petalled *Brahma*-lotus" (p. 51).

Reading this Upanishad with these pre-conceived notions in his mind, it is no wonder that the author misses its real teaching. In the preface that he attaches to each of the three sections of the Upanishad he gives something like a summary of the teaching but it has little bearing on the main theme.

He does not seem to follow the interpretation of any of the acharyas. In fact, he is critical of them and declares that they have missed the point of several statements. Referring to the word *Akasa* occurring in *Taittiriya* I.vi.1 the author writes: "Unfortunately the commentators have missed the point (of this word)" (p. 33). He seems to follow his own line which is more subjective than realistic. He gives the translation of the whole Upanishad, but it is very often fanciful. "The body-dweller person is built of five sheaths of rising importance: the breath-filled, the culture-soaked, the spirit-charged and the joy-radiating." This is the author's translation of the five sheaths.

The flawless printing and the nice get-up of the book are attractive features.

**MAHABHARATA:** By C. Rajagopalachari.  
Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.  
Pp. 332. Price: Rs. 2.50.

This book by C. Rajagopalachari whom, K. M. Munshi, the general editor of the series, characterises as 'one of the greatest of living Indians', needs no review or introduction to the public except in the way of welcoming its tenth edition. That it has already run through nine editions and a lakh and a half number of copies have been sold is proof positive of its unparalleled popularity. The public are athirst for more copies of the book and to meet this need the tenth edition has been issued with fifty thousand copies.

This immense popularity can only be partly accounted for by reference to the intrinsic merit of the story and the great skill of the author in narrating it. The main story, disengaged from all adventitious material, is handled with consummate art. It moves at a rapid pace always keeping the curiosity of the reader on edge.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata have sunk deep into the innermost recesses of the nation's heart. Naturally any artistic and faithful presentation of the great events enshrined in them and the part played by the god-men of the heroic age evokes a sympathetic chord in the mind of the people and serves to reawaken the old stored-up memories.

It is no exaggeration to say that the characters and incidents portrayed in the epics have served to mould the character of the nation much more powerfully than the personages and events recorded in our history. These two epics have also served through the ages to bring the people of this vast subcontinent together and make them feel that they

belong to the same nation. Undoubtedly Vyasa and Valmiki are two of our great nation-builders.

We join the author in the appeal that he makes to the young men in schools and colleges to read this book. For want of opportunities to study Sanskrit, they can have no access to the original. They will do well to read at least this book.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

**WHAT IS RELIGION?:** By T. B. Pahlajani.  
Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Pp. 76.  
Price: Re. 1.

In this booklet the author has dealt with Religion in a systematic way and has made a strong case for Advaita Vedanta (as propounded by the great Sankara), which according to him is a real way of life even in modern times and for all times. He defines 'Religion' as the art of living through right action — how to live our daily life in harmony with ourself and others. He further states that there are three reasons for the quest of religion: (1) Happiness; (2) Knowledge; and (3) Evolution, and deals with each in a clear, simple and convincing manner, giving homely examples. "The world is neither good nor bad," he says. "It depends on your mind, how you look at it." Further he tries to answer the fundamental questions of man: "What is creation? How is God related to it? What is the role of Maya? Who is Man? What is his relation to the world? What is Meditation? etc." Finally he gives in brief the metaphysics and ethics of Advaita Vedanta with special reference to subjects like salvation, *vasanas*, *karma*, faith, re-incarnation etc. and states its supreme value as the true religion. "Advaita philosophy of the Hindus," he rightly states, "is said to solve most of the riddles of life." No important topic is excluded and the discussion on the whole is comprehensive. There are wise thoughts — 'points to ponder and live' — scattered throughout, e.g. "Happiness does not lie in the fulfilment of desires but in their curtailment, i.e. self control." "Some devotees claim to see God and other occult phenomena. This is absurd as God cannot be seen with eyes nor can mind cognise Him." "Love all, love even thine enemy, for the same God is in every one."

Statements like "Long before the Vedic era, society in India was divided into four watertight compartments — *Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Sudras*" are debatable.

A useful, intellectual, simple guide to aspirants and sincere devotees.

PROF. G. V. KULKARNI

**RULERS OF THE MIND : MIND AT THE END OF ITS TETHER :** By Alden D. Starr, M.D. Price : \$ 4.95.

**THE PHILOSOPHICAL LIFE OF THE SENSES :** By Donald Burton Kuspit. Both published by The Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 125. Price : \$ 3.95.

Dr. Starr has attempted in his little book to predict how an era of social and cultural evolution can be brought about by charting the antecedent patterns that can in time bring forth the progress needed in social affairs to correspond to the vast array of technological potential man has acquired so far. The book can also serve as a guide for the evolution of social function and social structure so that man may indeed survive to reap his harvests. As the title indicates, man who has been long subject to the law of reason has since abandoned the previously prevailing law of passion but in that very process of becoming a most rational animal is also likely to fall victim to the most dictatorial, cruel, overwhelming and sinister ruler of all — the Mind, which as Oriental philosophy rightly points out, is the slayer of the Real.

In his study of the inter-relationship between personality and social crisis, the author has correlated history, philosophy and psychology by exploring the evolution of the mental processes. The several stages by which the present position has been reached is clearly detailed under the various heads of man as the king, the shaman, the priest, the merchant, the scientist and the politician.

Ideas have become institutions and their rule is by reasoning where such virtues as privacy, compassion, love, art forms, spontaneous group identifications, spiritual convictions and other qualities of life have been thrown overboard. The latter were the only investment of mankind down the centuries and today the intellect has usurped them all, regarding them as "regressive, wasteful, inefficient, degrading and worse yet — stupid".

It is doubtful, therefore, whether such a despotism of Reason can at all solve the problems created by the existence of man on earth for man, the other creatures and earth itself, as long as his full creative potentialities are not recognised outside the sphere of the intellect. Human potentialities, it will be admitted, lie in his nature which ranges from biology to theology and covers the realms from molecular structure to the universe.

