

the
Mountain
path



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

vol. 10, no. 1, january 1973

Happiness lies in peaceful
repose enjoyed when resting
in the Self. Beyond
speech indeed is Thy pro-
cess resting in the Self.
Beyond speech indeed is
This my State, Oh Aruna-
chala!

—*The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 37*

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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

Vol. 10

JANUARY 1973

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.

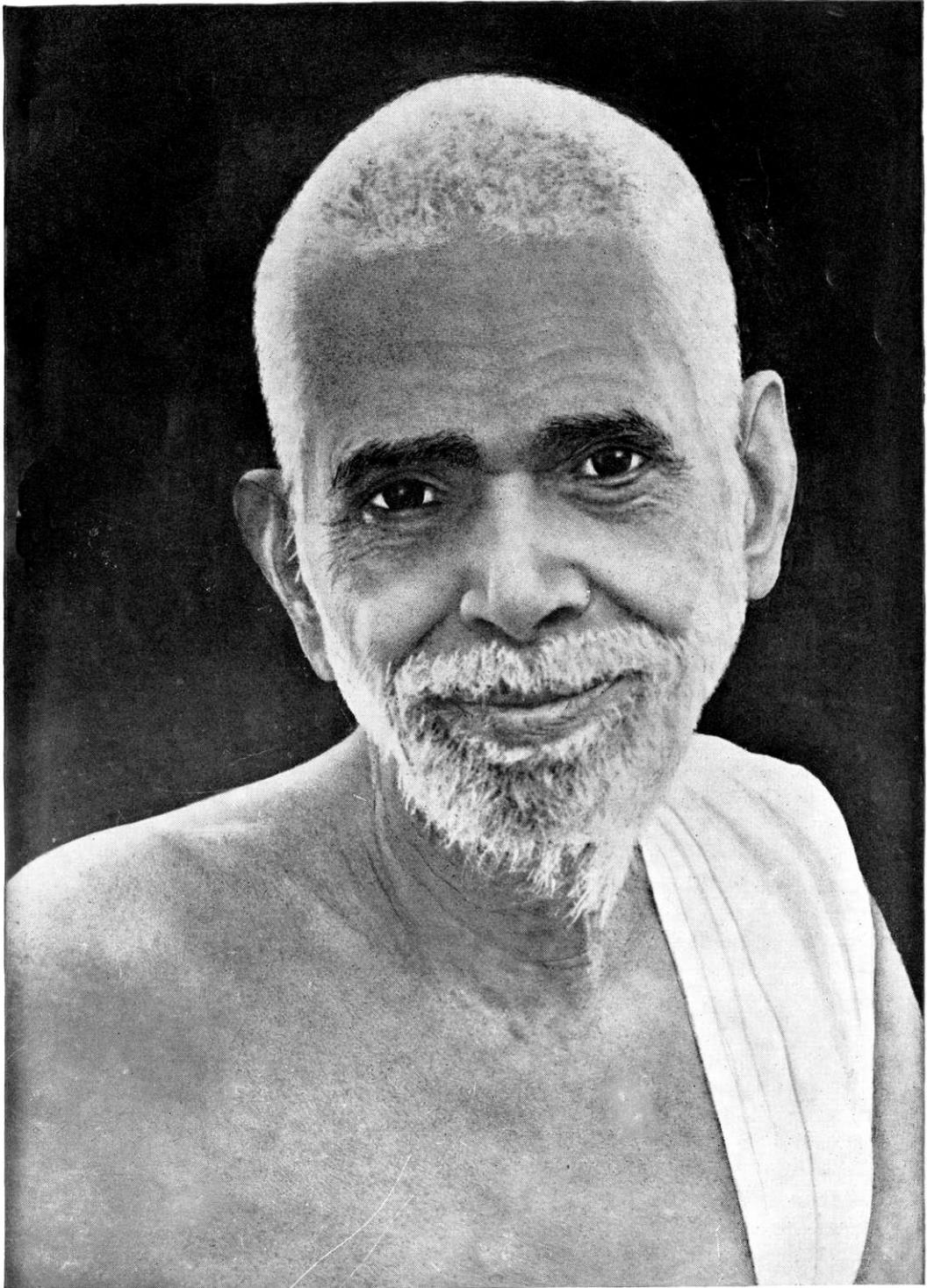
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

Vol. 10. No. 1, January 1973

Editor : LUCIA OSBORNE

Editorial

ABOUT STILLING THE MIND

ALL beings carry in their innermost core a reminiscence of their true state of pure happiness, which is more than happiness and unlimited Freedom, which is more than freedom. Hence everybody seeks happiness and freedom in one way or another. This is man's eternal quest — this search for happiness, which is his birth-right, meaning the discovery of the reality of his being. Only true knowledge can set him free and liberate from the trammels of his finite consciousness. Such knowledge, as is stressed again and again, sets one free not by grasping, seeing, or having it but by being It — a direct instrument-free intuitive knowledge which floods and overwhelms us and washes away all illusory otherness ; 'the drop merging in the shining sea', becoming the sea, or the sea slipping into the drop.

Rationally and intellectually, it is evident that happiness and peace of mind are 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 forget oneself; forget thoughts which trouble. There is a sort of stillness of the mind, unsteady, fragmentary, still enough to make one feel in a happier mood. For the same reason we court sleep in which there are no thoughts, no diversity unless dreaming 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 the absence of diversity in samadhi, which is pure awareness also called 'awakened sleep'. Similarly one forgets oneself, that is one's thoughts, when concentrating on some absorbing work or pastime or listening to beautiful music, anything to divert the mind from oneself. When we say it is 'breath-taking' we mean really thought-taking because the source of breath is the same as of thought. Similarly when a desire is fulfilled the contented mind is quiescent for that moment till agitated again by another desire or thought.¹ So, as Ramana Maharshi says, happiness is not derived from objects but from a quiet mind. The same objects or conditions which seem to make one man happy may cause distress to another depending on their previous conditioning. For instance a prince used to palaces will not be happy in a flat, the acquisition of which might be the cause of great joy to another.

Empirical knowledge, preconditioned as it is by the limitations and uncertainty of the human faculties, cannot reveal the true nature of Reality as it is. According to the Upanishads, only with his metaphysical intuitive insight is man able to transcend these limitations and know Ultimate Reality, which is the core and substratum of his being and the one life of all beings. *Brahmavidya* means Self-knowledge, which one realises without the aid of the intellect or of the senses — a direct instrument-free knowledge by being It through stilling the mind. In *Yoga Vasishtha* the sage explains to Rama that *pratyakshanubhava* (direct cognition or intuition) is the only and

ultimate source of all our knowledge be it empirical or metaphysical. 'There is no other source through which new knowledge comes to us' (III. 42. 15; II. 19. 16; VI-b. 52. 29). If anything is not directly experienced by anybody, it cannot be made known to him by any description of it by others. The taste of sugar, for example, cannot be made known to one who has never himself tasted it. Others can give us only a hint or partial knowledge of things unknown to us by way of analogy and illustrations.

Intellect is regarded as man's highest quality of paramount efficacy. According to the most advanced findings of modern science, our senses deceive us and reveal only the appearances relative to the experiencer. A blue sky is not really blue above the clouds, vast expanses of water appear blue or green but a handful of it looks transparent. Stars which we perceive now may have ceased to exist millions of years ago and so on. Empirical knowledge is mediate, changeable and instrument-conditioned hence unreliable. We have no real insight into the ultimate nature of physical reality through Astro-Physics or Nuclear Physics because, as modern scientists have discovered, the observational horizon becomes elusive at a certain point. The 'Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle' in quantum mechanics makes this clear. Scientific research is based *a priori* on the validity of past experimental conclusions based on our fleeting sense-perceptions. As yet, no scientist has seen a proton or an electron or a meson. Their existence is taken for granted on the basis of pointer readings of the Geiger counters and bubble chambers!²

Scientific enquiry reaches a point which baffles the human faculties and a natural maturing of it may lead to a contemplative life aiming at spiritual realisation which transcends them.

¹ See Editorial of the January 1972 issue.

² See *The Age of Modern Science* by Brahmachari Haridas.

If one can accept as valid whatever goes in the name of science, based on the past testimony of scientific enquiry and often discarded in favour of newer discoveries, so logically the collective testimony of seers, scientists of the spirit, widely separated in time and space, should not be brushed aside so easily.

If we can believe that this so solid looking matter is only a form of energy and accept modern scientific theories, though contrary to our sense-perceptions, it would be only fair to test for oneself the truth of the conclusions and teaching of the scientists of the spirit and give it a fair trial.

Einstein humbly acknowledged that with all the tremendous strides of modern science, not even the fringe of that greatest of mysteries, the mystery of existence, had been touched so far.

There have always been God-enlightened men in the world. Their experience of the Ultimate Truth has been confirmed by many mystics, ancient and modern, all over the world. It has stood the test of time. Something of the same nature comes through when they try to express the inexpressible. Their knowledge is not instrument-conditioned but a direct intuitive knowledge by seeing-being. We do not become something else, nobody can, we only cease to be deluded that we are finite when our true state is Infinity, eternal, immortal. We realise what we have always been, only we did not know that we knew. That is the experience of the Ultimate Truth as testified to by all those who have realised it or glimpsed it, even if only in a split-second of Eternity.

The high degree of unanimity and striking similarity so obvious in the attempts to describe mystical experiences in various ages and climes should induce even purely rational minds to test it for themselves and see whether it works. However even to attain finite objects such as effortlessness in music, sports,

KANT on Limits of Reasoning

“I was obliged to destroy knowledge in order to make room for faith.....We cannot prove by logic the existence of God, the freedom of the will, or the immortality of the soul. But when we turn from Pure Reason to Practical Reason it happily becomes clear that we must assume these things. Philosophy does not merely answer the question, What do we know? It must answer the practical questions, What ought we to do? What may we hope? After we have satisfied ourselves of the vanity of all the ambitious attempts of reason to fly beyond the bound of experience, enough remains of practical value to content us. It is true that no one may boast that he *knows* that God and a future life exist; for if he possesses such knowledge he is just the man for whom I have long been seeking. All knowledge (touching an object of mere reason) can be communicated and therefore I might hope to see his instruction. No, our conviction in these matters is not *logical*, but *moral* certainty; and inasmuch as it rests upon subjective grounds (of moral disposition), I must not even say *it is* morally certain that there is a God, and so on, but *I am* morally certain, and so on. That is to say, the belief in a God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature that the former can no more vanish than the latter can ever be torn from me.”

mastery of science, art etc., years of learning and perseverance in practice are called for. So when the aim is Infinity and realisation of the grandeur and radiance of our true state, the Self, it naturally calls for the highest effort a human being is capable of. Self-Existence, not confused with intellectual concepts, is unthinkable, undefinable and yet, as the Gita and seers affirm, it can be realised by earnest effort and perseverance. 'Earnest effort never fails' is the assurance given by Bhagavan.

Ling You, a Chinese sage, warns us that the false thinking is so deep-rooted that it cannot be dissipated in an instant. For this reason expedient methods are used to strip the mind.

With one accord mystics denounce the limitations of reason in the quest of the Absolute. When the mind is still, clear of thoughts — the basis of all disturbance — pure Consciousness, the very source of thought, the Oneness of life reveals itself as it is ever-present. Those who strive in all earnest and follow the teaching of genuine embodied gurus leading ultimately to the discovery of the one living inner Guru in one's own heart, find that it works commensurate with our dedication and sincerity. The inner living Guru who is One in all hearts can be followed from the start. When there is not enough dedication or faith, one can pray for it. A sincere prayer from the depth of even an unbelieving heart will not be in vain. The One inner Guru, the surest of guides, is always present watching over us, whether we know it or not. How could it be otherwise when he is the core of our being 'nearer to us than our jugular vein' says the Quran? We do not exist apart from Him.

When we have reached the limit of our effort, the inner Guru or Grace takes over, as if lying in wait like a flood to wash away our life-long illusion of finitude, conditioning and limitations. Effort is also in the realm of illusion — and the one who seeks 'a fancied being' — but we have to start from where we are so long as we have not realised this

as living truth, not only intellectually, and so long as 'unreal echoes produce relative results'.

We are imprisoned by our breath, a wise man said. Our original true state is such blessed equilibrium or harmony that even 'ecstasy' does not describe it. The scriptures and seers declare that 'words turn away baffled' when one tries to convey by the mind what transcends the mind — like trying to measure the limitless sea with a thimble. In such a state when there is activity it will be always spontaneously performed. Replies to questions are spontaneous, ready and not the product of discrimination. When in great danger the mind becomes one-pointed, such spontaneous action may become manifest.

The question arises whether a jnani who has transcended his mind uses it to think. Bhagavan replied to such a question that a realised man uses the mind like any other faculty. However in his case thoughts are not discriminative but arise spontaneously always dealing perfectly and effortlessly with a given situation — and leave no trace on the mind. He remains untouched by thoughts; they are like a flight of wild geese leaving no trace in the sky, whereas ordinary men are affected by their thoughts, which leave grooves on their minds, and change their metabolism; a jnani is the master of his mind and can use it or shut it off like any instrument, remaining always in his true state, whereas in the case of an unenlightened man it is the mind which is the master.

It was a matter of sheer delight and wonder to listen to Bhagavan's replies always spontaneously ready on his lips — perfect, witty and always to the point. Once a rather arrogant young man told him about his so far unsuccessful search for a guru and asked where he should go. Pat came the reply: "Go the way you have come." This was at the same time putting him in his place for his arrogance and giving him a profound spiritual teaching — to return to the source.

METHODS OF STILLING THE MIND¹

IN employing methods of concentration without the use of objects there is

1. the instantaneous cutting off of a thought the very moment it arises,
2. leaving unformulated so to speak nebulous any concept or idea which tries to arise,
3. letting thoughts pass over one like clouds or waves unmoved by their influence. Ramana Maharshi compares it to diving under the waves and letting them pass overhead while below them all is quiet.

The cutting-off of a thought at the root the very moment it arises in a flash is practised as follows :

(1) In meditating in the manner explained one finds that because of the mind responding to stimuli thoughts crop up continuously. Knowing that the birth of a single idea should be prevented one must try to inhibit this continuous cropping up of thoughts by exercise of mental alertness. Thus as soon as a thought sprouts try to chop it down, root and all, and continue meditating.

(2) By prolonging, during the meditation, the period of time in which the effort is made to prevent the arising of thoughts, one finally comes to be aware of thoughts following close on the heels of one another so numerous that they seem interminable. This is the recognizing of thoughts which equals the knowing of the enemy. It is called the 'First Resting Place' comparable to the shore of a river past which the water flows. . . . In other words if a man is successful to this point he will have attained to freedom from the mental tyranny of the thought-process. . . .

(3) Once the mind attains the tranquil state, for even the briefest moment, it understands the arising and cessation of thoughts. Thoughts are born instantaneously. That which is apart and capable of immediately

arresting this birth of thoughts is the Reality. *The Non-reacting to thoughts :*

Leaving unshaped whatever concept or idea appears means to be indifferent to the thought, neither falling under its influence nor attempting to impede it. Let the mind be a witness and go on meditating. Thereby thoughts will cease to arise and the mind will attain the state of passive tranquillity and one-pointedness.

The three processes are : instantaneous stopping of thought, allowing ideas to roam at will, unrestricted ; and letting the mind rest in perfect tranquillity.

Milarepa said :

When the mind is left in the primordial, unmodified condition Knowledge dawneth ;

When this condition is maintained, comparable in its calmness to the flow of a calm river, Knowledge in its completeness is attained.

Wholly abandon all directing and shaping of thoughts ;

Ever maintain quiescence of mind, O Yogin.

At the outset the beginner is apt to strain his mind through using the instantaneous chopping-down process. But when fatigued with this process relax (by changing over to that of) letting thoughts roam at will and simply witnessing their passage.

The Buddhist saint-philosopher Saraha uses the simile of a Brahmanical thread which is spun by tensing and relaxing with the greatest care so that it becomes perfectly even. Breaking of the thread should be avoided by all means. The mind should be like water which becomes clear when not disturbed.

¹From the *Seven Books of Wisdom of the Great Path* according to the English rendering by Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub.

**Stilling
the Mind
Through
Vichara
as Taught
by Bhagavan**

By Arthur Osborne

**Self-Enquiry as taught by Sri Ramana
offers a highly practicable method suited
to modern conditions. The quest is
universal. 'Circumstance, time and
Grace are aids to the quest.'**

THROUGH the potent Grace of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the path of Self-enquiry was brought within the competence of men and women of this age, was indeed fashioned into a new path that can be followed anonymously in the conditions of the modern world, with no forms or ritual — nothing to distinguish a person outwardly from the world wherein he moves. This creation of a new path to suit the needs of the age has made Arunachala the spiritual centre of the world. More than ever, now that He has shed His physical body and is one with Arunachala as He has always been, the Grace and guidance that emanates from Him to those who turn to Him and seek His aid is centred at Arunachala. It is the Holy place and centre and many are drawn there, both those who were disciples of the Maharshi in his lifetime and those who have come later.

In *Vivekachudamani*, translated by Bhagavan while he was living in the Virupaksha Cave, Shankara also enjoins Self-enquiry as a short-cut and royal road to Self-realisation.

