

The
Mountain
path



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

vol. 10, no. iii, July 1973

(A dog can scent out its master) ; am I then worse than a dog ? Steadfastly will I seek Thee and regain Thee, Oh Arunachala !

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 39

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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 JULY 1973 No. 3

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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.

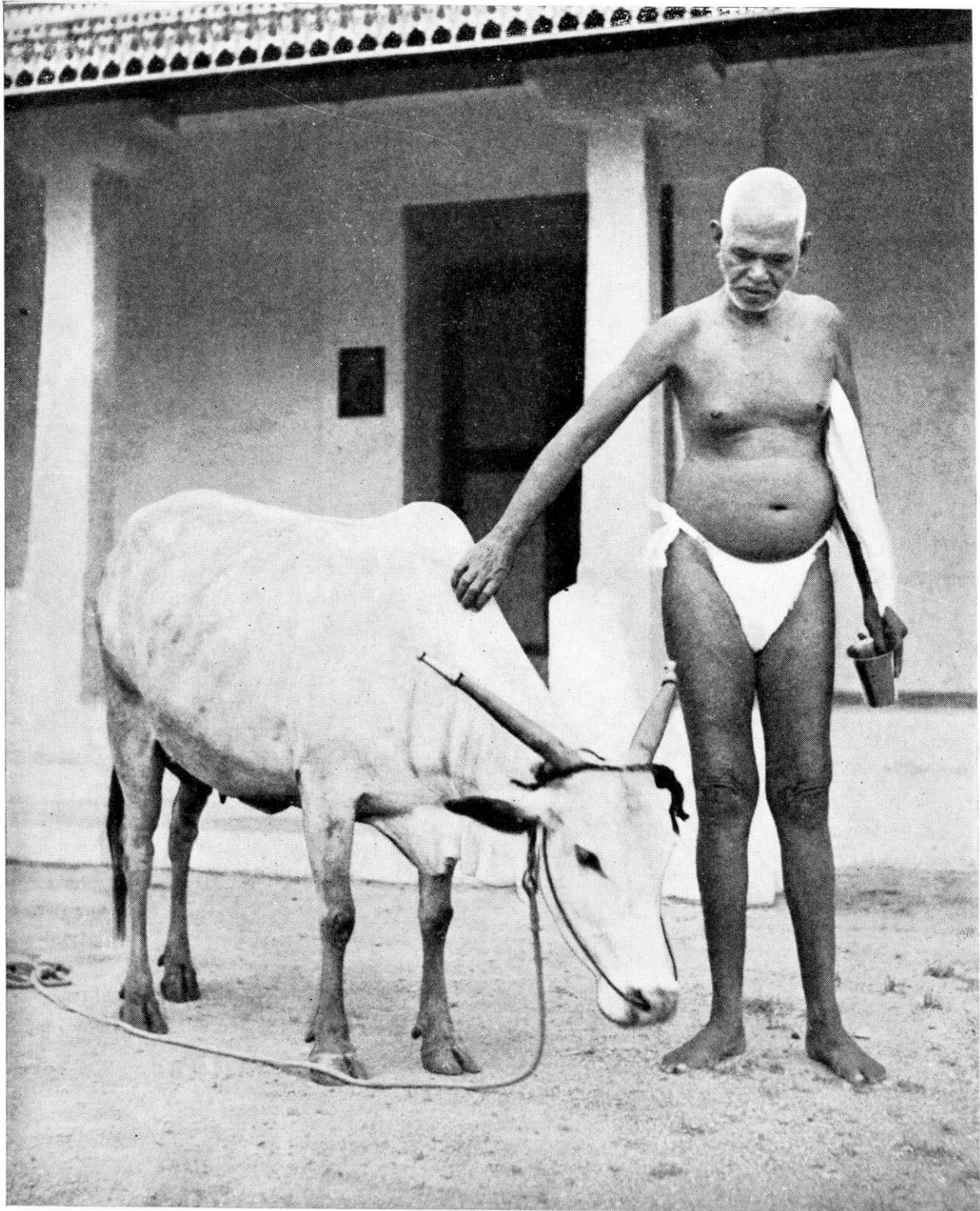
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

Vol. 10. No. III, July 1973

Editor : LUCIA OSBORNE

Editorial

DEATH AND JNANA

THE question of death arises only from the point of view of duality ; from that of Advaita - a jnani's point of view - neither has any reality.