Donald Kuspit has also tackled the same subject of the mind from another angle more in a poetic vein. According to him :

"mind is a cool, clear pond in a private garden, a privileged fountain invisible to all but the private passion of the philosopher, a fountain watering neat hedges and rising from some unquestioned underearth source of suffering, some stream in the mud and slush beneath the privileged surface."

Many other subjects like truth, solitude, wisdom, sensibility, art, etc., are discussed in this delightful volume from the existentialist point of view. Being a series of essays about the relationship between life and philosophy, this book seeks to establish the identity and significance of the philosopher in our baffling times. The style highlights the irrelevance of purely rationalistic activities by which man has "built himself a prison, by locking himself away from life".

**VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE TO THE YOUTH :** By V. K. R. V. Rao. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Price : Rs. 4.

Who would not be inspired by the message of the "young artist prince of the Renaissance", as Romain Rolland once described the Swamiji? Here is published the Avinashilingam 61st Birthday Commemoration Lectures (1970) delivered by Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao (Vijayendra Kasturi Ranga Varadaraja Rao, erstwhile Union Minister of Education). Everyone is aware of the true story of the tumultuous, restless youth turning into a Vedantic philosopher by the alchemical power of Ramakrishna's influence. One could exclaim with Shakespeare :

"Never was such a sudden philosopher made ;  
Never came reformation in a flood,  
With such a heady currance, scouring faults ;  
Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness  
So soon did lose his seat, and all at once "

as in this "favourite of youth and arbiter of fashion" of Bengal.

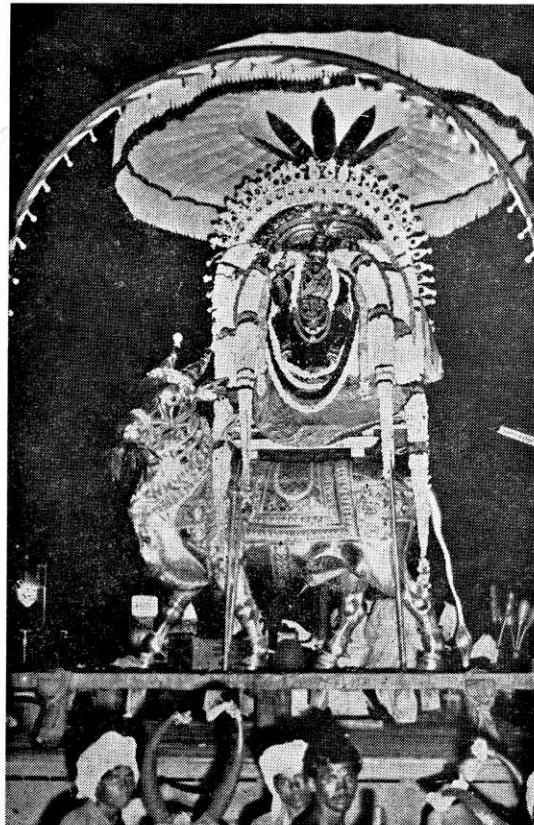
Swami Vivekananda's message has a topical appeal today when the country is passing through troubled times and when divisive forces are at work in the shape of communalism, linguism, casteism, regionalism and all other 'isms' conducive to bring about a crisis. Divided under the three sections : patriotic, educational and religious — these lectures bring out the salient teachings of the Swamiji, which were primarily intended to awaken youth to their full responsibilities and to build a new religion of humanism by making man the centre and fulfilment of the universe.

ARGUS.

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# ASHRAM BULLETIN

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## SIGNIFICANCE OF DEEPAM

The *Deepam* at Tiruvannamalai is one of the most important and largely attended festivals of India. Not merely a grand show or an impressive ritual it carries a profound spiritual significance pointed out by Sri Bhagavan. *Darshan* of *Deepam* is therefore all the more inspiring for His devotees. The significance of seeing the Beacon lit on top of Arunachala has been explained by Sri Bhagavan in the following verse :

“ Getting rid of the ‘I-am-the-body’ idea and merging the mind into the heart to realize the Self as non-dual Being and the Light of all is the real significance of *darshan* of the beacon of the light on *Annamalai*,<sup>1</sup> the centre of the universe.”

— *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, p. 82

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**A**N ancient and famous episode resulting in the manifestation of Lord Siva, the Ocean of Grace, as the Arunachala Hill may be mentioned :

Brahma and Vishnu who came into existence from the Supreme Effulgence, which is the Eternal Siva, once got caught up in an argument out of egoism and started a fight. Seeing the terrible rage into which they had fallen, the Lord thought in this manner : “ If I do not reveal myself immediately to these two and stop the fight the world will cease to exist. Each creature considers himself superior to every other. The one who cannot realize and concede equality or superiority to

another must necessarily suffer defeat and fall. If I reveal myself in a definite form somewhere in the world even a mean human being can attain me the moment he thinks of me.” Having so decided the Eternal Siva manifested Himself as a blazing column of fire before the disputants. It transcended all the worlds and its limits could not be seen. An aerial voice said : “ He who finds out the beginning or the end of it is the greater of the two.” Brahma and Vishnu thereupon decided to discover the ends of the column of fire. Vishnu in the form

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<sup>1</sup> Arunachala.

of a huge boar began very vigorously to dig into the earth to find the lower end. Brahma flew up in the sky in the form of a swan. Even after seeking for millions and millions of years it was not possible to find out the source of that beginningless column of fire. Seeing them tired and distressed, unable to find the ends of the column, Lord Siva appeared before them in a concrete form with the object of enlightening them and granting them boons. At their request Lord Siva took the form of the motionless *linga*, Arunachala. It is known as the *tejolinga* (effulgent *linga*). In commemoration of its origin the *Deepam* is lit every year on the Hill, symbolising the victory of Light over the darkness of delusion.