Bhagavan says that knowledge of the Truth of the Self is obtained by Self-enquiry and not by any number of actions, which lead only to purification of the mind and not to Realisation. . . . It is mainly through enquiry that he who is competent achieves knowledge of

the Self; circumstance, time and Grace are aids to the quest. Such a man must be tireless in practice, and be able to discriminate between the Real and the unreal or hold on to the essential and reject the inessentials. The *sine qua non* of the quest is an ardent desire for liberation and faithfully following the path shown by the Guru.

We cannot do better than quote what Bhagavan says about Self-enquiry in *Reality in Forty Verses* :

11. Is it not ignorance to know everything else without knowing the Self which is the source of knowledge? . . .

12. What is neither knowledge nor ignorance is (real) knowledge. Knowledge of (objects) cannot be real knowledge. The Self which shines without there being anything else to know or be known is knowledge. Know that it is not nothingness.

14. If the first person exists the second and third persons will also exist. If the reality of the first person is enquired into and the first person (ego) ceases to exist the second and third persons will also cease to exist and all will shine as One.

25. Attaching itself to a form (that is the body) this formless ghost of an ego comes into existence. Attaching itself to a form it endures. Attaching itself to a form it feels (experiences) and grows. On relinquishing one form it attaches itself to another. But when sought after it takes to flight. This know.

26. If the ego is, everything else is too. If the ego is not, nothing else is. Indeed the ego is everything. Therefore the enquiry what it is really means giving up everything illusory.

28. Just as one would dive into the water to recover an article that had fallen in, one should dive deeply into oneself with speech and breath restrained, and find out the place from which the 'I' arises. This know.

A FINAL WORD

By Kavana

The incandescent Nightmare
folds upon its back, and
my veins tap a song of Joy
to its hollow beckoning.
The Wandering has ceased.
The season is here to repose,
and forget.

The Sound of the Earth
has come to meet me
. . . lying in the Desert
yet,
the Sand is my brother,
the Sky, my mother;
All that is 'me' now
is the One Self
of the One Body.

30. When the mind, turning inward, inquires, 'Who am I?' and reaches the heart, that which is 'I' (ego) sinks crestfallen and the One (Self) appears of its own accord as 'I-I' . . . the real Self.

When a man begins to practise the *vichara*, his attempted concentration is always disturbed by thoughts, but that is no cause for despondency. Indeed it can be *turned to advantage*, since in this way he can see his thoughts objectively, as on a screen, and can discover the weaknesses and impurities that have to be overcome. When asked about this the Maharshi replied: 'Yes. All kinds of thought arise in meditation. That is right; for what lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless it rises up, how can it be destroyed? Thoughts therefore rise up spontaneously in order to be

We may rest assured that nothing whatever happens on earth without God's permission. What a source of consolation to know that even the sufferings and adversities which God sends us are for our very best, and have in view our eternal salvation. Ah, how great will be our shame when we stand before the judgment-seat of God and see clearly the loving intention of Divine Providence in sending us those trials which we tried to evade, thus battling against our own salvation !

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGOURI

extinguished in due course, thus strengthening the mind.'¹

This is an indirect but necessary use of the *vichara* in discovering and dissolving lower tendencies by knowledge. This is necessary before the ego which consists of them can dissolve into the Self. There are paths in which this process and others are clearly differentiated and different methods are employed for them. If this is not so with the use of the *vichara*, it is not because the process can be omitted, but only because the *vichara* is a universal weapon, and the supreme Wisdom and silent guidance of the Maharshi turn it in the direction that is necessary without the *sadhaka* needing to know how or why this is being done. In any case investigation into the mechanism of the mind does not lead to self-knowledge for it leaves unanswered the one essential question : Who am I? so constructed and affected. For this it is necessary not to analyse the influences and reactions of the ego but to discover the Source of it, behind all this.

The Maharshi also describes how, in what is really a later stage, the *vichara* is used more directly to deal with thoughts as they rise : "Even when extraneous thoughts sprout up during such enquiry, do not seek to complete

the rising thought, but instead deeply enquire within, 'To whom has this thought occurred?' No matter how many thoughts thus occur to you, if you would with acute vigilance enquire immediately as and when each individual thought arises as to whom it has occurred, you would find it is to 'me'. If then you enquire 'Who am I?' the mind gets introverted and the rising thought also subsides. In this manner as you persevere more and more in the practice of Self-enquiry, the mind acquires increasing power to abide in its Source."²

"Since every other thought can occur only after the rise of the 'I'-thought and since the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, it is only through the enquiry 'Who am I?' that the mind subsides. Moreover the integral 'I'-thought, implicit in such enquiry, having destroyed all other thoughts, gets itself finally destroyed or consumed, even like the stick used for stirring the burning funeral pyre gets consumed."³

Self-enquiry practice as the Maharshi enjoins is the most purely *advaitic* method, since its quest of the Self never admits the duality of seeker and sought. This means that it is the most central and direct and the least affected by the character of the religion in which it is used.

At the highest level and for some may be the easiest way from the start depending on their temperament and spiritual qualifications would be to ignore thoughts and let them pass over like waves in the sea. Under the waves all is quiet. Bhagavan said : "If one fixed the attention on the Self or the Heart and ignored all thoughts which come up remembering that they do not really affect one, the mind will be controlled. Just as by holding one's breath it is possible by practice to withstand the onslaught of one wave after another so is it possible to get over any number of thoughts if one can hold on only to the 'I'."

¹ *Maharshi's Gospel*, 1, p. 29.

² *Who am I?*, pp. 10-11.

³ *ibid.*, p. 10.

Some Collective Testimony of Mystic Experience

RAMANA MAHARSHI: "The intellect itself realises after continuous practice that it is enabled by some higher Power to function, it cannot itself reach that Power. When the mind is still and ceases to function (obstruct) the Supreme Power is still there revealed. That is realisation. . . . It is thus plain that the purpose of the intellect is to realise its own dependence upon the Higher Power and its inability to reach the same. . . . If the source of the mind is sought it will vanish leaving the Self unaffected. The mind vanishing, Self shines forth. Thoughts are the content of the mind and shape the universe. The mind springs up and sinks down, impermanent, transitory, whereas your real state is eternal. There is nothing but the Self."

"Another name for the Self is the Heart, the spiritual Heart and centre of all. It is that from which thoughts arise, on which they subsist and where they are resolved."

SRI RAMAKRISHNA: "In the ecstatic realization of the Self all thoughts cease and one becomes perfectly silent for Brahman is beyond thought and speech."

Apart from sense-perception SAMKHYA admits of a yogic perception which is a direct intuitive knowledge without the senses coming into contact with objects. This is possible through concentration and meditation. *Pratyahara* means checking the outgoing mind and

gaining detachment from sense-objects. He who succeeds in this frees himself from all limitations and conditioning.

The tortoise can draw in its legs,
The seer can draw in his senses;
I call him illumined.

SANKARA says in the *Vivekachudamani* that those who have attained *samadhi* by merging the sense organs, the mind, the ego from which the external universe springs, in the pure consciousness of Brahman — they alone are free from the world with its bonds and snares. . . . "Control your senses and you will gain mastery over your mind. Master your mind and the sense of ego will be dissolved in the joy of Brahman beyond speech and thought."

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS speaks of 'the dark night of sense' which sets the house of flesh at rest and is that of the spirit where all forms of vision and intelligence are absent or in emptiness. He teaches that the light of God shines in an emptiness where there is no subject to receive it. "To enter the way is to leave the way for the way itself is emptiness."

Zen enlightenment according to THOMAS MERTON is "a fully alert super-conscious act of being which transcends time and space. It is a direct revelation of one's original nature. And this implies the absence of all conceptual thoughts or media so that one arrives at

Mind by having no mind (wu h'sin); in fact by being mind instead of having it."

True identity is found not in separation from all that is but in oneness with all that is. For HUI NENG all life was zen. He apprehends the unity of Being in a simple direct intuition. It is not found by turning away from life to become absorbed in meditation. "Zen is the very awareness of life living itself in us." That is probably why Bhagavan is not known to have encouraged young people to renounce the world but to practise sadhana while performing the duties of life which fell to their lot.

PLOTINUS realised that 'when intellectual denudation is achieved the One who is not a being but the source of being' appears to the soul and they are no longer two but one and the soul is no longer identified with the body or the mind but knows...'

Here is an extract from a letter from Plotinus to a friend in 260 A.D.: 'You ask how we can know the Infinite. I answer not by reason. It is the office of reason to distinguish and to define. The Infinite therefore cannot be ranked among its objects. You can only apprehend the Infinite by a faculty far superior to reason, by entering into a state in which you are your finite self no longer. This is ecstasy. It is the liberation of your mind from its finite consciousness.'

IN CHRISTIANITY we have the saying: 'Be still and know that I am God!' or 'to be of one spirit with Christ' or 'I and my Father are One'. The absence of all particularized realities reveals the awareness of full spiritual Reality.

From the *Chun Chou* record of the Zen Master HUANG PO: 'All the Buddhas and all sentient beings are nothing but the One Mind, beside which nothing exists... It cannot be thought in terms of new or old. It transcends all limits, measures, names, traces and comparisons... Begin to reason about it and you at once fall into error. It is like the boundless void which cannot be fathomed or

measured . . . by using mind to grasp Mind they lose it. They do not know that if they put a stop to conceptual thought and forget their anxiety the Buddha will be revealed, for this mind is the Buddha and the Buddha is all living beings... Only awake to the One Mind and there is nothing to be attained... If you can only rid yourselves of conceptual thought you will have accomplished everything.'

SUFIS make use of prolonged invocation of God's name which gradually becomes one-pointed and helps to discard all particularised forms of knowledge or concepts other than His Name till 'there is identity between the glimmers of consciousness and the dazzling lightnings of the Infinite.' (Shaykh Ahmad al'Alawi) or till 'the Name is the Named One Himself' (Jili).

SAADI compares the path of reason or instrument conditioned perception to a crooked labyrinth, a maze within a maze. With the adepts the Self alone is in existence though one cannot express it as existence or non-existence.

AL HUIJWIRI echoes this when he says that the hearts of seers are detached from the fetters of stations and states.

Inspired poets glimpse the truth. For instance Shakespeare or William Blake say that the visible is not the Reality at all. By merging of the observer with the observed does one arrive at true insight because it is not conditioned by fallible instruments (sense perceptions, intellect etc.)

RUYSBROECK: 'To know it we must be it, beyond the mind and above our created being; in that Eternal Point where all our lines begin and end, that Point where they lose their name and all distinction and become one with the Point itself.'

RAMANA MAHARSHI: 'Realization is only the removal of obstacles to the recognition of the eternal, immanent Reality. Reality is.'

MEISTER ECKHART: 'In the case of God, being and knowing are identical.'

THE CLIMBING

By A. H. Nichols

I climbed a mountain in my mind
 To find my Truth—my God and my belief.
 ... Plumb the mind—
 A treasure that seeks to meditate as Buddha spake :
 On cause and joy,
 pity, love
 and finally
 serenity
 reaching for infinity
 stored within your soul.
 ... The Truth is in me.
 I am the Truth.
 Naught else do I know so well, nor need to know :
 What are *my* thoughts ?
 Who am *I* ?
 The *I* that I am.

—From *The Mystic Mountains*.

SWAMI RAMDAS : 'To think of God is to lose yourself in Him. The mind disappears and God only is.'

YOGA VASISHTHA : 'The Self is absolute Consciousness, pure Awareness, undecaying, free from all ideas of acceptance and rejection and not limited by space, time or genus.'

MUNDAKOPANISHAD : 'Indeed he who knows the supreme truth becomes the truth himself. There the subject-object relationship vanishes. This knowing by being is direct and immediate.'

ABU YAZID AL-BISTAMI (A.D. 875) : 'Be in a domain where neither good nor evil exists ; both of them belong to the world of created things ; in the presence of Unity there is neither command nor prohibition. All this talk and turmoil and noise and movement is

outside of the veil ; within the veil is silence and calm and rest.

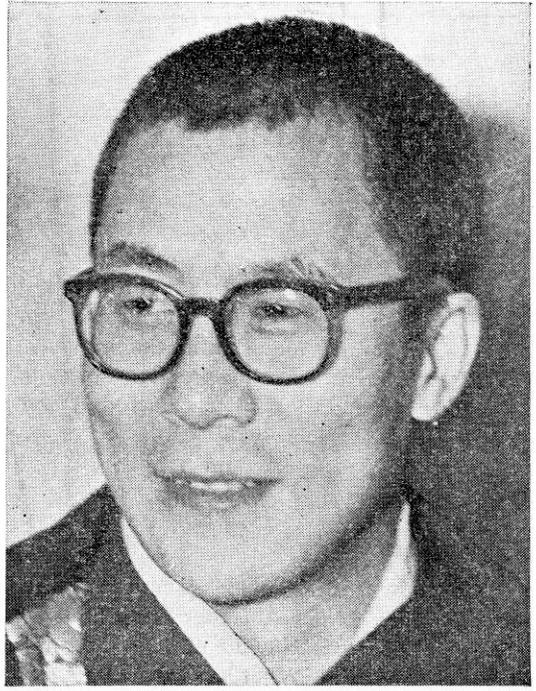
'Do you hear how there comes a voice from the brooks of running water ? But when they reach the sea they are quiet and the sea is neither augmented by their incoming nor diminished by their outgoing.'

From DYANESHWARI : Krishna to Arjuna : 'Whatever leads to one's welfare is always disagreeable to the senses. Constant practice is therefore required to subdue these senses. Removed from the disturbing influence of the senses the mind automatically starts merging in the Self resulting in supreme bliss beyond which there is nothing and which is not attainable by the senses. No worry or sorrow even as great as Mount Meru can oppress it any more. After such an experience the whole world becomes a temple of happiness...'

THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

By The Dalai Lama

**Righteous conduct purifies the mind
which then reflects inborn Wisdom, the
original Awareness.**



WHAT exactly do we mean when we use the word 'religion' as a term common to all our doctrinal systems? By referring to the Latin roots of the word, we can trace its origin to the prefix *re-*(again) and the verb *ligare* (to tie up); therefore the primitive meaning of 'religion' would seem to be "to bind again." Now how does the concept of binding up or tying up come to be applied as the common term for all our various teachings? The common enemy of all religious disciplines, the target of all moral precepts laid down by the great teachers of mankind, is selfishness of mind. For it is just this which causes ignorance, anger and passion which are at the root of all the troubles of the world. The great teachers wanted to lead their followers away from the path of sinful deeds caused by ignorance and to introduce them to the path of righteousness. They all agreed that the prime necessity for this is to bind up and control the undisciplined mind which harbours selfishness; for, with their great wisdom, they saw it to be the origin of all ill. Therefore,

we can find the very word which embraces all our spiritual teachings the key to and foundation of unity and harmony. We can easily ascribe the superficial disparities of dogma and appellation to the differences of time, place, culture, language, etc., prevailing at the time each religion came into being. By concentrating on the actual practice of each individual devotee, we shall discover with absolute certainty that we share the same sublime aim. To cite the great mentor, the saint-scholar Tsong Khapa :

All dogma when realized is found free of contradiction.

Every teaching is a precept for actual practice.

This is the easy way to penetrate to our teachers' meaning

And to avoid the great ill of abandoning our faith.

The spirit of non-contradiction expressed in this so-called 'Path of the Square' provides the key to a broad philosophical acceptance of

the spirit and function of religion. For by maintaining sharp awareness of the function as expressed in the actuality of all teachings, we can escape the ruinous error of sectarian discrimination and partisanship, and we can avoid the grave sin of casting aside any religious teaching. It gives me great pleasure to repeat these words which were spoken long ago in the Land of Snows ; for I am sure they will make an outstanding contribution to the development of unity and of a spirit of co-operation which are vital to keeping alive the flame of the spirit and preserving morality in these difficult times of strife and partisanship all over the world.

To make use of an analogy, a skilled physician ministers to his patients individually, giving each the appropriate medicine necessary to cure his particular disease. Furthermore, the method and materials of treatment will vary according to the particular combination of circumstances of time and country. Yet all the widely differing medicines and medical methods are similar in that each of them aims to deliver the suffering patient from his sickness. In the same way, all religious teachings and methods are similar in that they are intended to free living beings from misery. To cite a very famous verse from ancient India :

By not committing any sin,
By accomplishing every virtue,
To subdue one's own mind absolutely—
That is the teaching of the Buddha.

Until recently, the people in my Land of Snowy Mountains were left in complete isolation from their religious fellows all over the world. Although in ancient times, Buddhism and Buddhist culture were largely brought from India by the great Pandits of India's classical age and the great Tibetan scholars and translators who studied under them, and there was in general a close connection between the two countries, in more recent times we were regrettably cut off from developments in the modern world. Now that we have suffered the great national disaster of virtual

genocide, as is universally known, we can no longer doubt the impracticability of isolationism in modern times.

Now-a-days the world is becoming increasingly materialistic, and mankind is reaching towards the very zenith of external progress, driven by an insatiable desire for power and vast possessions. Yet by this vain striving for perfection in a world where everything is relative, they wander ever further away from inward peace and happiness of the mind. This we can all bear witness to, living as we do plagued by unremitting anxiety in this dreadful epoch of mammoth weapons. It becomes more and more imperative that the life of the spirit be avowed as the only firm basis upon which to establish happiness and peace.