"Deathlessness is our real nature", Sri Ramana Maharshi used to say. We falsely ascribe it to the body, imagining that it will live for ever, and losing sight of what is really immortal, simply because we identify ourselves with the body. Though it is said in the scriptures that a jnani looks eagerly to the time when he could throw off the body, just as a labourer carrying a heavy load looks forward to reaching his destination and laying it down, strictly speaking the jnani is not even anxious to shed the body, for he is indifferent alike to its existence or non-existence, being almost unaware of it !

The problem of death is of intrinsic interest for men when faced with this common lot of all, until its true nature is realised or understood. For one still on the relative plane of false identification with the body, the 'I', as a separate individual being, may fear the dissolution of the ego. But having understood through sadhana the nature of death as pertaining only to the body, a seeker will not find it difficult to overcome the first instinctive fear of death and look forward to it with equanimity.

During sadhana one may experience death and what survives it and even worldly people have been known to do so in extreme or

ordinary conditions.¹ But this is only a momentary glimpse which the mind cannot hold if not steady or pure enough. Only the memory of it remains and the Certainty. Tennyson, who had such temporary experiences, described this state as the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, where death was an almost laughable impossibility; the loss of personality not extinction, but dissolved into boundless being, the only true life!

From this point sadhana starts, or should start, in all earnest to steady the mind and realise this most natural inherently blissful state of Being.

In Sri Ramana Maharshi's case the experience of death resulted in the realisation that the 'I' was one with the universal deathless Self which is the Spirit and Self of every being. "The body dies but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless Spirit. . . . Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on."² This was an extraordinary case of instantaneous Realisation!

Bhagavan was quite categorical about it. He said that He never performed any sadhana prior to it nor afterwards. The experience was basic and final. His intuitive constant Awareness found corroboration when later He read the works of realised men. When someone asked whether Sri Bhagavan's teaching was the same as Sankaracharya's, He replied: "Bhagavan's teaching is an expression of his own experience and realisation. Others find that it tallies with Sri Sankara's."

From a jnani's point of view death has no reality. It is only those who have not realised its true state, who lament approaching death. When the Sixth Patriarch of Zen announced his decision to leave this world, the monks wept with grief. "For whom are you crying?" he asked them. "If I didn't know where I am going I wouldn't be able to leave you in this way. It is you who don't know where I am going. If you knew, you would not cry because you would also know that the true natural state is without birth or death."

When a devotee asked Bhagavan for the grace to let him see His real form, the couch

WILL O' THE WISP?

By Wei Wu Wei

**Who is Aware
that I-me thinks
that I-me perceives
whatever he seems to perceive,
and knows whatever he seems to know?**

**Who is eternally Aware
of whatever I-me thinks
that I-me does,
asleep or awake,
from his 'birth' to his 'death'?**

**Who is Aware
that I-me thinks
that I-me is Aware?**

N.B. As with the subject of the title, the finding is the seeking.

on which Bhagavan reclined became empty. The devotee left in terror. It was not until a month or so later that he mustered up the courage to speak about it to Sri Bhagavan, who then explained: "You asked to see my real form; you saw its disappearance. I am formless!"

During a *pradakshina* a group of devotees started singing: *Ramana Sad-guru*.³ Bhagavan joined in the singing. One of the devotees expressed surprise at Bhagavan singing His own praises. Bhagavan told them: "Do

¹ There are several descriptions of such experiences of death in the October, 1970 issue of *The Mountain Path*, which deals extensively with this subject.

² *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* by Arthur Osborne, Ch. 2, p. 18.

³ See *The Mountain Path*, Jan. 1971, p. 5.

you think Ramana is these 6 feet? He is all-pervading.”