This year too Tiruvannamalai celebrated the annual *Karthigai Deepam* in the usual festive manner from November 22 to December 1. The ten-day festival which culminates in the lighting of the *Deepam* on the top of the Arunachala Hill attracts huge crowds. It is a wonderful sight to see them circumambulating the Hill like a garland of flowers, men mostly in white and the women in colourful saris.

The image of Lord Arunachaleswara is taken out in procession morning and evening along with those of Lord Ganesa, Lord Subramanya, Goddess Unnamulai and Chandikeswara, with excellent decorations, made up of flowers and ornaments of gold and precious stones. Different *vahanams* (mounts for the images) are used, some of which are a speciality of the Arunachaleswara Temple. The *Kamadhenu-Kalpaka Vriksha* (the wish-yielding cow and the wish-yielding tree) and the *Vrishaba* (silver bull) — picture on the opposite page — mounts are unique features.

Crowds wait on the four main streets through which the processions pass for *darshan*, some go to the temple proper and a good many to the Ashram. The eagerly awaited finale is when the *Deepam* is lit in a huge cauldron on top of the Hill, at the precise moment when the moon rises with the setting sun still visible on the horizon. These elements, sun, moon and fire, symbolise the three eyes of Lord Siva (who is known as *Somasuryagni-lochana*).

It has been the practice to light the *Deepam* in the Ashram at the moment of seeing the first glimmer of it on the Hill and Sri Bhagavan Himself used to be present on the spot, watching the Hill with a steady and attentive gaze. Following the practice, Sri Bhagavan's portrait is installed on a chair used by Him and all devotees gather round it to watch the *Deepam*. It is a very solemn function and the congregation includes regular devotees,

Indian and foreign, as well as visitors. Old devotees chant the *Aksharamanamalai* (*The Marital Garland of Letters*) of Sri Bhagavan on Sri Arunachala which is followed by distribution of *prasada* to all present. Devotees go round the Hill after dinner. This year too the function was observed in all detail.

During *Deepam*, we had the pleasure of having amidst us the following earnest devotees at the Ashram :

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, University of Madras, Madras  
Smt. Suseela Parthasarathy, Madras  
Dr. Subhadra, Madras  
Sri N. Sambasivan, Water Diviner, Madras  
Dr. & Mrs. C. Satyanarayana, Madras  
Sri S. V. Ram, Madras  
Dr. Vajreswari and her mother, Tuticorin  
Sri R. Ramamurthy, Neyveli  
Dr. M. B. Bhaskaran, Pondicherry  
Sri K. Padmanabhan and his brother, Bangalore  
Sri V. V. Chandra Sekhar, Industrialist, Bangalore and his son and daughter-in-law  
Mr. & Mrs. Nanjundiah, Bangalore  
Mr. & Mrs. N. V. Nilakantan, New Delhi  
Sri & Smt. M. Venkatarama, Sri Lakshman Ashram, Nellore  
Dr. W. Radhakrishnayya, Pakala  
Sri & Smt. K. Prabhakara Rao, Hyderabad  
Sri M. Satyanarayana Raju of Jinnur and Sri B. Seshagiri Rao of Vijayawada, brought nearly 35 Andhra devotees and spent a few days in prayers and contemplation. They came specially to witness the *Deepam*.

A party of nearly 20 tourists from Singapore came by special arrangements to take part in the *Deepam* festival. Though they did not stay in the Ashram yet they were very happy to spend the whole day and the evening at the Ashram and left only after having *darshan* of the *Deepam* from the Ashram.

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#### ACTIVITIES OF RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

On November 1 after the usual *Veda Parayana* and devotional songs, Sri Swami Anuananda (Sadhu Parthasarathy), addressed a large gathering of devotees on "Sri Ramana Maharshi, a *Siddha Purusha*". The weekly *satsang* was held as usual on Sundays and holidays in various parts of the city.

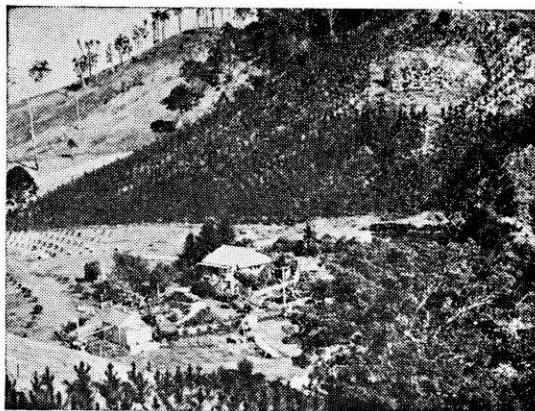
Srimathi M. S. Subbulakshmi has kindly agreed to give a benefit concert on February 12, 1972 at Delhi, in aid of the Building Fund of the Kendra. The premium for the site has been paid. A lady devotee has endowed a sum of Rs. 10,008/- to

meet in perpetuity the yearly rent. The construction work is expected to be taken up shortly.

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### RAMANA SHRINE AT AUSTRALIA

Mr. & Mrs. Lederman, staunch devotees of Sri Bhagavan and enthusiastic readers of our journal, sent us a couple of photos (one of which is published hereunder) representing a Hill rising behind their house on their estate in Obi Obi in Australia.



This hill they want to name 'Arunachala' and build a shrine above the pine trees so as to celebrate there the *Karthigai Deepam*. This is in addition to a little temple already constructed which they have dedicated to Sri Ramana Maharshi.

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### BIRTHDAY FUNCTIONS AT ASHRAM

Since the thirties Sri Krishna Sastrigal has been serving as the Vedic teacher at the Ashram *Veda Patasala*. In addition to teaching *Yajur Veda* to students, he conducts the chanting of the *Veda Parayana*,<sup>1</sup> both in the morning and evening at the Samadhi Shrine of Sri Bhagavan. This *Veda Parayana* was being done even during the life-time of Sri Bhagavan.