Therefore I pray that the precious light of the spirit will reign in the world for a long time, dispelling the dark shadows of materialism. It is imperative for all of us to resolve upon making great efforts to hold its essence steadfastly in our hearts, and thence to disseminate it all to its healing power. In so resolving, we eschew the path of mundane power, for the healing power of the spirit naturally follows the path of the spirit ; it abides not in the stone of fine buildings, nor in the gold of images, nor the silk from which robes are fashioned, nor even in the paper of holy writ, but in the ineffable substance of the mind and the heart of man. We are free to follow its dictates as laid down by the great teachers to sublimate our heart's instincts and purify our thought. Through actual practice in his daily life, man well fulfils the aim of all religion, whatever his denomination. And when the inner radiance generated by the practice of spirituality comes to light up the world again, as it has done in certain eras in the past, the masses who comprise the great nations of the world may take their inspiration from the Bodhi-mind of love and mercy, may relinquish their obsession with the vain pursuit of power, and may take refuge in the discipline of religion, the inexhaustible source of blessing, the universal panacea.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

SRI MURUGANAR

219.

Within, without, the heart of every comfort,
As this world and the next, as everything,
The Master, entering, fulfils and supports
The devotee apt, as boundless knowledge,
A jewel lamp that needs no kindling,
A standing column of light.

220.

Free from all fear of suffering
Even like Indra in his happy heaven
They dwell on earth who yearning cling
Close to the guru and rely
Solely on his glance of grace.

221.

Majestic like a mountain rises
The splendour of the guru who destroys
Sin and holds his royal court
In the devotee's heart of love.
The mystery of this mounting bliss
Is ineffable. For those who have known it
Do not speak. Those who speak of it
Have not known it.

222.

For cutting down or scooping out
The knot of nescience in the pupil's heart
The sword of power which pleases too
Is the natural state of pure awareness
Of the Master from the ego's *maya* free.

223.

Steadfast practice of the wisdom learnt,
Mind restrained from the base senses' field,
Living within in the clear light of Truth,
Such conduct only is true teaching.

224.

Sensible people avoid the company
Of empty talkers who are not content
Humbly to tread the path of dharma
And firmly uphold in practice life's ideals,
But proudly mouth vain words.

225.

Many are the ills that flow from mixing
With mad folk, alas, afflicted
With turbid minds and rattling tongues.
Best friendship is with those good men
Whose minds are stilled and who abide
In the pure silence of awareness.

Arunachala- Pancharatnam

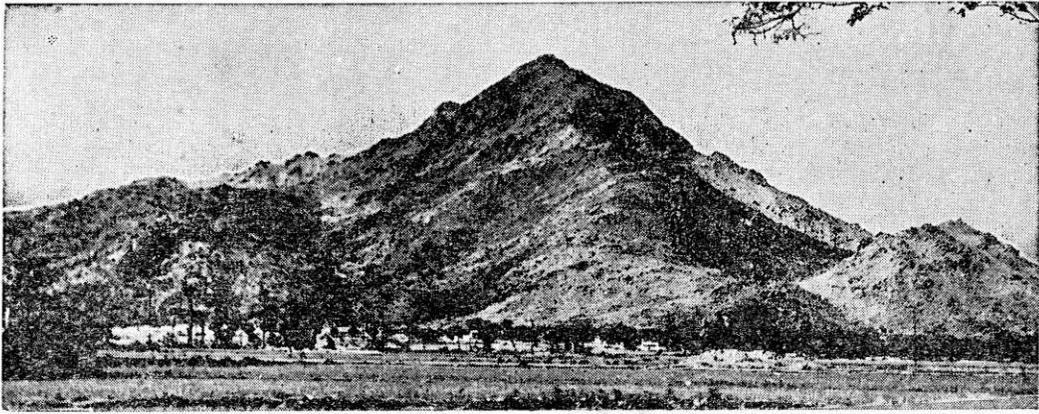
By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

Introduction

OF the five hymns to Arunachala composed by Bhagavan Ramana, the present one was originally written in Sanskrit. Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri, the great Sanskrit scholar and devotee, requested Bhagavan one day in 1917 to compose a poem in Sanskrit. Bhagavan replied with a smile that he knew little Sanskrit and less prosody relating to that language. But the Kavyakantha was not willing to leave the matter there. He explained to Bhagavan the technique of one of the Sanskrit metres called *arya*, and repeated his request. When he saw Bhagavan again in the evening, the poem was ready in exquisite Sanskrit, expressing in five short verses addressed to Arunachala the entire teaching of Vedanta.

This hymn consists of five gem-like verses on Arunachala ; hence the name *Arunachala-pancharatnam*. In the first two verses the nature of Reality is set forth from two levels, *svarupa* (essential) and *tatastha* (*per accidens*). In the remaining three verses the paths to perfection are sketched in outline. Thus, in this short poem, Bhagavan has given us in *sutra*-form the quintessence of Vedanta, as also the distinctive points of emphasis that are to be found in his teachings. This poem has been rendered by Bhagavan himself into Tamil *venba*¹ for the benefit of Tamil-knowing aspirants. The rendering was done in 1922 in response to a request from a devotee who wanted to add this to four other poems in Tamil on Arunachala written by Bhagavan, and publish the collection under the title *Arunachala Sthuthi Panchakam*.

¹ Verse form.



In the first two verses of the *Arunachala-pancharatnam*, as we have said, the nature of Reality is indicated. The Upanishads describe the nature of Reality in two ways :

Reality is existence-consciousness-bliss (*satchit-ananda*); its qualification *per accidens* is the causality of the world. The Real in itself is attributeless (*nirguna*) and unconditioned (*nirupadhika*). On account of *maya*, it appears as the cause of the world. In the first verse Bhagavan refers to Arunachala, the Supreme Self (*Paramatman*), that is unconditioned and unqualified existence-consciousness-bliss. It is supernal light ; it is the ocean of bliss. In it there is no plurality, there is no world. In the second verse Arunachala is described as the world-ground, as God who is the source and goal of the Universe. Creation, however is not real ; it is an illusory appearance. This is the implication of the picture-analogy. As Bhagavan himself explained the meaning once to an inmate of Sri Ramanasramam, "the universe is like a painting on a screen — the screen being the Red Hill, Arunachala. That which rises and sinks is made up of what it rises from. The finality of the universe is the God Arunachala" (*Talks*, p. 215). Thus the world is a transfiguration of Arunachala-Brahman ; it has no reality in itself. For the purpose of meditation on Arunachala, a location is assigned in the body — the location is the "heart", not the physical heart which

is in the left side of the chest, but the spiritual heart which is in the right side. Arunachala itself may be referred to as the "Heart", since it is the centre of all things.

In the third verse, Bhagavan teaches the path of self-inquiry. This is the same as *jnana-marga* (the path of knowledge). According to Advaita-Vedanta, jnana is the direct means to *moksha*. *Moksha* is not what is to be newly accomplished. It is the eternal nature of the Self. On account of nescience (*avidya*) it remains unrecognised. What will make us recognise it is the true knowledge of the Self. Bhagavan's formulation of the *jnana-marga* is well known. It takes the form of the inquiry 'Who am I?' Although all can take to this path, for sure and quick success one must possess a pure and one-pointed mind. The aids that render the mind fit to pursue the path of inquiry are meditation (*dhyana*), devotion (*bhakti*), and action (*karma*). In the fourth and fifth verses Bhagavan mentions these disciplines. Selfless service (*karma-yoga*) removes all impurities from the mind. Devotion to God (*bhakti-yoga*) and meditation (*dhyana-yoga*) impart to the mind one-pointedness. When the mind turns within and into its source, it merges in that source which is the Supreme Self, Arunachala. This is the final goal of all spiritual disciplines — the plenary experience which is existence-consciousness-bliss.

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA'S

Arunachala Pancharatnam

(A hymn of Five Verses to Arunachala)

(1)

"Ocean of Nectar, full of Grace, engulfing the universe in Thy Splendour! Oh Arunachala, the Supreme Itself! be Thou the Sun and open the lotus of my heart in bliss!"

This is the first verse of Bhagavan Sri Ramana's *Arunachala Pancharatnam*. Here the prayer is for the blossoming of the heart-lotus. The heart is compared to the lotus because it is what is fit to be offered to the Lord. The blossoming of the heart can be effected only when the Lord's grace descends on it, even as the lotus opens at dawn when the sun rises. The Lord is the Sun of suns; and it is by His Grace that the heart of the individual soul should attain maturity and purity.

The Lord is Arunachala, the changeless and constant Light; He is the Supreme Self. He is the ocean of grace and immortality. It is He that destroys all that is evil, and imperfect. To whom but Arunachala will the devotees turn for spiritual illumination that brings in the Life Eternal? It is by the Grace of Arunachala that perfection is gained.

(2)

"O Arunachala! in Thee the picture of the universe is formed, has its stay and is dissolved; this is the sublime Truth. Thou art the Inner Self, Who dancest in the Heart as 'I', 'Heart' is Thy name, Oh Lord!"

Arunachala is the Supreme God. A text of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* indicates the nature of Brahman by defining it as that whence all beings come into existence, wherein they reside and whereunto they return. Brahman is the ground of the universe. As the cause of the universe it is called God. But no theory of creation can be satisfactory. How



from the One the many appear is a mystery. Hence, it is said that God is both the material and the efficient cause of the world. The origin, middle, and end of the world are all within God. So Bhagavan Sri Ramana says that in Arunachala all these appear. That this should be so, indeed, is a wonder. It is true that explanations with the help of analogies such as the spider weaving the web out of its own insides have been offered. But no such explanation is intended to be finally valid. The teaching about the world and its creation is designed only as a prelude to the realisation of the non-dual Brahman.

The expression *etacchitram* may also be taken to mean 'This is like a picture'. The analogies from art-experience are given in order to show that the world is not to be regarded as a mere fact but as indicative of the highest value which is Brahman. Even as a fact it has its basis in Brahman. Brahman is the canvas whereon the world-picture is painted.

The reality of the cosmos is the reality of the individual as well. In the heart it manifests itself as 'I', the Self. It is itself called the 'Heart' because it is the centre of all things. It is said to dance in the heart because it is the principle of delight as well as the dynamism that moves all things.

Arunachala, the unmoving ground of the universe, is the same as Nataraja, the King

of Dance who dances in the Hall of the heart-ether (Chidambaram)

(3)

"He who inquires whence arise the 'I' thought, with a mind that is pure, inward-turned, and realizes his own nature, becomes quiescent, O Arunachala, in Thee, as a river in the ocean."

Here the path of self-enquiry is set forth. The technique consists in tracking the 'I' thought to its source. The 'I' thought is the first of all thoughts to arise. Wherefrom does it come? This has to be discovered, naturally, by employing the mind which is itself of the nature of thought. But it is only that mind that is pure and inward-turned that can accomplish this task. When the mind is impure and outturned, it gets distracted, dissipated, and lost in the objects of sense. It has to turn away from its mad pursuit of the external in order to know the truth and find peace. This it can only do when it is pure. When the pure mind turns within and inquiries into the origin of the 'I' thought, it discovers that this 'I' is the pseudo-self. With this discovery all thoughts disappear, and the true Self alone remains. The ego commits suicide and becomes one with the Self that is Arunachala. This is compared to the river joining the sea and losing itself in it.

The *Mundaka Upanishad* (III, ii, 8) declares :

'As the flowing rivers disappear in the ocean, leaving name and form, so the wise one, freed from name and form, goes unto the divine Person, higher than the high'.

(4)

"Rejecting the external objects, with breath and mind controlled, and meditating on thee within, the Yogi beholds thy light, O Arunachala, and finds his delight in Thee (or, this is Thy glory)."

Here is outlined the way to *yoga* which is the path of meditation (*dhyana*). Usually the mind flows out through the sense organs

towards the objects in order to enjoy them. It wrongly imagines that its delight lies in the objects. By dissipating itself away, it only comes to grief. But being under the spell of ignorance, it fails to learn the lesson. When it is disappointed with one object, it jumps on to another. *Yoga* is the return process of the mind; it turns it inward. Breath-control is practised as an aid to mind-control. Disciplining the body and regulating the breath help in the taming of the mind. When the mind is made one-pointed and fixed on the Self or God, one finds peace and joy within. Eventually the *yogi* realizes God. God is seen in the form of Light — not the physical light but the pure consciousness or awareness. The Light that is Arunachala is the supreme Spirit. Its splendour has no parallel; its greatness is unequalled. Seeing this Light is being it. The *yogi's* individuality is dissolved; and there is the Allness alone which is Bliss.

(5)

"With the mind offered unto Thee, seeing Thee, and seeing all as of Thy form, he who worships Thee with constant love conquers, O Arunachala, being immersed in Thee that art Bliss."

In the last verse, the path of devotion, and also the way of disinterested work by implication, are set forth. The essence of devotion consists in the total dedication of the individual soul to the service of God. *Bhakti* may begin by offering external things such as flowers and fruits to the Deity; but when it matures, what is offered is the mind, the heart. This the devotee will be able to do only when he sees God everywhere, and everything as an expression of God. He will then serve God in everything, which is the kernel of *karmayoga*. Through such service, the devotee's God-love becomes intense and undivided. And, eventually, he gains victory over all that is finite, inert, and painful; he finds that his individuality has dissolved, and that there is only the limitless sea of Bliss which is Brahman.

GLEANINGS OF RABBI NACHMAN'S COUNSELS

Translated By Zalman M. Schachter

VERY diligent must one's search be for the true Tzaddik (holy man). A true Tzaddik is he who possesses the quality of Ru'ach Hakodesh (The Holy Spirit). The root of faith lies in the analysis and separation of the power of illusion — and no one but the true Tzaddik, who possesses Ru'ach Hakodesh can accomplish that. Every man on earth from the smallest to the greatest must all his life take care to search for such a true Tzaddik.

For the Torah does not address itself to the dead, meaning those who do not really want to find 'life', those who do not take heed for their souls, seeking its redemption forever. The Torah addresses itself to those only who want to be saved from the emptiness and purposelessness in this life and the others.

Even if one did merit to find a Rabbe, or a friend who received guidance from a true Tzaddik who received living words of truth, and who can helpfully speak to the condition of his soul, he nevertheless must continue seeking.

Even if he succeeded in correcting something in himself, he still must continue seeking,

It is not enough if one recognises a holy man or develops faith in him. One should discover that holiness in oneself and thus break the power of illusion with the help of a true Tzaddik (holy man).

since man does not stand still. Since so many actions do not have the effect one had intended them to have, especially in our day and age as we so well know in our hearts, one must continue to seek for the true Tzaddik, who possesses Ru'ach Hakodesh. It is not the search for the bodily appearance of the Tzaddik that is so important. One must search for his Ru'ach Hakodesh. For only his Ru'ach Hakodesh is able to isolate and destroy the illusion. Illusion was created in order to be separated and refined by the Ru'ach Hakodesh of the true Tzaddik. One who has not found him must surely seek him out on one's hands and feet with all one's strength and all over the world and all one's days in the hope that one will be able to find him and through him find 'the life of one's soul', if only for one day or one hour before one's death.

Even if he did 'find' the Tzaddik, he must continue to be a seeker for his soul is still dark and he does not yet feel delight in the

truth of the Tzaddik's Holy counsel, and so is still far from his Tikkun. For the finding of the Ru'ach Hakodesh of the Tzaddik is the important thing. He who would sincerely seek the Tzaddik would surely find him, for "G-d does not require the impossible of his creatures, and he who says that he sought and found is to be believed."

Even the teacher himself must seek and search in order to rediscover the 'Holiness' of his own master's Ru'ach Hakodesh which he has received, until he will again find himself. Thus he will truly be able to guide, counsel and speak to the conditions of the people coming to him. For it is extremely difficult to counsel and help any one possessing 'free choice'. Thus in working with people to bring them to themselves, one must work in great depth, a depth scarcely imaginable. Therefore one must seek and search and plead with one's Master, friend or disciple and then only can one find the Ru'ach Hakodesh.

There is no counsel for anyone who desires to fall asleep except to cease to desire it. The more one will tense oneself to sleep, the greater will be the resistance. He who pursues sleep will find sleep fleeing. This holds true in anything else. Everything flees us upon our pursuits.

Some believe that there is *this* world and the *World to Come*. And we do believe that there is a World to Come. Perhaps there is *this world* (in which one enjoys its delights) in one or another of the universes. For here and now it seems that only Gehenna-Hell exists. Perhaps there is no 'this world' at all.

The power of reciting the Psalms resides in the truth that man can find himself in each Psalm. All the wars King David prays about are the wars with one's lower nature.

Don't we begin our morning prayers with "What are we, what is life?" Thus we find Jehoshaphat described (Chron, 2:16) "He raised his heart in the ways of H'V'Y'H." In the ways of L-rd, he slightly raised his heart.

The Vessel Must be Emptied of Self

By Joel S. Goldsmith

IT is not any degree of human wisdom or any degree of human goodness that we may attain that brings forth the Christ. In fact it might be far easier for some deep-dyed sinner to attain the Christ than for some very good person. The sinner is often well aware of his unworthiness. In his attitude of being 'one of the least of these', and understanding his own inadequacy, he has so emptied himself that he is ready to be filled with the Christ; whereas, as a rule, if a person is living a fairly good human life he is likely to get the idea, 'Hmm! I am good; I deserve it.' It does not come that way; it comes by Grace, and that Grace can come only in proportion as a person is emptied so that there is no self left to be good.