He used to say often that apart from the ego there is neither birth nor death. The ego itself is death. To transcend the ego is to destroy death. The quest for the source of the ego is the way to overcome death and attain immortality! “The ego, the world and the individuals are all due to the person’s *vasanas*. When they perish the person’s hallucinations disappear.” We are confounding the phenomena relating to the body, with the Self. If one investigates the source from which the ‘I’-thought, or the ego, arises, all confusion hiding our primordial true state will vanish and the Self will stand revealed as It ever is. “Tracing the source of ‘I’ the primal ‘I-I’ remains over, but it is that which is inexpressible!” The search is within and the seeker cannot find it as an object outside him. That seat is bliss and the core of all beings, untouched by death, eternal.

Why go to birth and death to understand what one daily experiences in sleeping and waking? asks Sri Ramana Maharshi. “When you sleep this body and the world do not exist for you, the same you that exists now while waking. It is the same with death. If you understand waking and sleep properly you will understand life and death.” We are immortal. It is only the bodies which are discarded like worn out garments. From the relative point of view in sleep they get repaired, in death renewed. Both dream and waking states are the product of the mind and the only difference is in their duration.

The illusory nature of the body Ramana Maharshi emphasised when telling his devotees: “I am only ill if you think I am ill; if you think I am well I shall be well”. Strangely enough on April 14, 1950 – the *Brahma Nirvana* of Sri Bhagavan – one devotee after a night-long double *pradakshina* (circumambulation of the Hill) in order to pray for His health, was unable to do so, surrendering instead to ‘Thy Will be done – you know best’. In the morning she saw Him during the very last *darshan* sitting up on the couch in radiant health smiling with approval, his eyes shining with indescribable

Grace, while the immediately following devotee in the line saw Him already in agony at the very same instant!

Sri Ramana Maharshi used to say towards the end: “They take this body for Bhagavan and attribute suffering and fear death for him. What a pity! They are despondent that Bhagavan is going to leave them and go away – Where can he go and how? . . . ‘I’ never dies. If the body falls away there is no loss for the ‘I’. Birth and death pertain to the body. You are identifying the Self with the body. It is wrong identification. Birth and death are mentioned only to make you investigate the question and find out that there is neither birth nor death. . . .”

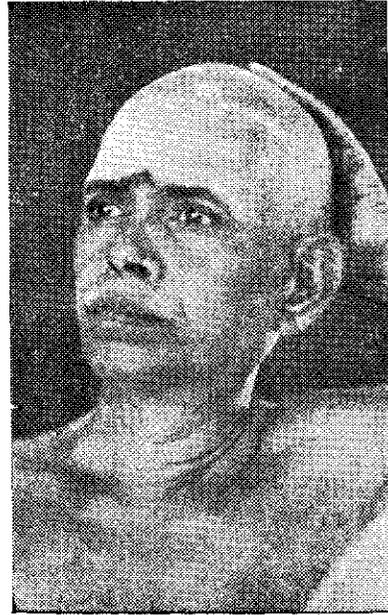
And yet across the delusion of identifying oneself with the body and confusion of taking the unreal for the real one is aware though dimly of the eternal Self because it is the Truth. People act and plan as if they were going to live forever forgetting that life in their bodies might end any moment. Bhagavan said that a man sees so many dying but still believes himself eternal. The natural Truth asserts itself, even with worldly people. How much more so with seekers guided by a Master who appears in human form for a time, like a decoy to guide us back to the Source; the Sad-Guru who is One in all hearts. All one has to do is wake up from this dream of birth and death, of *samsara* (earthly life), by following the most direct path He showed us, which some may find difficult because of its very simplicity!

Sri Bhagavan assured us that the guidance would continue after His physical disappearance: “I am not going away. Where could I go? *I am* here.” Not even ‘I shall be here’ but ‘*I am* here’! He the living inner Guru affirmed His uninterrupted presence and His continued guidance, for to the Jnani there is only the eternal ‘Now’. He reminded us not to attach so much importance to the body. He was not the body. Devotees, wherever they may be, find His Grace and support, His inner Presence even more potent now than before. And without outward constraint the inner discipline may become strict to the point where the purity of every thought matters!