The inmates of the Ashram and devotees of Sri Bhagavan had the pleasures of participating in the *Sashtiabdhapurti* (completion of 60 years) celebration of Sri Sastrigal on Dec. 22, conducted strictly according to tradition. Sri Sastrigal expresses his gratitude to all the devotees of Sri Bhagavan who helped him generously to celebrate the function successfully.

Sri Venkatasubramania Iyer, the Ashram head-cook who has been with us for three years, recently celebrated his 61st birthday. The connected rituals were elaborate and performed at the Ashram *Veda*

*Patasala*. Members of his family from Madras and other relatives attended the function and he received felicitations from inmates and other devotees present. All were treated to *bhiksha*.

We wish them many happy returns of the day!

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### PILGRIMS

Patricia Freitas came to the Ashram from Hawaii for the first time in October for a stay of about seven weeks. She was introduced to Sri Bhagavan's teaching by her friend, Mr. Jean Dunn, who was to have joined her here on Nov. 15. Jean Dunn did not turn up at the appointed time owing to an accident on the way. There were anxious moments for most of us here and above all for Patricia, but her surrender enabled her to remain serene and have faith that whatever happens has a purpose and is for the best! She left earlier than expected to be with her friend, though every moment spent here was very precious and of great significance to her. She found here what she had been seeking knowingly or unknowingly all her life!

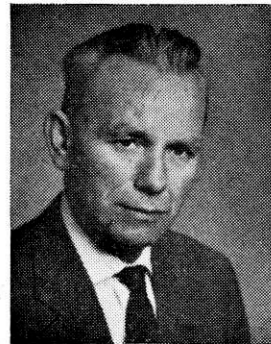
\* \* \*

Sisters Sarah Grant and W. Ward of Sophia College, Bombay, stayed at the Ashram for two weeks in October. Both sisters are very serious and discriminating students of Advaita and Sister Sarah is busy working on a thesis on these lines for her Ph.D. in Indian philosophy. The study of Advaita she finds very rewarding.

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Mr. Heinz Andra of West Germany, who first visited the Ashram in 1968, came again in October-November this year. He finds his attraction for Arunachala growing day by day. This is what he writes:

"In 1968, three years ago, when I was here for the first time I was surprised about the spiritual atmosphere of this place and I vowed to myself to be again there as soon as possible. My longing for Arunachala was increasing from year to year.



Mr. Heinz Andra

<sup>1</sup> An English translation of which is being serialised in our journal.

Now, in 1971, I took my holidays for a second stay in the Ashram and spent there a most remarkable time of four weeks. Sri Bhagavan's Grace manifested itself through his devotees, especially one of them, a permanent resident, who doesn't want to be mentioned, was most helpful.

My thanks for Sri Bhagavan's Grace and Guidance and for the aid of all others will be expressed in a rigorous continuation of my sadhana, as taught by Sri Bhagavan, with sincerity and perseverance.

I am also grateful to the Ashram management for their kindness. It helped me to feel at home in the Ashram very soon.

With Sri Bhagavan's Grace I hope to return to the Ashram in a few years!"

Mr. & Mrs. Earl Rosner of U.S.A. (for an account of whom see our Jan. 1969 issue, p. 66) came again in October and stayed for a week.

Sri Gulzarilal Bhargava of Delhi visited the Ashram this year also, staying for a month during October-November.

Miss Yvonne Douquet and Miss Jacqueline Leprince from France (for a note on whom see our April 1970 issue, p. 106), who arrived in October along with Miss Judith Annie, plan a long stay as before. Miss Annie, however, had to leave in November; but not without a desire to come again! Miss Yvonne and Miss Jacqueline manage such visits by accumulating extra leave and wages working overtime, as many other Western devotees also do!

Mrs. Marlies Hibschenberger of West Germany, who was here in 1968 (see *Ashram Bulletin* of April, '68, p. 160), has come again intending to stay long.

Mrs. Brigitte Sundin of France (for a reference to whom see our April 1967 issue, p. 169) repeating her visit arrived at the Ashram in the last week of October for a longer stay.

Master Subramania of Ceylon, with his disciple Mr. Mark, spent a few hours at the Ashram on November 4 and met some of the inmates. The Ashram President assured him that his followers, who expected to visit the Ashram some time in April, 1972, will get a warm reception.

Mrs. Anne Reeder (see Jan. 1969 issue, p. 66) left for the States with her infant girl, Ananda. Ananda's grandparents want her there for Christmas

and hence the trip! Essie, Anne's sister also spent a month at the Ashram. Mr. Charles Reeder is staying on and both Anne and Essie are expected to be back at the Ashram in January!

Major K. S. Abdul Gaffar of Mangalore, who came with a party of twelve devotees in the middle of November is another staunch devotee. It is like a family gathering to be in the midst of devotees so dedicated to Sri Bhagavan!

Sri V. Srinivasan, chartered accountant, Bangalore, who came during Deepam, is the eldest son of Sri R. V. Raghavan, a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. Accompanying him were Sri Gurdev Singh, Sri S. Banerji and Sri V. T. Surappa, all industrialists from Bangalore. The sight of the Deepam made a profound impression on them. They found the teachings of Sri Bhagavan very inspiring.

Mr. Erich Wilzbach, the brother-in-law of our resident-devotee, Mr. Hugo Maier, though drawn to Sri Bhagavan after hearing and reading His teachings, could come from Germany only this year in October. He stayed for a month at the Ashram and has written the following after return to Bensheim:

"Many Arunachala-friends, who have been to our home in Germany, told us of Tiruvannamalai again and again so that I believed

I knew much about this place. But when I first came to Sri Ramanasramam it was a surprise all the same! The atmosphere, in which I found myself after entering the Ashram gates, was much more powerful than I had imagined.