As long as a person has a trace of a belief that he is good, deserving, or worthy, in that degree he is setting up a barrier for the entrance of the Christ. The Christ does not come while a vessel is already full of self and of a human being's goodness. The Christ comes when a person is so emptied of self that he has renounced not only the evil but also the good and has thus made himself completely empty.

THE ZEN REVIVAL

ZEN "INSIGHT"

By Fr. Thomas Merton

"Zen" cannot be defined positively or negatively and is really not limited to the concepts of 'experiencer' or 'experienced'.

THE famous Jesuit Visitor of the Oriental province, Valignano, strongly urged the missionaries to associate with the Zen monks. This meant participation in the quasi-religious "tea ceremony", in which the Jesuits not only took a keen interest, but which they practised with a relatively consummate artistry, sharing with their Zen friends a real appreciation of its spiritual implications. One Jesuit has left us a moving account of his impressions in a sixteenth-century Portuguese manuscript, an excerpt of which has been published for the first time by Fr. Dumoulin :

This art of tea is a kind of religion of solitude. It was established by the originators in order to promote good habits and moderation in all things among those who dedicate themselves to it. In this way they imitate the Zen philosophers in their meditation as do the philosophers of the other schools of Indian wisdom. Much rather they hold the things of this world in low esteem, they break away from them and deaden their passion through specific exercises and enigmatic metaphorical devices which at the outset serve as guides. They give themselves to contemplation of

I say that next to God there is no nobler thing than suffering.....I hold, if anything were nobler than suffering, God would have saved mankind therewith, for we might well accuse him of being unfriendly to his Son if he knew of something superior to suffering.....Further, I maintain, no man apart from God has ever been so holy or so good as to deserve the least nobility such as the smallest suffering would give..... I tell you, right suffering is the mother of all virtues, for right suffering so subdues the heart, it cannot rise to pride but perforce is lowly.

MEISTER ECKHART

natural things. Of themselves they arrive at the knowledge of the original cause in that they come to see things themselves. In the consideration of their mind they eliminate that which is evil and imperfect until they come to grasp the natural perfection and the being of the First Cause.

Therefore these philosophers customarily do not dispute or argue with others, rather allowing each person to consider things for himself, in order that he may draw understanding from the ground of his own being. For this reason they do not instruct even their own disciples. The teachers of this school are also imbued with a determined and decisive spirit without indolence or negligence, without lukewarmness or effeminacy. They decline the abundance of things for their personal use as superfluous and unnecessary. They regard sparsity and moderation in all things as the most important matter and as being beneficial to the hermit. This they combine with the greatest equanimity and tranquillity of mind and outer modesty . . . after the manner of the Stoics who thought that the consummate person neither possesses nor feels any passion.

The adherents of *cha-no-yu* claim to be followers of these solitary philosophers. There-

fore all teachers of this art, even though they be unbelievers otherwise, are members of the Zen ceremony, they observe neither superstition nor cult, nor any other special religious ritual, since they adopt none of these things from it. Rather they copy only their cenobitic solitude and separation from activities of life in the world, as also their resolution and readiness of mind, eschewing laxity or indolence, pomp or effeminacy. Also in their contemplation of natural things, these practitioners imitate Zen, not in deed with regard to the goal of the knowledge of being and the perfection of original being, but rather only in that they see in those things the outer tangible and natural forms which move the mind and incite to solitude and tranquillity and detachment from the noise and proud stirring of the world.

There are several instances of Zen Masters who became Christians in the early days of the Japanese mission, along with some of the "Tea-Masters" who were not always members of the Zen sect. But the relations between the Jesuits and the Zen monks did not always remain friendly. There was a certain amount of ambivalence and misunderstanding. In fact, when the great persecution of Japanese Christians began, some of the Zen abbots were among the most zealous in instigating it. The reasons for this were extremely complex and we do not need to go into them here.

What, exactly, is Zen? If we read the laconic and sometimes rather violent stories of the Zen Masters, we find that this is a dangerously loaded question: dangerous above all because the Zen tradition absolutely refuses to tolerate any abstract or theoretical answer. In fact, it must be said at the outset that philosophically or dogmatically speaking, the question probably has no satisfactory answer. The word *Zen* comes from the Chinese *Ch'an* which designates a certain type of meditation, and is based on the Sanskrit word *dhyana*. Zen is therefore not a religion, not a philosophy, not a system of thought, not a doctrine, not an asceticism. In calling it a kind of "natural

mysticism" Fr. Dumoulin is bravely submitting to the demands of western thought which is avid, at any price, for essences. But I think he would not find too many eastern minds who would fully agree with him on this point, even though he is, in fact, giving Zen the highest praise. He feels a Christian theologian can accord it. The truth is, Zen does not even lay claim to be "mystical" and the most widely-read authority on the subject, Daisetz Suzuki, has expended no little effort in trying to deny the fact that Zen is "mysticism". This, however, is more a matter of semantics than anything else.

The Zen insight cannot be communicated in any kind of doctrinal formula or even in any precise phenomenological description. This is probably what Suzuki means when he says it is "not mystical": that it does not present clear and definitely recognizable characteristics capable of being set down in words. True, the genuineness of the Zen illumination is certainly recognizable, but only by one who has attained the insight himself. And here of course we run into the first of the abominable pitfalls that meet anyone who tries to write of Zen. For to suggest that it is "an experience" which a "subject" is capable of "having" is to use terms that contradict all the implications of Zen.

Hence it is quite false to imagine that Zen is a sort of individualistic, subjective purity in which the monk seeks to rest and find spiritual refreshment. It is not a subtle form of spiritual means of self-gratification, a repose in the depths of our own silence. Nor is it by any means a simple withdrawal from the outer world of matter to an inner world of spirit. The first and most elementary fact about Zen is its abhorrence of this dualistic division between matter and spirit. Any criticism of Zen that presupposes such a division in Zen is, therefore, pure nonsense.

Like all forms of Buddhism, Zen seeks an "enlightenment" which results from the resolution of all subject-object relationships and

oppositions in a pure void. But to call this void a mere negation is to re-establish the oppositions which are resolved in it. This explains the peculiar insistence of the Zen Masters on "neither affirming nor denying". Hence it is impossible to attain *satori* (enlightenment) merely by quietistic inaction or the suppression of thought. Yet at the same time "enlightenment" is not an experience or an I-Thou relationship with a Supreme Being considered as object of knowledge and perception. However, Zen does not deny the existence of a Supreme Being. It neither affirms nor denies, it simply *is*. One might say that *Zen is the awareness of pure being beyond subject and object*.

But the peculiarity of this awareness is that it is not reflexive, not self-conscious, not philosophical, not theological. It is in some sense entirely beyond the scope of psychological observation and metaphysical reflection. For want of a better term we may call it "purely spiritual". In order to preserve this purely spiritual quality the Zen Masters staunchly refuse to rationalize or verbalize the Zen experience. They relentlessly destroy all figments of the mind or imagination that pretend to convey its meaning. They even go so far as to say: "If you meet the Buddha, kill him!" They refuse to answer speculative or metaphysical questions except with words that seem utterly trivial and which are designed to dismiss the question itself as irrelevant.

When asked "If all phenomena return to the One, where does the One return to?" the Zen Master Joshu simply said "When I lived in Seiju I made a robe out of hemp that weighed ten pounds." This is a useful and salutary *mondo* (saying) for the western reader to remember. It will guard him against the almost irresistible temptation to think of Zen as *not* a system of pantheistic monism. It is not a system of any kind. It refuses to make any statements at all about the metaphysical structure of being and existence. Rather it points to being itself without indulging in speculation.

PURE CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE WORLD

The world is only the mind in action.
When the mind itself subsides
in Pure Consciousness there is no world.
Thus the world is as true as the mind,
they are never apart.

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

"If the world be taken as *chit* (consciousness),
it is always real."¹

— SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

MODERN science takes up this position :
'The spatial and temporal properties of
physical occurrences are found to be largely
dependent upon the observer ; only a residue
can be attributed to the occurrences in them-
selves, and only this residue can be involved
in the formulation of any physical law which
is to have an *a priori* chance of being true.
Einstein found ready to his hand an instru-
ment of pure mathematics, called the theory
of tensors, which enabled him to discover laws
expressed in terms of the objective residue
and agreeing approximately with the old laws.
Where Einstein's laws differed from the old
laws, they have hitherto proved more in
accord with observation' ' . . . If there was
no reality in the physical world, but only a
number of dreams dreamt by different people,
we should not expect to find any laws connect-
ing the dreams of one man with the dreams
of another.'

Sri Ramana Maharshi says : " . . . the
body and all other objects are all contained
in the brain. The light is projected on the

brain. The impressions in the brain become
manifest as the body and the worlds. Because
the ego identifies itself with limitations, the
body is considered separate and the world
separate."² "Without consciousness, time and
space do not exist. They appear in consci-
ousness. It is like a screen on which these are
cast as pictures and move as in a cinema show.
The absolute consciousness is our real
nature."³ "It is only the individual mind
that sees the world. When this mind dis-
appears the world also disappears."⁴

WORLD ?

For centuries many people had the simple
explanation of the Genesis pertaining to man
and his world. The idea of supernatural
creation persisted amongst a large number of
people. But the Advaita thinkers in India
held on to their theory of non-duality and
non-origination. Gaudapada says in his
Mandukya-karika that whatever is seen by
the mind is void of reality.⁵ The world which

¹ Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, p. 297.

² Ibid., p. 173.

³ Ibid., p. 194.

⁴ Ibid., p. 628.

⁵ Mandukya-karika, IV, 36.

AWAKE

By paul rePS

we are mostly asleep when awake
 "is it possible to sleep awarely?"
 we say I had a sound sleep
 so we must be aware of it innately
 though not divisibly
 senses do not sense until we INsense
 why scatter into matter?
 "who suffers? kills? is killed?"
 no one
 it's a dream
 "then how do we wake from the dream?"
 you already ARE awake

we regard as all too real is only 'such stuff as dreams are made of'. Just as the dream-objects are experienced in dream alone, neither before nor after, even so the objects of waking hours are experienced in the state of waking alone. The 'things' are all superimposed on the Self of Pure Consciousness which is the substratum.⁶ The Absolute Consciousness alone is ; all else is imaginary.

It is interesting to find that, without accepting the Absolute Consciousness, scientists have come to regard man's knowledge of things as subjective. The scientist, like the ordinary man, believed that his perceptions gave him knowledge about what is really occurring in the world. Trends in modern science show that the 'name-form' aspect of 'things' is not real. Let us take an example. In a second, light travels 300,000 kilometers. It

travels from the sun to the earth in about eight minutes, and from the stars to us in anything from four to a thousand million years. Suppose the sun ceases to exist now. Still you will continue to see the sun for nearly eight minutes. This is because the rays which emanated from the sun will continue to cause a disturbance in the optic nerve ending in an occurrence in the brain. The processed output of the brain is an imaging which has the 'name-form' projected as the sun.

Similarly, the world that we perceive is a mere imaging processed by the brain. Everyone knows that a dead brain does not process any imagery. The first occurrence in a living brain is the rise of the I-sense, the brain processes the sense inputs. "There exists for

⁶ Sankara on Mandukya-karika, II, 33.

the individual, an I-time or subjective time" says Einstein.⁷ "For each body, there is a definite time-order for the events in its neighbourhood; this may be called the 'proper' time for that body. . . . For the beta particles (electrons) in laboratories, quite different times would be wanted; it is because we insist upon using our own time that these particles seem to increase in mass with rapid motion. From their own point of view, their mass remains constant, and it is we who suddenly grow thin or corpulent. The history of a physicist as observed by a beta particle would resemble Gulliver's travels," says Bertrand Russell.⁸

With reference to the I-sense, the body and the external world are all jointly present events in the subjective past. Suppose I scratch my head. It is after the scratching has been done that the brain receives the input. So it is an occurrence in the subjective past; so are all body sensations. I say, therefore, the human body is a complex of compresent⁹ events in the subjective past. Similarly the sun and the stars are all compresent events in the subjective past — the sun about eight minutes, the stars anything from four to a thousand million years. Imagings (as processed by the brain) of compresent events are ranged about the I-sense in the subjective past. Such arrangement referenced to the I-sense creates the illusion of the human body and the external world.

REALITY

The fore-going considerations take us to the following conclusions. :

1. The 'world-building' is referenced and ranged about the I-sense.
2. It is after the rise of the I-sense that the brain acknowledges the 'I'. In other words, it is the closest event in the subjective past. We can say that the I-sense is the 'subjective now'.

3. The Source from which the I-sense rises is the 'Real Now', the very Present. All forms of intelligence such as the I-sense rise from this Source. It is pure Consciousness. For there is nothing prior to it to give it consciousness. It Is As It Is. To quote the famous saying of Marquis de Laplace: "An intelligence which knew at a given instant all the forces by which nature is animated, and the relative position of all the objects, if it were sufficiently powerful to analyse all this information, would include *in one formula* the movements of the most massive objects in the Universe and those of the lightest atom. Nothing would be uncertain to it; the future and the past would be present to its eyes."
4. The world appearance ceases with the subsidence of I-sense. For the imagings cannot occur without the I-sense. From this we may turn to Sri Ramana Maharshi: "The 'I'-thought is the root-thought, seek the root of the 'I', question yourself: 'Who am I?' find out its source. Then all these will vanish and the pure Self will remain."¹⁰
5. Modern science tells us that the human body and the physical universe are made out of particles which are nothing but energy states.

This is the attitude of science which rejects the long-persisting concept of supernatural creation among many people. The non-dualists of India go further and find (as said above) the substratum of all reality in Pure or Absolute Consciousness. We may say that Absolute Consciousness is All-That-Is.

⁷*The Meaning of Relativity* by Albert Einstein, Methuen & Co., 1960, p. 1.

⁸*The ABC of Relativity*, published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964.

⁹*Human Knowledge* by Russell, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948, p. 312.

¹⁰*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 191.

MEMORY AND NATURAL PERCEPTIONS:

St. John of The Cross

**We are so bound up with wrong knowledge
that we shudder at the prospect of
its loss. If success is to be achieved such
imaginings should be curtailed.**

*Answer to a doubt as to the
emptying of the faculties*

WHEN the reader observes that I teach the annihilation of the understanding, the memory and the will in the matter of their operations, he will perhaps imagine that I am destroying and not building up the spiritual edifice. This objection would be valid, if my purpose here was to instruct only beginners, who are to be led onwards by means of these discursive and tangible apprehensions. But as I am teaching how to advance by contemplation to the divine union — for which end all these means, and the sensible exertion of the powers of the soul must cease and be silent, in order that God in His own way may bring that union to pass — it is necessary to release the faculties and to empty them, and to make them renounce their natural jurisdiction and operations, in order that the supernatural may fill and enlighten them . . . as it is most true that the soul knoweth God, rather by what He is not, than by what He is, it follows of necessity that if we are to draw near unto Him, it must be by denying and renouncing to the uttermost all that may be denied, of our apprehensions, natural and supernatural alike.

The stripping of the memory

The natural knowledge of the memory is all that knowledge it can form about the objects of the five bodily senses: hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and touching, and all else of the like kind. The memory must be stripped and emptied of all this knowledge and of these forms; it must labour to destroy all sense of them, so that no impression whatever of them shall be left behind; it must forget them and withdraw itself from them, and that as completely as if they had never entered into it. Nothing less than the annihilation of the memory as to all these forms will serve, if it is to be united with God. For that union can never take place without a total separation from these forms which are not God, for God is without form; neither is He the object of any distinct knowledge whatever.

Union empties the memory

As God is without form or image, on which the memory may dwell, so when the memory is united with God — as we see by daily experience — it remains without form or figure, with the imagination suppressed, and itself absorbed in supreme felicity, in profound oblivion, remembering nothing. The divine union expels every fancy and shuts out all forms and knowledge; it raises the memory to that which is supernatural, leaving it in such deep forgetfulness that it must do violence to itself, if it will remember anything at all. Such at times is this forgetfulness of the memory, and suspension of the imaginative powers, because of the union of the memory with God, that time passes by unheeded and what took place in the interval cannot be known. If God is to bring about this perfect union, memory must be severed from all acts of knowledge of which it is capable. But it is to be observed, that this suspension never occurs thus in those who are perfect, because they have attained already to the perfect union, and this suspension relates to the commencement of that state.

How Bhagavan Came to Me

By A Seeker

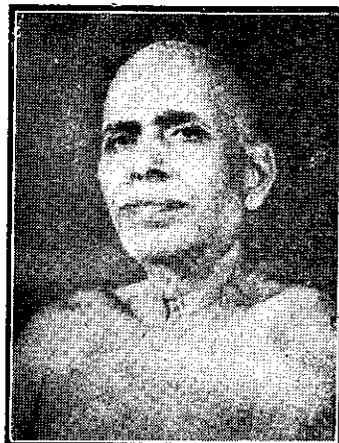
THIS is offered as homage to Sri Ramana and as testimony to the truth that all paths lead to the same Peak and that without Grace there is nothing, neither "light" nor "darkness", neither "regress" nor "progress"; Grace is All.

Born into a non-religious Jewish family, I was raised in a small Protestant town in the southern United States. At twenty I found myself in a university in the Northeast and extremely unhappy. Till then God had meant nothing to me; but abruptly things changed. Some Higher Intelligence began hammering me over the head with the fact of Its existence and by moving me through coincidences in which the whole universe seemed to converge in direct answers to my innermost questions of the moment.