Difficulties, better supposed difficulties, faded to nothing. An unobtrusive but very strong guidance which I received, helped to more clearness and showed the right way. Very helpful was also the meeting with old devotees of the Master and with friends from all over the world, who follow the path Bhagavan pointed out.

Back in Germany I miss so much: at first the majestic Hill and the places with the most powerful vibration in the Ashram, but also the many dear



Mr. Erich Wilzbach



friends, the eating in the remarkable dining hall and the last but not least the animals, from the kind Ashram dogs and the peacocks to the hungry monkeys who paid me a visit at the very last day of my stay to help themselves to some presents I hadn't offered freely enough.

If I had to express my fundamental mood after returning home I would choose the *Ode to Joy* from Beethoven to which music-loving devotees of the Ashram gave a new text containing words of Sri Muruganar.

It goes without saying that one is earnest to repeat a joyful and rewarding experience. I hope Sri Bhagavan will bring me back to Tiruvannamalai in the future, this time with my wife and my daughter!

Ganesh, one of the friends who was always ready to help, said in a letter that Sri Bhagavan's Ashram is the real Home for us all. How right he is!

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Miss Suzanne Bautze of U.S.A. is staying in the Ashram for the past one year, being introduced to Sri Bhagavan and to the Ashram by Mrs. Barbara Rose (see *Ashram Bulletin* of April 1970, p. 105). She is happy to communicate the following to brother-devotees:



Miss Suzanne Bautze

"A year has passed here now at beloved Arunachala like the pure and holy water that flows from Skandashram. To be taken up by Sri Bhagavan has indeed been a

precious blessing beyond expression. Upon arriving here I felt like a bundle of scattered dreams reflected in the waters that break along the rocky coast of an unexplored territory.

I felt strangely liberated and warmly protected in my wanderings on the Hill and it soon became a source of comfort and consolation. The pilgrimage within had begun though at times one finds oneself in a lonely valley or out on a sharp precipice, Sri Bhagavan is always close by guiding us lovingly. Such trials only bring us closer to Him and therefore to each other. To feel like a child on this earth with no thought for the morrow, to gratefully accept and faithfully embrace all that He sends with unwavering confidence is to be forever safe! It is a rare and special gift to be able

to live here at Arunachala and to practise and grow with others who are earnestly seeking, but above all to know that the Light reaches and fills the lives of loved ones across the world.

But surely all this would not be possible without the kindness and loving care afforded by those who manage and maintain the Ashram as a living centre of true brotherhood.

May our innermost wanderings and longings be ever directed toward Him in adoration. *Jai Bhagavan! Jai Arunachala!!*"

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Mr. John B. Dawson of the States and fondly addressed 'Jack' by us all, arrived at the Ashram in January, 1970, happily still stays with us. In our April, 1969 issue, p. 125, we published how he was totally transformed by the picture of the Master. Now he adds:

"By Sri Bhagavan's Grace, I have been enabled to remain here for a combined stay of two years. After the first visit, which served mainly to acquaint me with myself and to get on with sadhana, I felt confident enough to return home to America to 'try it out' in the midst of the oft frantic business world. There, as a linotype operator for a newspaper, many things got revealed. With the backdrop of an office environment, this ego had to bow down to the fact that all of its acquired knowledge and insight on esoteric matters, etc., counted for nought. I often felt quite groundless, except when in contact with Sri Bhagavan during meditation after a weary day and at other times, by His Grace. After 15 months of this hard, yet necessary and valuable experience, He rescued me and again brought me to the feet of Arunachala.

I can assert that toward the end of this second year the way has become clear. The now innate tendencies though still arising in plenitude can be subdued by the miracle of Sri Bhagavan's Presence and daily guidance at this blessed place.

I count my blessing that Sri Bhagavan has taken me up and brought up here, enabling me to sit quietly in His Samadhi Shrine and in Old Meditation Hall, where His Presence is very powerful, and to go around the very beautiful and powerful Arunachala Hill, and to have the blessing of the divine Name, Arunachala Siva; to reside in the Presence of Sri Bhagavan's older devotees, to catch their words of invaluable guidance and to observe their movements (which often teach more). And lastly, there is the huge and growing family of His devotees, whose loving support and unfailing goodwill are to me a great blessing.



I thank Sri Bhagavan with all my heart — Ramana, the great Universal Master, Friend and Lord of uncountable devotees everywhere — for having remembered the needs of this one!"

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In the *Ashram Bulletin* of October, 1968, p. 286, we published an account by two young men from England, *Christopher* and *Philip Pegler*.



Mr. Christopher Pegler

Philip spent four months at the Ashram last year and is back now in England, while his brother, *Christopher*, has returned to the Ashram, in March this year, and continues to stay. He has the following to say:

"Just a word of good cheer to those readers who, whilst interested in spirituality, feel frustrated in their progress. To me it is nothing short of a miracle how Sri Bhagavan gave a new direction to the life of a dry, scientifically-minded and convinced materialist — almost against his will! Previous to that there was nothing and no one who in the last resort could be depended upon.

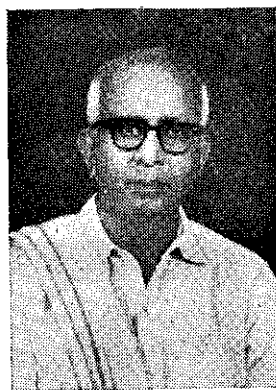
Initially I was attracted by His simple, direct teaching, which not only satisfied my hungry intellect but could also dispose of any question that came to mind. But I was quite unable to form any relationship with Him as a Master. Nevertheless after several years I found myself visiting the Ashram — more from curiosity — a visit which at the time seemed quite uneventful!

I now feel it was the Presence here that, without my knowledge, really sparked things off. For upon my return to England, *sadhana* made a definite move away from the intellectual to the practical — an essential step. No amount of reasoning, only practice itself, was capable of strengthening the link with Him and in due course showing that without doubt He is my Master — ever present and ever watching over me!

Is He not like a fisherman who seeing His prey to be hungry, casts out His line? Dissatisfied with pond food the fish swallows the bait and thenceforth, though struggle and resist as it will, it is inexorably drawn in on the line — having an infinite breaking strain which is Love — to be finally brought to the shore of that Peace which passeth human understanding!"

## OBITUARY

*Sri P. Rajagopala Iyer*, a devotee of Sri Bhagavan for a long time passed away on Nov. 3. He was 74. A noted member of the Congress party he was an ardent follower of Sri Gandhiji having taken part in the famous Vedaranyam Satyagraha and other movements concerning Indian Independence. He was also the Editor of *Sakti Vijayam*, a monthly. May his soul rest in peace!



Sri P. Rajagopala Iyer

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*Sri Sarraju Narasimha Rao*, an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan from Andhra Pradesh, passed away on October 31 in his 74th year. May he rest in peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

## THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

### New Additions

*Sri Aurobindo on the Tantra*: Compiled by M. P. Pandit. Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2. (Rs. 2).

*Mahatmas, Saints, Sages and Seers of India and Abroad*: By Trivedi Krishnaji. Pub.: Author at 22, Samudra Mudaly Street, Madras-3.

*The Bhagavad Gita The Song of Life*: Translation & Notes by T. L. Vaswani. Gita Publishing House, Mira Nagar, 10, Sadhu Vaswani Path, Poona-1.

*Jataka Tales*: Edited by H. T. Francis & E. J. Thomas. Jaico Publishing House, 125, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay-1. (Rs. 4-50)

*The Taittiriya Upanishad of Sublime Education*: By M. R. Desai. Pub.: Sau. Susheeladevi Desai, Leena-Kuti, 306, E. Ward, Kolhapur. (Rs. 10).

*Pathway to God through Tamil Literature*: (A translation with interpretation of *Tiruvachakam*) By G. Vanmikanathan. The Delhi Tamil Sangam, Sector 5, Ramakrishnapuram, New Delhi-22. (Rs. 7).

*The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*: By Har Dayal. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7. (Rs. 25).

*The Vision of Atman* : By Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswati. Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Holenarsipur, Mysore State.

*Gems from Ramayana* : By T. Srinivasa Raghavacharya. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay-7. (Rs. 3).

*Contemporary Essays* : By Karan Singh. Pub. : Same as above. (Rs. 3).

*A Study of Indian History* : By B. N. Puri. Pub. : Same as above. (Rs. 4).

*Faith as a Constructive Force* : By Swami Paramananda. Pub. : Same as above. (Re. 1).

*Hindu Sastras and Samskaras* : By V. A. K. Ayer. Pub. : Same as above. (Re. 1).

*The Bhagavadgita* : Introduction and Translation by Dr. Shakuntala Rao Sastri. Pub. : Same as above. (Rs. 10).

*Theosophies of Plato, Aristotle & Plotinus* : By Dibia Wa Said. Philosophical Library, 15, East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016, U.S.A. (\$ 6.25).

*With Charity Toward None* : By William F. O'Neill. Pub. : Same as above. (\$ 10).

*The Nature Cure* : By M. K. Gandhi. Pearl Publications Private Ltd., 249, Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Bombay-1. (Rs. 2.50).

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*The Realm of Perception* : By Zohra Saiyidain. Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla-5. (Rs. 20).

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*Gita My Guide* : By P. S. Tolani. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. (Rs. 3).

*Ten Saints of India* : By T. M. P. Mahadevan. Pub. : Same as above. (Rs. 3).

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*Sufis, Mystics and Yogis of India* : By Bankey Behari. Pub. : Same as above. (Rs. 4).

*Gleanings from the Gita* : By P. R. Krishnaswami Iyer. Pub. : P. K. Venkataraghavan, 8, Ellappa Naicken Street, Madras-2. (Rs. 2.50).

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## At Thy Feet

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Let us meditate on Ramana,  
The Teacher of Reality  
Who dwells within my inmost self  
As I, as I,  
Bringing in full measure  
The joy of silence  
Ending the delusive pride  
Of a divided self's self-love.

In one unbroken silence let us dwell  
On the twin feet of the Guru  
Glorified above all kinds  
Because His Glance of Grace revealed  
The Hill of bright Awareness  
Shining in a world  
Troubled by darkness of desire.

Dear devotees, avid for grace,  
Our Master is an ocean,  
Take and hold your fill.  
Approach him freely,  
Minds and hands wide open.  
Drink to your heart's content.

— SRI MURUGANAR.

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**A**MONG the foremost devotees, Dr. V. Srinivasa Rao found in Sri Bhagavan the greatest solace and support in his life. He was born in the former native state of Pudukottah and is happily still with us at the age of eighty-seven. He was intimately associated with the growth of the Ashram for many decades. Childlike by nature and outspoken, his sincerity and frankness gained him easy access and familiarity with Sri Bhagavan who treated him like a pet child.

Born poor and orphaned when hardly four years old, he grew up to be self-reliant. He took his degree in medicine and surgery, and prompted by the good wishes of the doyen of his days, Dr. Singaravelu Mudaliar, he entered Government service. He was Medical Officer in several District Headquarters Hospitals and retired in 1940 as the Superintendent of the Royapettah Hospital, Madras. Since then he spent a good deal of his time in the Ashram in a life of devotion and service to Sri Bhagavan.

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## INTRODUCING...

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To begin with Dr. Srinivasa Rao had no interest in a spiritual life and seemed more an agnostic, if not a downright atheist. Through the friendship of spiritually highly evolved people like Sri S. Doraiswami Iyer (introduced to our readers in the July 1969 issue, p. 212), one of the oldest devotees, he came to Sri Bhagavan. Before taking leave of Sri Bhagavan he asked him, "Will I come again for your *darshan*?" Sri Bhagavan with a tender and compassionate look patted him on the shoulder saying "What will happen is sure to happen." That was all! He felt somehow thrilled in the core of his being by His touch and the gracious reply which strengthened his faith and surrender. Since then remembrance of Sri Bhagavan was constant.