That summer I read an autobiography of a yogi. It electrified me, literally: after reading it I lay relaxed before sleep, wondering if yoga were to be part of my path. An oscillating sound came to me and raised my mind inwardly; suddenly there sounded an incredibly beautiful herald of trumpets followed by a flash of brilliant light which illuminated my whole being.

Needless to say, I took this as a "yes" to my question, and that fall I took initiation from a disciple of an enlightened Indian yogi. By the next summer I felt ready to go to India. I wasn't able to leave till autumn.

This Master, called Baba, lived up to all my expectations, and more. He showered his grace upon me; my prayers for greater devo-



tion were being answered. But then something happened which I cannot detail here: through his words, actions, and arrangement of my "external" circumstances, he indicated unmistakably that I was to leave his mission, perhaps never to see him again physically. So I left.

Before departing from India a friend and I visited other ashrams. The message I got was: all paths are one; and the Guru is within, so seek within. I went halfway across the world to find someone to save me, but those capable merely referred me to a mirror.

Thus I returned to the States, feeling exalted by a wondrous journey — it was a perfect circle of experience — but also somewhat confused as to how to proceed. I was reading Krishnamurti and trying to be, but I didn't feel comfortable or secure in a practice which said, "Make no effort." I was praying to Jesus. Shortly after my return, I had met a devotee of Jesus who asked if I had accepted Him in my heart. I quickly answered, "Yes"; but upon reflection I realized that was untrue. So I was praying very fervently to Jesus, that He enter my heart.

At the same time I was praying to my first Guru ("my" Guru's first form). I had come to feel that I could be satisfied with nothing less than absolute and eternal Realization. It

felt almost blasphemous to ask so much, but what else could I ask?

So all this was going on, and at the height of it Baba came to me in a dream. I was sitting before him in *darshan* with a few others. He asked if I had been practising a certain *mantra*. Anxious to please him, I blurted "Yes". He said sternly, "No, you haven't," and looked away. I began to weep, my head against his knee. Then something made me look up at him. Smiling. He said simply, "Yours is the path of the Heart".

Upon awakening I thought he might have been referring to the occasional feelings in the centre of my chest that were accompanying my practice of trying to BE with all things. Or maybe he meant something in reference to my prayer to Jesus. I didn't know, and nothing was made clear.

By late spring I was feeling pretty miserable. No changes, no breakthroughs. Some friends and I had attempted to establish a community; egoism aborted it. I was often on the verge of tears. One weekend I visited some friends on a farm, people I had met in India. But rather than feeling any *satsang*, I felt a loneliness, even paranoia, that I thought I'd left behind long ago. After two days of this misery, I picked up a little pamphlet, "Who am I?", with a picture of the slender young Ramana. By reading it I was able at least to regain my equilibrium.

The next night, at a friend's apartment in Montreal, Quebec, I came across *The Teachings of Bhagavan* by Arthur Osborne. By now quite interested, I read parts of it and then tried the *sadhana* the Maharshi recommended. After fifteen or twenty minutes of asking mentally, "Who am I?", and concentrating on the right side of my chest — suddenly, from the depths of my Heart something opened up in me, a piercing sensation followed by a wave of bliss. The bliss passed, and the piercing sensation diminished over the next few days — but the feeling of the Heart remained.

Since then It has never left me — though sometimes I leave It for this thought or that, and It remains on the edge of consciousness. Shortly after Its advent I came to see that *this* is the path of the Heart, and that I shall have to find no other forms for my Guru. And then it dawned on me that my prayer to Jesus had been answered. For as it is true that no one other than Sri Ramana vibrates at the Core of my Being, so also it is no one other than Jesus, and no one other than Baba.

"Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find." "Earnest efforts never fail." What else is there to say? Full realization has not dawned, but whether moments or lifetimes intervene, it cannot fail to come. Patience and perseverance are necessary, as Bhagavan has said. It may take long years of practice to reach the Goal.

Yet the Grace He has bestowed upon me compels me to conclude on a different note. For Bhagavan again says we are the Self, ever and always; and Jesus says *be alert*, for you don't know when the Bridegroom will arrive. And indeed, young Venkataraman experienced the truth of this latter statement most dramatically, at the moment of his death and the arrival of the Bridegroom, Arunachala. So we should be patient and persevering, but we shouldn't give a moment's thought to "the long years ahead" and other such poison. For "the thought that you are not realized is the obstacle to Realization." If we don't feel we *know* Reality, ever and always, then we must at least feel continuously that its lightning flash is imminent. Such an attitude naturally allows *sadhana* to become the all-consuming flame it should be, and thus "hastens" the Coming. For, again as Venkataraman realized, no one walks that final infinite distance to the Peak of Arunachala — but rather, in a way too inscrutable for the mind to comprehend, and at a speed far too fast for the ego to withstand, one is brought to the Heart-Summit by the Mountain Itself.

SPIRITUALITY IN RUSSIA

By Gladys de Meuter

The holy men of Russia come under such widely varying groups as (represented by) the highly contemplative Hesychastic and the ritual-minded monastics. The writings of the saints have been preserved and those of Tychoa for example are noted for a direct and intensely devotional approach. This is the first instalment of Gladys de Meuter's account.

RUSSIA has been the recipient of rich spiritual treasures. The traditions of the ancient Eastern and Byzantine Church have been preserved by the Mother Church known as the Greek and Eastern Orthodox which is now the national religion of Russia.

In 1054, the middle of the eleventh century, a schism separated the Christian East from the Western Roman Catholic Church. Although the canonical aspects of the Eastern Church as well as the liturgical, have been the objects of study by scholars, it is only recently that the 'heart' of this lore has been tapped and is now being better understood. Its lofty moral, ethical, intellectual and philosophical tones reveal rare spiritual beauty, but there are too few studies still extant on this absorbing study.

The Mother Church in Russia received her cultural and religious life from Constantinople, bearing the unmistakable stamp of Byzantine influence. This culture was ruthlessly wiped out by the invading Tartars who in so doing cut off the Northeastern Russians from the Southeastern populace, comprised of those Ukranians and white Russians who dwelt in the Lithuanian and Polish territories.

The Great Prince of Moscow emerged as a powerful enemy of the Tartars and succeeded in throwing off their tyrannical grip, after which he crowned himself Tsar or Caesar of the Russians (circa 1547), and continued his role of warrior by driving off the Mongolian invaders still in possession of Russian land. Thus, after the Mongol and Byzantine Emperors, the Muscovite state now ruled, and the peasants became serfs.

In (d. 1725) Peter the Great essayed a reform whereby Russia became westernized. Between the upper classes and the illiterate masses there formed a cultural breach so great that when World War I ended, a revolutionary Bolshevik reaction shook the country to the core, resulting in the stifling of the spiritual life in Russian literature.

When Russia underwent conversion, she absorbed a great treasury of translated Greek sermons, collections of tales which derived their source from the Syrian, Palestinian, Egyptian monastic life, and also the lives of Saints. Among those saints John Climacus was regarded as a spiritual authority for a very long time.

The first canonized Saints of Russia were the brothers Boris and Gleb who revealed in their martyrdom a 'kenotic' influence, namely, imitation of Christ in His 'Kenosis' — embodying self-humiliation, self-sacrifice, voluntary sacrificial surrender to death. These brothers, the princes Boris and Gleb, met the assassins sent by their elder brother, with non-resistance, rather than commit the crime of fratricide themselves. This Kenoticism plays a very important role in Russian Christianity.

During the Mongolian period the Church adopted the Kievan tradition, adding to it the mysticism brought from Mount Athos (14th and 15th centuries). Thus, there emerged in Russia a contemplative form of monasticism where emphasis was laid on spiritual prayer. To the Kenotic and caritative types of Monasticism in Russia was adapted the Greek form of mystical prayer.

The forests of Northern Russia embraced the solitary Hesychasts who sought spiritual attainment in silence. Saint Sergius (14th century) started the movement, but in the fifteenth century Saint Nilus Sorsky put pen to paper in order to guide others. These hermits took upon themselves an austere life; they courted absolute poverty, practised spiritual prayer and maintained silence. They retained moral independence of secular powers

towards which they felt the obligation of teaching and reproving. Under such intense spirituality, the art in icon painting reached its peak, and in the fifteenth century Russia enjoyed the golden age of saintliness and artistic achievement.

While the contemplatives dwelt in the silent forests, other monastics found fulfilment in active, practical, social activities. They tilled the soil, became social leaders, administrators and even gave political advice to the Muscovite princes. They observed meticulously ritual and liturgical forms of worship.

The two groups found themselves drawn to a conflict in the beginning of the sixteenth century when they disagreed on two major problems. The first concerned the legitimacy of landowning by monastics. The second dealt with which policy to adopt towards a new sect of heretics called the Judaizers. As the contemplatives were opposed to capital punishment and any form of severe chastisement, they refused to sanction judgement on the heretics.

Because the princes of Moscow patronised the Josephites, the contemplatives were overruled and the fearless disciples of Saint Nilus were themselves denounced as heretics. Quietly the mystical element of the Church went underground while the Josephites became more and more immersed in meaningless ritualism.

Although the mysticism of Russian spirituality appeared to withdraw, its greatness lies intact in a large anthology collected and compiled into what is now known as the 'Philocalia' — the influence of this work is great and continues to expand. A testimony to this is the beautiful, sincere *WAY OF A PILGRIM* now made available to Western readers.

The lives of Saints are crossroads to the human spirit seeking the Path. Father Yelchaninov who died in 1934 expresses the reverence for saintliness in these words: 'We must return to the lives of the Saints, to the writings of the Fathers. They contain the same light

of Christ, but with a softer quality mellowed in passing through the prism of a saintly human soul.'

Among the writings of the Russian Saints are those of Tychon whose passionate devotion to God is moving in its direct approach and intensity. This love is a flame which inspires a tender soliloquy.

'Hearken, my soul: God has visited us; Our Lord has come to us. For my sake He was born of the Virgin Mary, He Who is brought forth of the Father before all time. For my sake He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, He Who causes heaven to be covered with clouds and vests Himself with robes of light. For my sake He was put in the lowly manger, He Who has heaven for a throne and Who rests His feet upon earth. For my sake He allowed His mother to feed Him with milk, He Who provides all creatures with food. For my sake He was held in His mother's arms, He Who is Cherubim borne and holds all creatures in His embrace. For my sake He was circumcized according to the law, He Who makes the Law. For my sake He the invisible became visible and dwelt among men, He Who is God. My God became a man like me; the Word became flesh, and the Lord of Glory took upon Himself the form of a servant — lived on earth, walked on earth, He, the King of Heaven.

'... He Who gives food and drink to all creatures knew hunger and thirst. He Who wipes away all tears, wept. He Who is the Comforter of all men suffered and grieved. He Who alone is holy and just, consorted with sinners. He Who is omnipresent, laboured and had no place to lay His head. He Who gives wealth to all men, was poor. He Who is Omnipresent travelled from place to place, from town to town. And so it was for thirty three years and more that He lived and laboured upon earth for my sake.

'... O Son of God ... what did You find meritorious in me? Why did You come to seek me out in this vale of tears? Shep-

herds seek their lost sheep for their own profit; men seek lost property out of self-interest; travellers visit other countries for their own benefit. Kings offer ransom for prisoners, paying it in gold and silver through their ambassadors, and largely for their own profit, but what was it that You found in me, my Lord? What use, what profit, what good did You see in me that You came to find me? The King of Heaven Himself came, not His ambassadors.

'... my God, You loved me without profit. This is indeed true love!

'... the Immortal One was put to death. Arise my soul; be filled with awe, humble yourself, bow low and fall at His sacred feet.

'... my Lord, You wept in order to wipe the tears from my eyes.

'You were betrayed, sold in order that I might be freed, I who was in bondage.

'You were bound in order that my bonds might be broken.

'You submitted to an unjust trial, You, the Judge of all the earth, in order that I be freed from eternal judgement.

'You were crowned with thorns in order that I might receive the crown of life.

'You were laid in the tomb in order that I might rise from the tomb.

'You were brought to life again in order that I might believe in my resurrection.

'... I shall offer unto You a grateful heart, and that alone You desire of me. Yet even this thing I cannot do without You.

'Without You I cannot know You, or having known You, love You.

'O Compassionate, O Generous Lover of men — give to me the heart so that I may follow You.'

Saint Tychon in his impassioned appeal echoes the prayer of all sincere hearts dedicated to God.

(To be continued)

The Concept of Tawakkul in Islam

By Muhammad Abdulla

TAWAKKUL means trust and abidance in the will of God. Nothing happens outside His will which is supreme. We can make efforts but whether they bear fruit or not rests with Him.

Muhammad lived and preached in Mecca for thirteen years after the first revelation. This was a period of great hardship. Forsaken by his own tribe, he suffered insults and indignities. His own uncle, Abu Talib, who gave him shelter and support, did not embrace Islam. In spite of all this he did not lose heart and went on preaching.

Later he had to flee to Medina with his friend and disciple Abu Bakr and one guide, with the people of Mecca in hot pursuit. Muhammad's position at that time was at the lowest ebb, but he had trust in God and carried on the task allotted to him by the will of God. Who could say at that time that these two people, alone and persecuted, would raise a banner to draw millions?

Trust in God gives complete security. One example can be cited here: Once a man visited Omer, the second caliph, with the intention of killing him. He had a phial containing poison in his pocket for that purpose, but he was so impressed by Omer that he embraced Islam instead. Later he told

Omer about his mission and showed him the little phial. Omer was not perturbed and said his death was in the hand of God and not in the phial. He calmly drank its contents — and lived. (This is reminiscent of a similar incident in the life of Mirabai).

Trust in God strikes at the root of insecurity, for man's security lies in Him alone. In perspective it may turn out that what we considered misfortune was a blessing in disguise. Surrender to God means acceptance of whatever comes as Grace. Trust in God does not teach lethargy — it rather teaches that we should perform our duty to the best of our ability, with detachment. In Hinduism this is called *nishkama karma*.

Once Muhammad passed a man who was repairing a crumbling wall. On the prophet's enquiry he said that he was repairing the wall because of the fear that it may collapse and kill him. The prophet said: "Death is closer to you than the collapse of this wall." He even said once: "When God is displeased with someone, he makes him waste all his money in stones and mortar." This is not a tirade against building as such under legitimate circumstances; it is just a warning for people to spend in charity instead of building security in mortar.

Yoga for Spiritual Progress

By Swami Manuvarjaji

THAT from which all these beings take birth, that by which they live after being born, that towards which they move and into which they merge — that is the Supreme Reality, that is ever-present behind all thought and activity of man, whether in the waking state or in the dream state.

The Upanishads declare that Self-Knowledge, the knowledge of the inmost reality in us, — this alone is the spiritual knowledge. It is this knowledge which confers spiritual freedom on man. *Isha Upanishad* speaks of the divinity of man and nature and the spiritual oneness of all existence. Everything is Divine in essence.

Kathopanishad, giving an exposition of the nature of the Self or the ultimate Reality, points out the limitations of logical reason in understanding the deeper spiritual reality which is imbedded in the heart of every being.

These Upanishadic truths are the outpourings from the hearts of perfected souls. They are there for every earnest seeker to follow. To know the nature of Reality is to get free from the bondage of matter and to attain spiritual illumination, which confers on men eternal peace, eternal happiness and eternal blessedness.

What are the steps that lead to this state of Bliss? Is there a path of attaining Reality? Yes, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and the eightfold yoga of Patanjali, Maharshis and Saints all over the world have shown various paths at different times. Truth is one; the wise speak of it variously.

The process of yoga is a turning of the human soul from the egoistic state of conscious-

A brief account as to the real aim of yoga. The whole process is for overcoming the limited consciousness and not for gaining momentary powers, the author warns.

ness to a transcendental state of oneness. The secret of success in Yoga is to regard it not as one of the aims to be pursued in life, but as the whole life. The goal of life is Self-realisation. All systems of Indian philosophy have this one goal in view.

The word yoga means union between Jivatma and Paramatma, or individual soul and Supreme soul. We come across this term in the Vedas and Upanishads. Vedanta supplies a conception of reality and yoga is actual practice. Practice is the essence of spiritual life. Yoga is more than an intellectual conception of truth; it is realisation of Truth.

The Self, hidden in the hearts of men, cannot be known by one who is dull or restless, who is not disciplined. Nor can it be known by much learning or by reasoning — it can be known by spiritual effort and grace. A constant battle of Kurukshetra is being waged forever on the anvil of man's heart between the forces of light and the powers of darkness.

In the widest sense all life is yoga because the same urge for happiness lies behind all activity. But only a few people follow the goal with vision, while many others grope in the dark. Knowingly or unknowingly we are all seeking the same ideal. Yoga is therefore both the means and the end, the way and the goal.

To find Truth, we must become one with it in the supreme silence of contemplation. When through Samadhi man experiences the unity underlying all multiplicity, or when, in the words of the Upanishads, the knots of his heart are sundered, all his doubts vanish and his search is at an end.

The yogi whose mind is controlled and concentrated on the Self is likened to a lamp which is without a flicker in a windless place. Supreme happiness comes to the yogi whose mind is peaceful, whose passions are at rest and who is merged with the Divine.

If we want to grasp it, it runs away from us, but if we cast it away it continues to be there all the time.

We, the originally vast, serene, and marvellous mind are all pure and illuminatingly all inclusive. Nothing can hinder us, we are as free as the firmament.