Sri Bhagavan directed his attention specifically to *Upadesa Saram* among His works and emphasised *ekachintana* (fixing the mind on one thought — of the One) as essential for the mind to get free of thoughts; and that constant remembrance of God is better than a recital of hymns or silent invocation. On one occasion he told Sri Bhagavan: "It is said that one should contemplate on God Vishnu from head to foot. Is that the correct thing to do?" Sri Bhagavan reminded him: "It is all One from

head to foot." Yet again he discussed the efficacy of *Rama Japa* and the like and asked Sri Bhagavan: "Why not do *Ramana Japa* instead of *Rama Japa*?" to which Sri Bhagavan gave his assent.

Since 1940 Srinivasa Rao had the unique opportunity of staying in the proximity of Sri Bhagavan rendering some personal service or other. He treasures the privilege he had of massaging Sri Bhagavan's limbs and of ministering to Him during His bodily ailments as a doctor. His simple but total love and attachment to Sri Bhagavan's person generated many happy incidents. Once Sri Bhagavan's knee caps and legs did not function owing to stiffness and Srinivasa Rao with folded hands implored Him to permit his massaging for a few days only. Sri Bhagavan would not agree saying "If allowed to do so you will continue endlessly." But he beseeched Him like a child and Sri Bhagavan yielded but said it would be strictly for ten days. Sri Bhagavan was counting the days and on the last day when Srinivasa Rao was actually massaging His legs Sri T. P. R.'s father who arrived just then, entered the Old Hall and perceiving the doctor massaging the legs of Sri Bhagavan repeated a Sanskrit *sloka* and exclaimed: "Oh, Raoji, do not give up what you are doing. You need no other

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### Dr. V. SRINIVASA RAO

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*sadhana* for your salvation." Sri Bhagavan burst out laughing and said: "Well, well; I have been counting these days and waiting for this last day and you have come to recommend continuance!" Leaving his massaging, the doctor stepped before Sri Bhagavan and went on doing obeisance imploring Him to listen to the elderly gentleman if not to him. Sri Bhagavan yielded for another ten days!

During the two years preceding Sri Bhagavan's *Maha Nirvana* the doctor gave whole-time attention and assistance to Sri Bhagavan's health and comfort in collaboration with the team of medical men who devoutly rendered service during the last illness.

Old in years yet ever young in his devotion and spirit Srinivasa Rao scarcely leaves his residence in Madras these days. He happily spends his days remembering Sri Bhagavan and his memorable days with Him, and deriving all the solace needed from His writings and utterances, which he reveres. May Sri Bhagavan's Grace and Blessings sustain him many more years with health and happiness!

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## 'WHO AM I'

... I still firmly believe in the simplicity and directness of Bhagavan's teaching. However, at times I get discouraged when the only answer I get comes from my mind. Who am I? I am a part of the life force that flows in, around and outside of everything. I am formless and beyond any appearances. I know who I am better than I can put down in words but I know it intellectually, and mere intellectual knowledge does not satisfy me. Is there any answer to this apart from patiently continuing with the practice? At times I wish Bhagavan was still in his body for I am sure he could dispel doubts from my mind with ease and though of course he is always here, it is difficult without his personal presence...

PETER FIREBRACE,  
Delhi.

*Reasoning or intellect can neither give an answer nor reach the goal. 'It can only prove to itself its own inadequacy for the purpose.' You are not only a part of everything, you are everything, you alone are. This one realises when sustained effort reaches its limit, comes so to speak to the brink and Grace takes over. The VICHARA is not asking the question in so many words and giving intellectual replies. It means rather turning inwards with a burning urge to know 'Who am I?' remaining intuitively alert in a state as free from thoughts as possible. When they arise let them pass; they only hide the truth. Sri Bhagavan dispels doubts now as before, if you turn to Him in all sincerity. On one occasion he replied to a devotee with a similar doubt... 'What happens when you make a serious quest for the Self is that the I-thought as a thought disappears, something else from the depth takes hold of you and that is not the "I" which commenced the quest. ... It is not the ego but the import of I. The real Self. ...' His answers can be found in books. They are living words.*

EDITOR.

## THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

...and it has been so wonderful . . . such perfect peace. Then *vasanas* arising again but now every effort is bent only to *sadhana* — the *vichara*. Then came this terrible blankness and reaching for Bhagavan. . . . The intellect knows it cannot reach That — it is used to “experiences” and realises now that they are only on the mental level and it is a blind groping and even that must stop...

JEAN DUNN,  
Hawaii.

*SADHANA at a certain stage is a succession of ups and downs and each down may lift us up higher depending on how we tackle it. What about the dark night of the soul so beautifully, poignantly expressed by St. John of the Cross? One reaches out with the intellect as far as it goes and then remains passive in intuitive alertness and relaxed as if under water letting the sea waves pass over one. So can thought waves pass till all is quiet...*

EDITOR.

## CONCEPTS AND THE WAY

I very recently picked up a copy of *The Mountain Path* at Watkins Bookshop in London and my interest and the same strange feeling I once had and knew were reawakened in the life and teaching of Sri Ramana Maharshi. In front of me is a beautiful drawing of His Grace in the article called ‘Earnest Effort Never Fails’ something which I cannot define (I am not sure that I would want to even if I could) draws me to knowing about his teaching.

For some 3 or 4 years now I have been absorbed in the teachings and schools of yoga and esoterism... My queries are these — as a teacher of one of the many types of meditation ‘now on the market’ I still feel very unfulfilled and depressed. Better for me to refrain from naming my method or its chief proponent whom I respect greatly. However I feel that perhaps his way is not for me. I know the concept of a ‘way’ or ‘path’ is meaningless in Maha Yoga since Ramana Maharshi often spoke in terms of ‘You are the Self’, ‘There is no path no goal’. Is *vichara* compatible with other forms of meditation? Can the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ be carried on successfully whilst one is engaged in other forms of yoga... All I can say is that I am seeing to the point where I feel like giving up altogether. It seems my feet are too wide for the narrow razor-edge path...

To return again to my previous questions. At this moment in my life I am incapable of formulating a personal God image which I can revere and adore. This frightens me actually. I can readily understand and accept that life is essentially pure consciousness but I do want to feel the warmth of devotion in myself but even Sri Ramana Maharshi has left the body although he is everywhere . . . and there is a very strong yearning on my part to totally identify myself with some sort of arch-type figure. Can you possibly indicate any answers to these questions? Can I profit by attempting to love the memory of a great saint I never saw or knew?...

D. W.  
A Seeker from London.

*It is often better to leave things difficult for one to define undefined. If you still feel unfulfilled and depressed wouldn't it be better for all concerned to refrain from teaching any type of meditation ‘on the market’ and concentrate on reaching a state of serenity first? The concept of a way or path is not meaningless. Ramana Maharshi and all great seers show a path and enjoin effort on the relative plane even though they say that we are already the Self and have never ceased to be the Self, still we also have to know it as living Truth not only intellectually and for that effort is necessary.*

*The VICHARA (enquiry) can be practised with other forms of mediation. If carried on one-pointedly with a real urge to know it will spontaneously eliminate other forms of yoga.*

*You may or may not formulate a personal God-image. In the end all concepts have to be transcended. The real Guru, Ramana Maharshi or Christ or the most intimately personal God-image is already in your heart and all-pervading at the same time. His leaving the body does not make Him less present. He can be reached now even easier than before. Christ said: ‘Blessed are those who have seen and believe but more blessed are those who have not seen and believe’ (see editorial, Sad-Guru is One, in the Jan. 71 issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH). If the picture of Ramana Maharshi moves you very much you are already in the orbit of His Grace or rather your heart is open to receive it because we are never out of its operation.*

*You can supplement Self-Enquiry with whatever other practice you find helpful till the VICHARA becomes all-sufficient. Devotion and love come in the wake of sincere effort. Meanwhile one can always turn to Sri Ramana in the heart and pray for it. No sincere prayer in real need is left unanswered. The Eternal Sad-Guru your real Self is always in*

*your heart and never leaves you whether you know it or not. He takes an outer form only to lead you back to the Inner Guru, the Self.*

EDITOR.

### TRUTH IS ONE

It was about a month ago that I saw Bhagavan in a dream and received His Grace by touch which has uplifted my spiritual life considerably. Previous to this experience I had not attached more significance to Bhagavan and His Teaching than to the many other great gurus... I have tried various systems of yoga and meditation within the limits of my capacity... I would like to discuss the very real connection between Bhagavan's teaching and the Ch'an and Zen teachings of the Mind Transmission. I practice Self-enquiry according to the combined essence of both traditions and I rather suspect that Bhagavan was an Incarnation of a former Ch'an Master who had realised God, the One Mind, and who came to make the Mind Transmission a living fact in the Vedanta tradition so as to break down the division of the various world's spiritual traditions.

I am sure Bhagavan will inspire you to help me with this in the way God intends for me. I have faith in this . . . and I wish all to know that I am sure Bhagavan has moved me to write this letter, for His Peace has been upon me all morning.

G. B. CHICOINE,  
Nova Scotia.

*There is a connection between all genuine spiritual masters and traditions with all their apparent divisions. The ultimate Truth is one. They all teach the same truth by various methods adapted to the spirit of the age and the adaptability of the recipients. In Christianity the saying: 'Be still and know that I am God' or 'I and my Father are One' conforms esotically with the teachings of the One Mind Transmission. Bhagavan said that these sayings contain the essence of Vedanta.*

*Having understood intellectually the validity of the teachings of a genuine Master it is a waste of time to go to many others or read too much. Somewhere else in this issue Bhagavan gave the example of a man who looks into a mirror and sees that he has a growth which needs shaving. All the mirrors will show him the same growth but no mirror will shave him. This he has to do himself. The same with SADHANA. As pointed out in the preceding reply Self-Enquiry can be supple-*

*mented with devotional practices or incantations valid in all traditions.*

EDITOR.

### THE NIGGER-IN-THE-WOODPILE

There is no doubt that the Nigger-in-the-Woodpile is a troublesome fellow and I am not surprised at the lengthy exchange on his account. The 'ego' and the 'Self' may be names or concepts but Sri Bhagavan would have us stick to the 'I-I', irrespective of definitions. If a realised Master says that the limited 'I' will vanish just by Self-enquiry and assures us that the real 'I-I' will reveal itself in the process there is nothing else to be done than try it out.

The Vedantic position so lucidly explained by the respective Editors in their replies already published<sup>1</sup> is well known. Thanks to Wei Wu Wei a very interesting controversy took place. It seems to have come to an end. What a pity!

RAMAMANI,  
Tiruvannamalai.

I very much enjoyed reading the letters and replies on the Nigger-in-the-Woodpile and found it all very enlightening. Such discussions enliven a magazine and make it even more interesting. What about some more?

LILAVATI,  
Calcutta.

*This will depend on readers. After all we have only one Wei Wu Wei, who in a given case might present the more absolute view as far as possible.*

EDITOR.

<sup>1</sup> See April, 1970, p. 111 and April, 1971, p. 137.

## The God

God is absolute or restricted as He pleases; and the God of religious belief is subject to limitations, for He is the God who is contained in the heart of His servant. But the absolute God is not contained by anything. . . . If a worshipper understood the saying of Junaid: "The colour of the water is the colour of the vessel containing it," he would not interfere with the beliefs of others, but would perceive God in every form and in every belief.

— Ibnul-Arabi.