We are like the sun shining in the blue sky—clear and bright, unmovable and immutable, neither increasing nor decreasing. In all daily activities we illumine all places and shine out from all things.

This mind that we are is vast and expansive like space itself... The wonder of this effortless mind naturally and spontaneously reacts to all conditions without any obstacle.

We do not adhere to anything, but are natural and spontaneous at all times and in all circumstances... We who observe our body and mind see them as magic shadows or as a dream. Nor do we abide in this magic or dreamlike state... When we reach this point then we can be considered as having arrived at the true state of No-mind.

TSUNG KAO

Is it essential to give up our social duties in order to plunge into meditation in some mountain cave or retreat? This sort of renunciation is no true yoga or *sannyas* (Bhagavan also says that it is not necessary, for true renunciation and solitude is in the mind, which we carry with us wherever we go).

Before I conclude, one word of warning to those who practise yoga for strange experiences and new sensations. Yoga should be undertaken for the sake of Truth. Those who seek psychic powers or the sweet-sounding consolations of religion had far better leave the whole thing alone or they will wreck their lives and perhaps those of others as well.

SAMSARA IS NIRVANA

By Alexander Paul Hixon Jr.

THE central core of Ramana's teaching is highly akin to the 'Samsara is Nirvana' teaching of Mahayana though not always terminologically so. In the deepest insight, Ramana tells his listeners, there is nothing to 'see': "Meditation helps to overcome the illusion that the Self is something to see. Actually, there is nothing to see. How do you recognise yourself now? Do you have to hold a mirror up in front of yourself to recognise yourself?" Here the term 'yourself' can perhaps be better understood in the light of Buddhist *anatma*: "If one earnestly enquires Who am I?" says Ramana, "one will see that there is no such thing as 'I' or 'me'. That which remains on seeing that 'I' does not exist is realized vividly and unmistakably as self-luminous and subsisting merely as Itself." "Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware. No one is ever away from his Self and therefore everyone is in fact Self-realized; only — and this is the great mystery — people do not know this and want to realize the Self. *Realization consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realized.* It is not anything new to be acquired . . . Realization is eternal and already exists here and now." Ramana again and again develops the theme that the ungraspable awareness which we already are is Ultimate

Sri Bhagavan often taught that Realisation is our true nature and nothing new to be acquired. If one holds to this firmly, no distinction can arise between 'everyday' life and 'spiritual' life. Truly then, 'Samsara is Nirvana.'

Reality Itself. Men are always projecting fictitious distances and complexities between their present state and the ultimate state: "or speak of various spiritual paths as if you were somewhere and the Self somewhere else and you had to go and attain it. But in fact the Self is here and now and you are it always. It is like being here (at the Ashram) and asking people the way to Ramanashram and then complaining that each one shows a different path and asking which to follow." "Everyday life is not divorced from the Eternal State. So long as the daily life is imagined to be different from the spiritual life these difficulties arise." So Ramana can say, along with followers of the Prajnaparamita: "There is no goal to be reached. There is nothing to be attained." In terms of concrete spiritual practice, such as meditation, this teaching (or non-teaching) is expressed by Ramana thus: "Meditation is your true nature. You call it meditation now, because there are thoughts distracting you. When these thoughts are dispelled, you remain . . . in the state of meditation free from thoughts, and that is your real nature." A disciple once asked Ramana to clarify the difference between worldly activity and *dhyana* (meditation). Ramana replied: "There is no difference. It is like naming one and the same thing by two different words in two different languages."

This reference to *dhyana* is important, for the 'non-absence of realization' is only a

theoretical speculation from the point of view of any awareness still bounded by ego, and we have seen Ramana's sharp opposition to theorizing. It must become a question of intense practice. With the following cautionary words, Ramana shows the gulf that exists between the man who is realized and the man who, no matter how sincerely, simply holds intellectually (or non-experientially) the idea of the non-absence of realization: "It is true that we are not bound . . . but if a man beats you, can you say: 'I am free, I am not affected by the beating, let him continue beating?' . . . what is the use of just saying in words that you are free?" Practice and strenuous effort are absolutely necessary to open the way for the effortless. Ramana gives a very instructive reply in this connection to a question about formal practice, or the absence of it in the teaching of Krishnamurti. Seeker: "Krishnamurti teaches the method of effortless and choiceless awareness as distinct from that of deliberate concentration." Ramana: "Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain that state and abide in it, that is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-old *vasanas* (inherent tendencies) turn the mind outward. All thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward and that, for most people, requires effort. . . . Even if we find someone who has (easily) achieved this supreme state of stillness, you may take it that the necessary effort has already been made in a previous life."

We should add an important clarification here. 'Turning the mind inward' does not necessarily mean 'closing the eyes' and still less does it mean 'introspection' in the sense of inner dialogue or monologue. 'Outwardness of mind' simply means the engaging in the process of articulation, whether conceptual or sensible, whereas 'inwardness' simply means freedom from this articulating activity. Ramana says: "The mind, turned outward, results in thoughts and objects.

Turned inward, it becomes itself the Self. Such a mind is called *arupa manas* (formless mind) or *suddha manas* (pure mind)." "Even if the eyes are closed, the mind follows thoughts. There is no use closing your eyes. Close the mental eye and all will be right." And from Ramana's viewpoint, there is only a provisional meaning to any distinction between 'outward' and 'inward': "Because your outlook is externally directed you speak of a 'without'. In that state you are advised to look 'within'. This 'within' is relative to the 'without' which you accept. In fact, the Self is neither 'within' nor 'without'."

Thus, through deliberate practice, one has to be transformed into a subtle instrument: "The Bliss of the Self can manifest only in a mind rendered subtle and steady by assiduous meditation," for, as Ramana vividly remarks, "fine silk threads cannot be woven with the use of a heavy iron shuttle." But it must always be remembered that the whole meaning of effort is the dissolution of this idea of effort. Ramana remarked to a devotee: "Now it is impossible for you to be without effort. When you go deeper it is impossible for you to make effort. . . . Meditation is initiated and sustained by a conscious effort of the mind; when such effort subsides, it is called *śamādhi*." But there always remains this fact (paradoxical to any ego-centred perspective): "One goes through all sorts of austerities to become what one already is." And what is 'austerity'? It is the battle against thoughts, the attempt to clear away thoughts (i.e. conceptual and sensible articulations) from the field of awareness. In this view, meditation itself is the most direct and basic form of austerity (*tapas*): "Meditation is a fight. As soon as you begin meditation, other thoughts will crowd together, gather force, and try to overcome the single thought to which you try to hold. This thought must gradually gain strength by repeated practice. When it has grown strong, the other thoughts will be put to flight." The remaining 'single thought' must then be dissolved.

THE SHINING

By Wei Wu Wei

May it not be better to forget what you are-not
 than to remember what you think that you ARE?
 Is it not the former which needs forgetting?
 Does the latter need remembering?

The ever-shining sun appears to you,
 in the absence of spatio-temporal rain-clouds,
 whereas memory of it does not dispel what obscures it.
 The sun as such cannot be either present or absent,
 for it is always and only to a 'you' that it appears.

When relative phenomena are absent,
 the sun has no thing on which to appear to shine.
 In the absence of phenomenality
 to what could a 'sun' be absent?
 Only to phenomena is a 'you' present, and the 'sun' absent.

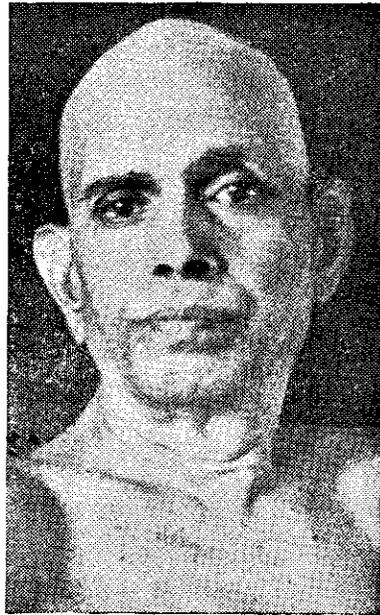
Noumenally there is no 'you' to which a 'sun' could appear.
 Without the clouds of relative phenomenality, there is no 'you'
 to whom a 'sun' could be either absent or present,
 but only what is suggested by symbols such as 'Zero' or 'Absolute'.

There is no objective 'you' and no objective 'sun',
 but just Absolute 'shining' as such — sometimes termed 'Suchness'.

STILL
MIND
versus
MEMORY

By S. S. Cohen

An old devotee discusses the efficacy of *vichara* as a means of stilling the mind, the highest objective. Also discussed are the obstacles that one faces in *sadhana*.



Crucifixion and Resurrection

BHAGAVAN was once asked 'How to still the mind?' He answered, 'Looking at the mind by the mind brings the mind under the control of the Self. . . . It can be done through *vichara* alone,' equating stillness with mind control.

'Seeing the mind by the mind' implies that the act of perceiving or knowing is done by the mind alone, as every student of yoga and psychology knows, and not by the body. The nature of the mind is, therefore, consciousness, intelligence, knowledge or Self: it knows anything on which its attention is focussed. If it fixes it on the objects, it will end by identifying itself with, and losing itself in the distracting world of objects: it is then called 'ego' or '*jiva*' (individuality). On the other hand if in meditation it gathers itself from the variety to the thought-free unity of itself, it will enjoy freedom from distraction as well as the bliss of self-awareness (*Jnāna*): it is then the Self Itself: the mind which used to see things outside, has now turned its gaze

upon itself and has discovered the truth of its own nature. This is true Liberation, true Resurrection from the bondage and misery of the ignorant ego to the freedom of the pure spirit. It is the crucifixion of the ego and its ascension to the beatitude of the Godhead, the Supreme Atman.

Beneficence of the Vichara

By 'through the *vichara* alone' in the above answer Bhagavan signifies his preference of the path of enquiry to all other approaches, having found it to yield the maximum results in the minimum time in co-operation with *dhyana* (meditation) proper. The *vichara* 'Who am I?' which has come to be associated with Bhagavan's name, is definitely not a repetitive *mantra*, but an enquiry into one's own 'I' — its nature, its locus, its scope, whether it changes (or not) with the ceaseless changes in the body and in all conditions of life — in health and disease, in pleasure and pain, in youth and old age, etc. Some enquirers find it easier to begin their analysis with the body, because it is within their daily and hourly experience. They know its composition, its organisation, its actions in various circumstances, its relation to the mind or life which moves it. They may even contrast a body with life to a body without life in order to draw the right conclusions as to which of the two is the master, the man, the intelligent 'I' — the cadaverous body or the all potent, scintillating life. Thus they end by separating the body from life or 'I', which uses it, the constantly changing from the ever changeless consciousness. Therefore whether they start with the mind or with the body, the enquiry will lead them to the singleness of the consciousness 'I' as against the whole world of not-'I', including the body.

The path of *vichara* appeals to intellectual seekers. They begin with faith but soon proceed to consolidate it by reason and commonsense, which will take them up to actual experience, the immediate apprehension of the reality. Faith, reason and assiduous applica-

tion can surmount all obstacles and ripen the mind to obtain a clear vision of itself, as the pure, immaculate, eternal Consciousness.

Obstacles to Sadhana

These are literally endless. Every man has problems peculiar to himself — physical, mental, emotional and what not. Added to them are foolish biases and deep-seated beliefs of all kinds — religious, racial, national, domestic, etc. — which are so subtle that the individual himself may not be aware of them. These are hard to extirpate by ordinary means. Lucky are the few who start with clean-slanted dispositions. They have much less hurdles to cross and, so, make rapid progress. Yet however serious may the obstacles be the *sadhana* in the course of time will grind them to dust. There is really no need to have a detailed enumeration of the obstacles in order to be freed of them. It will be more profitable to know the general principle that the major disease is the world itself, for the simple reason that it is the not-Self. All thoughts, all feelings are the not-Self, which stands in deadly opposition to the Self, barring the slightest sight of it. The sovereign remedy is therefore the shutting out of the not-Self altogether. That is why meditation is recommended. Meditation's main aim is to sweep away all thoughts from the mercurial mind, retaining a single thought — the subject of the meditation — to chain it with. Constant elimination of the world ultimately results in complete detachment (*vairagya*) from everything worldly, causing the permanent thinning away of the thinking processes (*tanu-manasi*), through which the light of the Self can be perceived and the remaining single thought absorbed.

Thus *vichara* and *dhyana* are the reverse and obverse of the practice. The former dialectically exposes the unreality of the not-Self, the phenomena, and the latter completely extinguishes it, leaving the Self alone to shine as the ever-present light of consciousness in the clear firmament of the Heart.

THE BHIKKHU CHITTA

By Hellmuth Hecker

**This story illustrates the pitfalls on the
way to renunciation.**

THIS Chitta was the son of an elephant trainer. When he was still a youth he met an elderly bhikkhu who was returning from his almsround with a particularly tasty item of food in his bowl. The bhikkhu had no desire for it, so he gave it to the young lad. Chitta was greatly pleased, and under the impression that as a bhikkhu he would be fed like that every day without having to fatigue himself with work, he joined the Sangha. But with such a motivation no ascetic life is possible, and shortly afterwards he discarded the robe to return to his old life.

All the same, the spirit of the holy Sangha had left a deep and indelible impression on his mind. Soon he felt dissatisfaction with the life of a householder and asked for ordination once more. Having obtained it, after a time he deserted the Sangha again. A third, a fourth and a fifth time this happened.

The fifth time, when he was living a married life, he was unable to sleep one night, and while he was looking at his wife, who was pregnant, the wretchedness of sensual pleasures was driven home to him so forcefully that he seized a yellow robe and hastened to the vihara at once. On his hurried way through the silent night all the good seeds planted during his previous monkhood burst into blossom and he attained to Stream-entry there and then.

At the vihara, however, his former fellow-monks had just agreed among themselves to refuse a possible sixth request for ordination from Chitta. They felt that they had been forbearing to a praiseworthy degree, and considered Chitta totally unfit for the holy life and a disgrace to the Sangha.

Even while they were so deliberating, they saw Chitta himself approaching. His features were aglow with a new bliss, and his manner was so calm and mild that they found it impossible to refuse him another ordination.

This time he quickly succeeded in the four *jhānas* and signless unification of mind.

This filled him with joy, and he felt a great urge to talk about it. On one occasion some Arahats were sitting together in conversation and Chitta interrupted them again and again. The senior bhikkhu of the gathering, the Venerable Mahākotthita, advised him to wait until the senior monks had finished what they had to say. Thereupon, Chitta's friends said that he ought not to be reprimanded, because he was wise and capable of explaining Dhamma from his own experience.

Mahākotthita answered that he could see Chitta's heart. Then he went on to explain, by similes, that there are states of mind which may be excellent as long as they last, but are still unable to prevent a bhikkhu giving up monkhood again. In this connection he gave the following similes.

A cow securely tied up in the byre seems peaceable enough, but turned loose it quickly tramples down the green crops. Likewise a bhikkhu may be humble and well-behaved in the presence of the Master or saints, but left on his own he tends to relapse and leave the Sangha. Again, a person may be in possession of the four *jhānas* and signless unification of mind, and as long as these abide he is safe; but as soon as the bliss wanes he goes among people, talkative and unrestrained and bursting with pride to announce his achievement. Then his heart becomes filled with greed and he gives up the monk's training. He may feel secure in the *jhānas*, but it is precisely this which leads to his ruin.

While a king and army, with drums and chariots, are camping in the woods, nobody can hear the crickets chirping and everybody might think they had been silenced. But after the troops have moved on the crickets can easily be heard again, although one might have been quite sure there were none.

Later on, Chitta actually did leave the Sangha for a sixth time to return to family

life. His bhikkhu friends then asked the Venerable Mahākotthita whether he had himself foreseen that Chitta would act thus, or whether Devas had told him. He replied that it was both. In astonishment those friends went to the Buddha and related the matter to him. The Blessed One dispelled their apprehensions by telling them that Chitta would soon return.

One day Chitta went to see the Buddha, accompanied by Potthapāda, a wandering ascetic of another sect. Potthapāda posed some deep questions regarding the different modes of arising in the three worlds. Chitta followed up with further questions as to differentiation between these forms of becoming, since, having experienced the *jhānas* he was familiar with some of them. The Blessed One's answers satisfied him fully and he requested admission to the Sangha for the seventh time which turned out to be the last.

The Buddha gave his consent, and in a short time Chitta too became one of the Arahats.

In subsidiary books of the scriptures as well as in unrelated and later tradition we often find significant hints as to how the actions of past lives affect a man's present experiences. Thus we are told just why it was that the Bhikkhu Chitta, in his last life which was to bring forth Arahatship, had to defect from the Sangha so many times. It appears that a long, long time ago, when the Buddha Kasapa was teaching Dhamma, there were two friends who joined the Sangha. One of them became dissatisfied with the hardships of a bhikkhu's life, and contemplated returning to his family. His friend encouraged him to make this decision, because in his heart he longed to be able to feel himself superior. This ugly motive had its results much, much later during the life-time of the Buddha Gautama. It subjected this false friend, now become the Bhikkhu Chitta, not less than six times to the humiliation of leaving the Sangha and having to petition for acceptance again.



Swami Satyananda with Bhagavan

I WAS born in 1916 in a village named Mavelikara in South Kerala. My mother who was of a pious disposition used to serve sadhus and was happy to help them in various ways. Her piety made me turn to the spiritual path when I was only eighteen but home I left later. Meanwhile I ran a small school for children on the verandah of our house.

After four years I went on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram in the company of some sadhus. In the course of my pilgrimage I halted at an abode of sadhus called Pandikkan Mazhi Matham situated between Madurai and Manamadurai. This *matham* was managed by one Narayanaswami who had stayed at Sri Ramanasramam for some time. He was the first person who spoke to me about Sri Bhagavan

HOW I HAVE BEEN SERVING BHAGAVAN

By Swami Satyananda

and His greatness. He wrote out the full address of Sri Ramanasramam on a piece of paper and gave it to me.

From Rameswaram I came directly to Tiruvannamalai. This was in 1938. I was overcome with joy when I saw Arunachala. After spending a few days at the Virupaksha Cave I came down one day to Sri Ramanasramam in the company of a sadhu. When we arrived Sri Bhagavan had just returned from His afternoon walk and was sitting in the hall alone. He looked at us and smiled. I can never forget that smile. After sitting in His presence for some time I returned to the cave. Thereafter I used to visit the Ashram daily and have *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan. I changed my abode from the Virupaksha Cave to the Mango tree Cave, Skandaramam, etc., from time to time and spent seven years in this manner, begging my food in the town.

I then obtained, by Sri Bhagavan's Grace, the good fortune of serving Him as His personal attendant from 1946 till His final Nirvana on 14th April 1950. One day Sri Bhagavan described to me how one Sadguru Swami from Kerala, under the influence of some intoxicating drug, kept on embracing Him tightly saying, "You are a good boy. It is a pleasure to see you." Sri Bhagavan acted

The Effortless Control

A young man came in, sat down, and gave a note to Bhagavan.

Bhagavan, after reading it, said, "See, in this note is written, 'Is peace of mind Liberation (*moksha*)?' The reply is contained in the question itself. What else can be said? He must have asked after knowing what Mind (*chitta*) is."

Someone asked the young man, "You know what is meant by *chitta*, don't you?"

THE YOUNG MAN: "*Chitta* means Mind."

BHAGAVAN: "Yes, but what about it? Your question itself states that peace of mind is liberation."

THE YOUNG MAN: "The mind is at times peaceful and at other times distracted. How are we to prevent those distractions?"

BHAGAVAN: "For whose mind is that distraction? Who is it that is enquiring?"

THE YOUNG MAN: "For my mind. The enquirer is myself."

BHAGAVAN: "Yes, that is the real thing. There is a thing called 'I'. Peace being experienced now and then, it must be admitted that there is a thing called peace; moreover, those feelings called desires are also of the mind; and if desires were banished, there would be no wavering of the mind; and if there is no wavering, that which remains is peace. To attain that which is always there requires no effort. Effort is required only for the banishing of all desires. As and when the mind wavers, it must be diverted from those matters; if that is done, peace remains as it is. That is Atma, the Self, that is Liberation and that is Self."

"Restraining the restless and fidgety mind from all those objects after which it runs, one should repeatedly concentrate on the Self."—*Gita*, VI. 26.

— *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, p. 251.

the part of the sadhu in His inimitable way while narrating the incident. I was alone with Him at the time and still remember the scene with joy!

I was present when the tumour on Sri Bhagavan's arm was operated upon in 1949. Although I cannot stand the sight of blood I managed somehow to control myself. On the evening of the 14th of April 1950 we were massaging Sri Bhagavan's body. At about 5 o'clock He asked us to help Him sit up. Precisely at that moment devotees started singing *Arunachala Siva—Arunachala Siva*. When Sri Bhagavan heard this His face lit up with radiant joy. Tears began to flow from His eyes and continued to flow for a long time. I was wiping them from time to time. I was

also giving Him spoonfuls of water boiled with ginger. The doctor wanted to administer artificial respiration but Sri Bhagavan waved it away. He also wanted to give some fruit juice so I begged Sri Bhagavan to agree to this and when He graciously consented the doctor gave it to Him. Sri Bhagavan's breathing became gradually slower and slower and exactly at 8-47 p.m. subsided quietly. At that very moment, as is well known, devotees who were outside saw a big, bright meteor in the sky.

I observed silence from 1950 to 1963. I have all these years been feeding the peacocks, monkeys and squirrels, a job which was always pleasing to Sri Bhagavan. I also look after the room in which Sri Bhagavan attained Nirvana. I wish to end my life doing this service.

GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

CHAPTER IX

THE GLORY OF CIRCUMAMBULATING ARUNACHALA*

GAUTAMA continued: As the Lord commanded I am always living here and worshipping Arunachala.

Upon this Gauri asked: Bhagavan! Knower of all Dharmas! Gautama! Kindly describe to me the glory of circumambulating Arunachala. When is it to be done and how? Who are they who have till now circumambulated it and attained their objects? Who has attained the supreme state (by doing so)?

Gautama replied: Goddess! Hear what the great Siva told me. He said: While I abide gloriously on earth as Arunachala all the Devatas and Munis circumambulate Me. At every step that one takes on the path round Me all the sins committed by one in one's past lives are expiated. By circumambulating Me one obtains the merit of performing thousands of horse sacrifices, innumerable *Vajapeyas* (a particular sacrifice) and bathing in all the *teerthas* (holy waters). Even a great sinner who has no good deed to his credit can attain all kinds of powers by cir-

cumambulating Me. Merit acquired by bathing in all the *teerthas*, by performing all the sacrifices, by studying all the scriptures and by following all the dharmas can be easily acquired by merely circumambulating Sonachala.

One attains this world, (i.e. the earth) at the first step, the middle world at the second step and the world of the Devas at the third step. At the first step sins committed mentally are destroyed, at the second the sins committed by speech and at the third the sins committed by the body.

There are thousands of ashrams of Munis and Siddhas and abodes of Devas around Me. I myself abide here always in the form of a Siddha worshipped by the Devas. Let one imagine a divine abode gloriously existing within Me. What is known as Arunadri is (really) a column of effulgence. Meditating on this great linga one should circumambulate it slowly. If one does so meditating on this linga of effulgence consisting of the eight kinds of embodiments (*ashta murti*) all one's sins will be expiated. One will not be born again and certainly become eternally one with Sonachala.

The moment one takes a step with the intention of circumambulating Sonagiri the very earth becomes extremely pure by coming into contact with the dust of one's feet. At every point of the compass one should meditate, and bring the palms together in praise and reverence. One should walk as carefully, slowly and noiselessly as a woman advanced in pregnancy. Before setting out a bath should be taken, clean clothes put on, sacred ashes applied on the body, and *rudraksha* beads worn. While circumambulating one should meditate on Siva. Thousands of invisible Manus, Devatas, Siddhapurushas and others accompany a devotee who circumambulates in this manner. Therefore, a wise man should, even amidst a crowd of men, put

* Continued from the last issue.

his foot down with great care, regarding the Hill as very holy. One may also walk in the company of devotees singing the sacred names of Siva and dancing, or, go slowly meditating reverently on My Glory. Alms should be given on the way according to one's means and one should remember Siva in the heart with love and devotion.

This Hill is incomprehensible, being beyond speech and thought. It is unapproachable, being a mass of fire. It is the Absolute and therefore called the Supreme. It is also a Hill in the form of a linga.

The body of one who rolls round (this Hill) becomes divine and immune from hurt. Devas, Siddhas and great Rishis stay invisible in their celestial cars and watch those who devoutly circumambulate Me. They gladly grant boons. The thirty three crores of Devas circumambulate me everyday. Crowds of Devas are always found on the way. The Sun and the other celestial bodies obtained their lordship over the other planets by circumambulating Me.

A devotee who circumambutes the Hill on a Sunday penetrates the region of the Sun and attains Liberation. He gains the world of Siva. He who circumambulates the Hill on a Monday lives happily in the world, free from old age and death. He who circumambulates the Hill on a Tuesday is released from all his debts and becomes an emperor; on Wednesday he becomes omniscient and wise; on a Thursday he is worshipped by all the Devas and becomes famous as the world-Guru. Circumambulation on a Friday brings prosperity and gains the abode of Vishnu, on a Saturday brings worldly success and averts the bad influence of the planets.

The *nakshatras* (stars) and the *Devatas* (deities) presiding over them also do good to those who circumambulate the Hill. *Tithi*, *karana*, *yoga*, *muhurta*, *hora*¹ etc. do the same. The sound 'pra' in the word 'pradakshina' (circumambulation) means rooting out sins, 'da' granting desires, 'kshi' obli-

terating the fruits of karma and 'na' bestowing liberation. This is the real meaning of the word 'pradakshina'.

When those who are suffering from all kinds of physical and mental ailments as well as those who are weak and emaciated circumambulate Me their ailments are cured. The feet of one who devoutly circumambulates Me I see moving on the path which goes round the three worlds. In ancient days the Protectors of the worlds and the directions of space and kings circumambulated Me and attained positions of over-lordship.

Even I circumambulate Arunadri, the divinely effulgent linga which is my form in the company of Ganas, Devas and Rishis at the time of the sacred *Uttarayana* (the winter solstice). I do so for the welfare of the world. Moreover Goddess Gauri will be coming here to do penance. She will become pure by circumambulating Me. Afterwards she will become one half of my body. She will perform severe penance and circumambulate Me at the time of *pradosha*² on the day of *krittika*³ in the month of *karika*.⁴ Those who are not truly blessed cannot do that. The Goddess will pray to Me and merge in Me in the form of *Apitakuchambika*.

All the Devas rejoice during the holy season of *Uttarayana*. At that season all the hosts of Devas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Siddhas and Rakshasas gather at this place, worship me, make progress in their austerities and perform the rites which expiate all the sins committed by them in their previous lives. The day on which the holy season of *Uttarayana* commences is a rare day for men. Let them adore Me on that day and attain the goal of their lives.

(to be continued)

¹ These are all divisions of time according to the Hindu calendar.

² The evening of the thirteenth day of the moon.

³ The day on which the moon is in conjunction with the constellation Pleiades.

⁴ The eighth month of the solar year.

BOOK REVIEWS

ANAPANASATI (MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING): By Buddhadasa Bhikku. Translated by Bhikku Nagasena. Published by Sublime Life Mission, Bangkok. Pp. 172. Price not given.

Mindfulness of breathing is given great prominence in the Pali canon for mind training, connecting up the fundamental doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. Pranayama (breath control) is used here as a stepping stone. First one gives attention to this meditation subject to counting. It should be remembered that respiration-mindfulness is a method of developing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and that this development consists of clear comprehension and constant practice in the order of concentration, insight and ultimately path-attainment.

There is a description of the states of the mind which hinder and those which help concentration and an analysis of the process of attaining full concentration and respiration-mindfulness with its sixteen cases which the Blessed One considered of great benefit.

This is not the first translation in English of Anapanasati as the translator mistakenly declares in the Introduction. An excellent English translation from Pali by Bhikku Nanamoli, of the Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, has already appeared in 1968. According to Bhikku Nanamoli the words in Pali have the linguistic distinction of being precise whereas Nagasena Bhikku had on his own admission to face innumerable difficulties in his translation since the structure of the Thai language is based in his own words 'on feeling with an under-current of warm expression.' This difficulty reflects in the present translation, which covers the first four steps of Anapanasati. It is not surprising since the Thai language is tonal and a given word has different meanings according to the modulation of voice. Thus we come across statements metaphysically open to criticism when the translator speaks of knowledge that arises as 'merely Full Awareness' simply making one aware of how the practicer

breathes. Formless absorption (arupa jhana) and complete Absorption he describes as high mental levels which are not on the path to insight and are possessed of various qualities. Are qualities arupa?

In Chapter XII the translator summarizes the stages of Anapanasati culminating in a state of utmost calm known as absorption or *Jhana*, 'in which the breathing is then loosely said to have become extinct'. Why 'loosely said'? It is well known that breathing may stop in absorption and yogis can suspend breathing or animation for considerable periods. The translation is crowned with a significant four line poem by Buddhadasa Bhikku:

IT ALREADY IS

Time the mind is free from "I",
Nirvana is then and there in mind;
When "I" arises in the mind,
Samsara appears instead thereby.

L.O.

CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND ITS ORIGINS: S. P. Peterfreund and T. C. Denise. Pub.: Affiliated East-West Press Private Ltd., Delhi-3. Pp. 326. Price: Rs. 10.50.

Prepared for undergraduate courses in contemporary philosophy, this book deals only with Western Philosophy as it is current today. The movements covered are Realism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Existentialism and Analysis. The Editors have taken care to give a rapid account of the historical origins in each case so as to give the right perspective to the students.

In the East — especially in India — every philosophy worth the name is based upon spiritual experience. One's intimate experience of the Reality is rendered — as far as possible — in terms of the intellect and a system is organised around the Central Truth realised. This is not so in the case of philosophies spoken of in these pages. These systems are more or less mental approaches to that which is beyond mind. They help to clarify one's conceptions and at their best prepare the mind for a leap beyond.

M. P. PANDIT

TEMPLES AND LEGENDS OF NEPAL: By P. C. Roy Chaudhury. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. 93 pages. Price: Rs. 3.

This book describing temples and legends of the ancient country is bound to serve as a valuable guide for visitors, providing them with a wealth of fascinating background information. For those interested in Nepal but unable to make the trip in

person, a section of photographs illustrates the detailed text.

The author shows how Buddhist and Hindu influences have mingled to mould the rich cultures and to link Nepal with India. He traces the development of architecture and temple art before featuring the main places of interest in the capital of Kathmandu, and in three other major towns.

In the second half of the book, he outlines the background of Nepalese legends and warns that the rich cultural legacy is being threatened by modernisation of the country. Yet as long as the lavish beauty of Nature holds sway in the land, it is evident that the many legends associated with rivers, mountains, lakes, plains and forests can never be forgotten.

P. PEGLER

GEMS FROM SHAKESPEARE: By P. G. N. Nayar. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. 282 pages. Price: Rs. 5.

Lovers of Shakespeare's wit and worldly wisdom will welcome this new addition to their collection. In the words of the Foreword, the author has "plunged into the sea of Shakespeare with gusto and picked out some precious gems."

This comprehensive selection of quotations from forty plays is arranged alphabetically and neatly under a wide range of headings providing a useful source of reference.

For those readers unfamiliar with Shakespeare the collection is especially valuable. Through it they are enabled to catch a fair glimpse of Shakespeare's brilliance and spirituality without themselves having to wade through a massive quantity of literature.

Besides being a wonderful poet and playwright, Shakespeare also ranks as a profound philosopher -- not to say mystic. In the *Tempest* he writes:

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of,
and our little life is rounded with a sleep..."

In the *Merchant of Venice* he uses one of his favourite images:

"I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one."

Both these quotations come under the heading of 'Life'. Under the heading of 'Love' is included a quotation from *Venus* and *Adonis*, which indicates Shakespeare's insight into the higher realities:

"Love is a spirit all compact of fire,
Not gross to sink, but light and will aspire."

I've suggested just one aspect of Shakespeare's many-sided genius, which finds ample representation in this useful volume.

P. PEGLER

ATMA BODHA: By A. Parthasarathy. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Pp. 182 + XXXV. Price: Rs. 10.

Among the *Prakaranas* written by Sri Sankara, *Atma Bodha* occupies an important place. The reason for it is that within the brief space of sixty eight verses it covers the entire ground of Advaita Vedanta. Its ontology, epistemology, psychology and ethics are all briefly but most clearly dealt with in it. A further reason accounting for its popularity is the manner in which it elucidates very subtle truths by means of similes taken from everyday life.

The author, Sri A. Parthasarathy, has done well to edit it with an introduction, text in the Devanagari script and in English transliteration, word for word meaning and copious explanatory notes. In some places (Pp. XII, XXV, 30 and 35) he has given diagrams to clarify certain important truths.

He explains the exact significance of the similes which are so numerous in the work. In some cases he draws out the further implications of the similes which serve to throw additional light on the principles of Advaita Vedanta.

Practical hints are also to be found in the exposition. Thus to become the mere witness of the modes (*vrittis*) of the mind and to realise that the Self is really unattached, we are advised to cultivate such an attitude of being a mere dispassionate observer of the events that are taking place all around us without getting involved in any of them. This will gradually lead us to take up the same attitude of being an unconcerned witness of our joys and sorrows, our pains and pleasures. In another context the author says that to find a suitable place for meditation it is not necessary to betake ourselves to forest solitudes but that we could find it even in a crowded city and in the midst of a large family. A quiet hour in the small hours of the morning when most people are asleep can be utilised for the purpose.

Arguing the case for recognising *jivan mukti*, the author makes the significant observation that its non-acceptance would deprive the pronouncements of the seers of the Upanishads of all authority and reduce them to the level of mere opinions not having any binding force. Unless they are treated as inspired utterances emanating from realised souls, they will not carry any authority with them.

It is a very useful book worth careful study by all students of Advaita Vedanta.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

ASHRAM BULLETIN

SRI BHAGAVAN'S 'JAY ANTHI' CELEBRATED AT ASHRAM

THE 93rd *Jayanthi* (Birthday) of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on December 22 at the Ashram, amidst a large gathering of devotees including a good many from abroad.

Commencing with *dhanurmasa puja* early in the morning the programme consisted of recitation of Tamil works on and by Sri Maharshi, elaborate *pujas* in His Shrine of Grace, special lunch for the assembled devotees and feeding of the poor on a large scale.

The *Ramaneswara Maha Lingam* was well decorated with a number of specially made garlands and ornaments. The silver *prabhai* (ornamental arch) recently contributed by a devotee made the decorations even more impressive.

At three in the afternoon Brahmasri Krishna Bhagavatar of Bangalore gave a discourse on 'Rama Nama'. This was followed by a *bhajan* by a party of devotees from Sankara Vihar, Madras, who accompanied Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras.

After dinner in the night the assembled devotees witnessed a film screening Sri Bhagavan. There were visitors throughout the day which is the usual feature of *Jayanthi*. The function concluded with a *bhajan* in the night by Brahmasri Jagadeesa Bhagavatar and party.

* * *

FOUNDATION LAID FOR DELHI KENDRA

The foundation stone for the building of the *Ramana Kendra, Delhi*, was laid on Friday, December 22, in the presence of a congregation of devotees, including the Union Minister and President of Ramana Kendra, Delhi, Sri C. Subramaniam, Dr. C. Ramaswami, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, Prof. K. Swaminathan and the Kendra Secretary, Sri A. R. Natarajan.

Invocations specially composed for the occasion by Sri Viswanatha Swami in Sanskrit and by Sri Muruganar and Sri Sadhu Om in Tamil, were sung and a telegram of good wishes from the Ashram was read out. Songs by and on Sri Bhagavan were rendered in chorus.

* * *

KARTHIKAI DEEPAM

The Karthikai Festival was held at Arunachala from November 11 to 20. It culminated on the tenth day at sunset when the Holy Beacon was lit as usual on the peak of Sri Arunachala Hill.

The Deepam Day was observed at the Ashram in all solemnity on Nov. 20 by devotees and Ashram inmates including many visitors from India and abroad. After the routine *pujas* at Sri Bhagavan's shrine all present assembled near the *Nirvana* room where a portrait of Sri Bhagavan was installed on a couch, bedecked with flower garlands, facing the Hill and affording a full view of the Holy Beacon.

At the appointed hour, on sighting the Holy Beacon on the peak, a Deepam was lit almost simultaneously before Sri Bhagavan's portrait to the accompaniment of Vedic chants. Old devotees of Sri Bhagavan and others recited Sri Bhagavan's *Aksharamana Malai* and other compositions including *Siva Puranam*. *Prasad* was distributed to all present.

After the evening meal devotees and Ashramites did *Giri Pradakshina* round the Holy Hill with the full moon shining on the Deepam. Crowds of people, many of them from adjoining villages, the women in bright *saris*, use this occasion to do *Giri Pradakshina*, looking like a garland of flowers round the Hill!

* * *

NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL

The nine day festival of *Navarathri*, when the worship of *Shakti* as the Divine Mother takes place, was celebrated at the Ashram from October 8 to 17.

Special *pujas* were offered each night at the Mother's Shrine (Goddess Yogambika) with the Deity beautifully decorated and arrayed in the three aspects of the Divine Mother as Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi.¹ On the first and last days of the festival the idol of Goddess Yogambika, beautifully dressed and decorated by the Ashram *Archakas*, was taken out in procession around Mother's and Sri Bhagavan's shrines for installation on the first day at a special place and reinstallation back on the last day.

¹ Symbolising unity behind diversity.

Laksharchana was performed during the festival with recitals of *Lalitha Sahasranama* and reading of *Devi Mahatmyam*. *Mahanyasa japa* and *abhishekan* were performed at both shrines and *prasad* distributed daily to all present.

Many devotees, from the town and other places, attended the celebrations.

* * *

PILGRIMS

Sri Radhakrishna Swami, head of the All India Sai Samaj, accompanied by a group of devotees from Bangalore, visited the Ashram on Sunday, November 19.



(l to r) Sri Radhakrishna Swami, Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer and Sri T. N. Venkataraman, the Ashram President.

On arrival at about 11 a.m. they were all received by the Ashram President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman. After visiting the shrines in the Ashram and offering *pranams*, the Swamiji and party joined the Ashramites for lunch. They also met Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer and spent some time with him.

After briefly resting at the Morvi Guest House, the Swamiji left for Bangalore at 3 p.m. The Swamiji had visited the Ashram before and one of the group, Sri K. Doraiswami, is known to the Ashramites. We were happy to have them all in our midst.

Major I. J. Taneja and his wife arrived at the Ashram for a few days stay and their visit happily synchronised with the Karthigai Festival and Deepam Day.

They came again for a stay of fifteen days on December 17.

Major Taneja who was never before interested in visiting holy places, or gurus, was first drawn to Sri Bhagavan in 1949 by whom he was deeply impressed and from 1958 he was able to come every year and stay for a month, benefitted by Sri Bhagavan's guidance and protection in his mundane life as well.



Major I. J. Taneja

He now happens to be posted to Nellore, a place within easy reach of Sri Ramanasramam and he is happy that now he will be able to come more often. They are welcome always at the abode of our Master!

* * *

Mr. Purushottam M. Tolani (of Bombay), along with his wife, daughter, son-in-law and little grandson, Sai, arrived on December 16 and left on 24th. We were very happy to have this devout family in our midst during *Jayanthi*.

They have come here before but this time they stayed in a cottage built within the Morvi Compound and donated by them to the Ashram. We hope that from now on they will be able to come oftener for longer stays, by Sri Bhagavan's Grace!

* * *

In our April '72 issue we bid *au revoir* to Hugo Maier, one of our permanent inmates, to his home country Germany and we are happy he is back amidst us again.

* * *

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

New Additions

Chitshakti Vilas : By Swami Muktananda. Pub. : Sri Gurudev Ashram, Ganeshpuri. (Rs. 15 in India and \$ 6 abroad).

Vishnu Sahasranamam : By T. M. P. Mahadevan. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. (Rs. 2).

The Free Mind : By Robert Powell. Pub. : The Julian Press Publishers, 150, 5th Avenue, New York. (\$ 6).

Knowing the Unknown God : By William J. Hill. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 6).

Education as Existential Possibility : By Gari Lenoff Carcavaglia. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 7.50).

Yoga and Medicine : By Steven Brence. Pub. : The Julian Press Publishers, 150, 5th Avenue, New York. (\$ 7.00).

The Buddhist Teaching of Totality : By Garma C. C. Chang. Pub. : George Allen and Unwin, London. (£ 3.95).

Common Philosophy : By Forrest H. Peterson. Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 6.00).

Buddhist Meditation : By Edward Conze. Pub. : Union Books, London. (£ 0.75).

Handbook of Reason : By Dagobert D. Runes. Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 6.00).

Sexual Energy and Yoga : By Elisabeth Haich. Pub. : George Allen and Unwin, London. (£ 3.50, Paper cover £ 1.85).

Entering the Path of Enlightenment : By Marion L. Maties. Pub. : George Allen and Unwin, London. (£ 4.50).

Temples and Legends of Nepal : By P. C. Roy Chaudhury. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. (Rs. 3.00).

Gems from Shakespeare : By P. G. N. Nayar. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. (Rs. 5).

Anapanasati : By Buddhadasa Bhikku. Pub. : Sublime Life Mission, Bangkok, Thailand. (Price not stated).

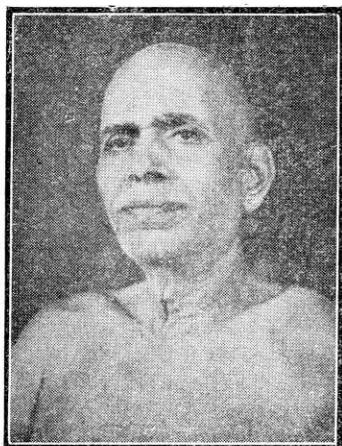
* * *

OBITUARY

Sri K. S. Venkataraman, an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan, passed away on December 15 at the ripe age of 85 at Pondicherry. He came first in 1907 when Bhagavan was living in the Pachiamman Temple. He was introduced to Bhagavan by Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni who had earlier initiated him into the practice of *mantra japa* (repetition of sacred mantras).

Sri Venkataraman broke off his studies to join in the Indian Independence Movement. He also served on a hospitalship during the First World War. He was an admirer of Sri Aurobindo. He used to write articles and reviews for journals and was well-known in the world of South Indian musicians.

May his soul rest in Peace in Bhagavan whose devotee he remained to the last!



Sri N. R. Krishnamurti Aiyar, Retired Professor of Physics, American College, Madurai, comes from a family of Sri Bhagavan's devotees, both his grandfather, Swami Aiyar of Nangavaram and his father Ranganatha Aiyar of Tiruchirappalli, having known Sri Bhagavan from the time he arrived at Tiruvannamalai.

Sri Krishnamurti Aiyar had his first *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan when he was a schoolboy of sixteen years. He still remembers the kind and steady look of Sri Bhagavan which created a deep impression upon him at that time. But, as a result of his extensive studies in modern science, he became an atheist. He thought that the existence of evil and misery in the world was incompatible with the existence of a benevolent God. So, when he came to see Sri Bhagavan in the summer of 1923, he put the following question to Him: "You are now in this *stithi* (state). What will be your future *stithi* (state after death)?" Sri Bhagavan who was at that time standing in front of the thatched shed over His mother's samadhi, did not reply immediately but merely looked at him steadily for a long time. He then put a counter question: "You say *stithi*. What exactly do you mean by that?"

Sri Krishnamurti Aiyar at first thought that Sri Bhagavan was evading his question. But when he heard the counter question he began to think. He knew that *stithi* could not apply to the body which is either burnt or buried. But if he said that he meant the mind Sri Bhagavan could turn round and ask him to define the mind, which he could not easily do. In the meantime Sri Bhagavan was looking at him silently and steadily. Sri Krishnamurti Aiyar could not stand that penetrating look! He lost his sense of body consciousness. He felt as if he was under a spell. He almost entirely forgot his body and the world. After some time, when

INTRODUCING...

Prof. N. R. Krishnamurti Aiyar

the spell was broken, he prostrated before Sri Bhagavan reverently and almost fled from His presence without the least desire to put any more questions to Him. From that moment he surrendered himself completely to Sri Bhagavan.

Subsequently Sri Krishnamurti Aiyar had several visions of God and Bhagavan. There was a time when he and his wife were both seriously ill and were almost given up for lost. But they recovered almost miraculously. He attributes this to the Grace of Sri Bhagavan. His faith in Sri Bhagavan grew day by day until it became a conviction that He is the benevolent power forming the basis of the transitory world.

Sri Krishnamurti Aiyar is now living after his retirement in his house at Madurai and leading a life of devotion to his Master, Sri Bhagavan. He and his late father were anxious that the houses in which Sri Bhagavan had born and lived at Tiruchuzi and Madurai, respectively, should be acquired in His memory. These two houses have now been, with their help, acquired and converted into the well-known *Sri Sundara Mandiram* (Tiruchuzhi) and *Sri Ramana Mandiram* (Madurai).

We wish the Professor and his wife many more happy years of a life of service and dedication to Sri Bhagavan!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VISITORS AND SEEKERS

... More and more seekers find their way into this peaceful, remote valley. Most of them are young and serious. ... We have not become an organisation, we are not an Ashram or a school of living. We are just a family living a simple life close to nature, trying to follow the words and spirit of Sri Ramana. ... We have no rules, make no demands, only expect visitors to adhere to our daily routine. ...

Yet as the flow continues a problem arises occasionally. ... At times, people who have heard of 'Shalom' make use of its accommodation and its service. We know that they will fall into karmic debts and that it is no concern of ours. But 'Shalom' requires much hard work and time and our energies need to be conserved for genuine seekers. But again who are we to select? ... We rely on Sri Bhagavan to guide us, but in our inadequacy we are not always sure of understanding Him.

We would be very grateful if you would let us know what you think and feel about this subject.

ILSE & GERD LEDERMANN,
'Shalom', Australia.

The subject of seekers and visitors, some serious and some what we call 'Ashram-trotters', has become a widespread problem. What I feel about it? It may be best to stipulate short stays of a few days up to a week to begin with and see what these visitors are like. Serious seekers need our help. With others our help will not be sattvic, encouraging only wanderlust and escapism. In the Bhagavad Gita, gifts are classed under various categories: sattvic, rajasic and tamasic. Tamasic means giving to the wrong person at the wrong time; rajasic giving with an eye to a reward. Without seeking any reward, sattvic is of course the most rewarding — giving to

the right person at the right time without any ulterior motive, selflessly.

Another possibility might be to admit people with the proviso that they should help with the work 3-4 hours daily. It is beneficial for most to combine work with sadhana and carry sadhana into the work. You have plenty to do on your large estate.

Once a beggar was ousted from the ashram dining room and a visitor who felt disturbed asked Bhagavan about it. The reply was that if one allowed all idlers into an ashram there would be no room for earnest seekers. There are many more idlers than seekers.

You can try to select and judge to the best of your ability as the heart speaks and seek Bhagavan's guidance when in doubt.

EDITOR.

* * *

PRARABDHA KARMA

I refer to the opening paragraph, Chapter 11, of Mr. Arthur Osborne's matchless work *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*. ... I am still not very clear about what exactly is meant by *prarabdha* and what is the difference between it and *sancitha karma*. ... I have been deeply concerned lately about *prarabdha*. The feeling is growing upon me that death does not cancel everything.

JAYARAMAN, Madurai.

There is no such thing as fate except what we ourselves have prepared. On the plane of relativity karma is as real as we are to ourselves. In this way death does not cancel anything except in the case of realisation of our true state when only ignorance and all illusion of limitations and conditioning are cancelled. Till then the load of accumulated karma follows in death and rebirth.

*Prarabdha karma is that karma which has already begun to bear fruit good or bad according to our actions. Accumulated karma which will fructify later is classified as *sanchita karma*. When the stored*

up karma begins to bear fruit in another birth it becomes prarabdha karma. The difference is only in time.

EDITOR.

* * *

MEMORY AND THINKING POWER

I request your advice regarding a matter of mental health. For the last few years my concentration, memory and thinking power have been seriously affected, so much so that these faculties have almost subsided. Associated with it is a tendency of the past when I strongly desired a clear first-hand insight into the mental functions disregarding religious and philosophical issues on the matter. This inventarisation of the 'links' and qualities of the mind seems to be nearly completed. But I find myself in a state of increasing darkness and subsidence of initiative.

Please do enlighten me if you can and place this letter on Bhagavan's tomb.

J. F. N., Holland.

Probing into the nature of various qualities or functions of the mind or what you call psychological 'inventarisation' serves no useful purpose and only creates more problems. 'Who asked you to think about all that?' Bhagavan admonished an aspirant. 'What good will it do you to go on thinking about memory and perception etc.? It will be endless. . . Ask who has this perception and memory, whence does it arise? Find this,' and all will be well.

Why should you desire to have an insight into the working of the mind or mental functions? Still-ing the mind is what matters and brings peace. This does not mean becoming like a block of wood but actually reaching the very source of thought in pure blissful awareness. Do not worry about your memory and thinking power being affected. Just stop all your psychological probing and think only of Bhagavan or Arunachala ever-present in your heart. He becomes present in the measure you remember Him. This will be sufficient to lift you out of darkness and despondency. Your letter has been placed on Bhagavan's tomb.

EDITOR.

* * *

HIS EVER-PRESENT GUIDANCE

His picture was fixed on the wall near Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramakrishna but I could see only the Maharshi and it was His face that my heart kept. . . I started my path searching for the Maharshi in books, talks, pictures everywhere. . . It was a search for something I could not find. . .

Suddenly I found the Maharshi again. . . My mind was flooded with light. It was like a shock. Great peace came to me. I was sure that I have found my Guru. And all things appeared to me in the right place. . . Many people said to me that when a Guru leaves the body his work is finished here. And yet I feel Maharshi's Presence and His touch in all matters of my life. Where is the truth? are these people right or my intuition? Please answer me.

I am interested to know the hours of meditation at Ramanasramam. I want to write and receive instructions. Will it be possible? Help me please also with the hymns of Arunachala, the chants and the music also, if possible.

V. L. F., Brazil.

If you feel Ramana Maharshi's Presence it is a sure sign that He is guiding you. He gave us the assurance that His guidance will continue after the body's death. It does not matter when people say things to the contrary. They do not know. Only those who are ready are aware of His guidance which is never absent. A jnani like Bhagavan is not bound by the body. He is the ever-present living inner Guru in the heart to whom you can turn with all your problems. You can always write to us for explanations or advice.

The meditation hall is open from 5 a.m till 8.30 p.m. Devotees meditate at all hours. The best times are early morning, at dawn, sunset and before going to sleep. Many devotees congregate at dawn till 6.30 a.m and in the evening from 6 p.m. till 8 p.m. The chanting of the VEDA PARAYANA takes place at 8 p.m. and 5 p.m. each lasting about 40 minutes.

EDITOR.

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SELF-KNOWLEDGE

A saint says that two aspects of avidya are ignorance and knowledge. . . The Self realises itself when the two are negated. The Maharshi is a Jnani — a sage who has attained Knowledge. How then can one say that He has realised the Self if knowledge is an aspect of avidya. Kindly enlighten me on this.

B. K. MISRA, Orissa.

When one speaks of knowledge as an aspect of AVIDYA it means conceptual or particularised knowledge of this or that. Knowledge of a Jnani is pure Knowledge all-embracing yet non-objective, unlimited. It is Self-Knowledge.

EDITOR.