THE FACE OF DEATH

By Gerard Casey

The Enlightenment of Sri Bhagavan as a result of his death-experience confirms the Christian doctrine of birth into Eternal Life through death. Christ called God the Father, likewise Sri Bhagavan referred to Arunachala as the Father.



The disquieting question we have to raise in the face of death is : what will be our being as such once it is a being that (temporally speaking) only has been ?

— KARL BARTH

AS a man rooted in the Christian Faith I wish to offer a few considerations that seem to me to spring from a Christian understanding of, and devotion to, Sri Ramana Maharshi. I begin with some general observations which will, I hope, provide a background against which such a Christian approach will be revealed as fraught with meanings which transcend any purely private and personal significance.

It is at this time common ground among thoughtful men and women the world over that humanity has entered into a period of extreme crisis and danger. This crisis reveals itself at every level of human striving but most acutely and painfully in the depths of men's religious consciousness. Among men of all religious traditions there is a need to reach out to deeper understandings of both their own tradition and traditions native to cultures and civilizations other than their own. For men

rooted in great and ancient forms of the spiritual life, the differences in emphasis and perspective between what we have come to call 'east' and 'west' remain the most urgently demanding of understanding and acceptance.

In the West the religious spirit has crystallized in Christianity into the form most expressive of the peculiarities of the western mind. In the east Hinduism presents the form perhaps most difficult of access to western understanding. As a Christian who has been for many years fascinated and attracted by Hinduism — approached through wide reading and some devoted study of the great Sanskrit Scriptures — I confess that the figure of Sri Ramana has come to hold for me a place of central significance both in my own spiritual life and in my attempts at understanding Hinduism. It is from this point of view I write what follows. I concentrate on the 'death-experience' in his youth which initiated

for Sri Ramana his supreme spiritual realization, and which was the source of his extraordinary power.

As I am writing for devotees of Sri Ramana there is no need to recapitulate in detail what is known of this experience but I would like to quote briefly from the account given by Paul Brunton: 'He was sitting alone in his room one day when a sudden inexplicable fear of death took hold of him. He became acutely aware he was going to die, although he was outwardly in good health . . . he began to prepare for the coming event . . . he fell into a profound conscious trance wherein he became merged into the very source of selfhood, the very essence of being . . .'

He emerged from this trance 'utterly changed': *Bhagavan was born!*

In so far as we can understand or attempt to express our understanding of this experience in words it seems true that it involved in some quite radical sense the 'death' of the seventeen-year-old Venkataraman: a 'death' which yet left the eternal 'Self' incarnated in the still living body of the youth.

It is known that 'conscious death' experience which brought about this final realization of the Spirit had been preceded in the foregoing months by incursions of deep dreamless sleep from which the youth could not be roused and from which he emerged only with difficulty. We may believe that in these sleep-states - so profound as to be close to death-states - the psyche withdrew to the deepest sources of its being: to the primal 'ungrund' spoken of by the Christian mystic Boehme, a state of unconditioned freedom, and returned in the later death-trance to the fully conscious realization of the divine essence: a radiant formless glory.

All the known facts of the Maharshi's long subsequent life seem to bear out the truth that he remained unchanged in this state until his *mahasamadhi*.

A short time after this 'death' Sri Ramana disappeared leaving his family and the home of his childhood with the farewell message: 'I have, in search of my Father and in obedience to His command, started from here . . .' His mother distressed and seeking him found

him two years later near the great temple of Arunachala. His response to her importunities that he return home with her was to the effect that 'I must be about my Father's business'. Those not familiar with the Christian Scriptures will find a close parallel to this passage in Sri Ramana's life in the *New Testament* (Luke 2: 41-52).

It is from the Christian point of view of special interest that Sri Ramana in his earliest expression of his understanding of his spiritual destiny used simple personal terms: 'I have, in search of my Father and in obedience to His command . . .' Such terms are entirely consonant with the Christian doctrine of Grace which is experienced by the Christian as a Divine Person to human person communication of the Divine Essence. Without this Grace revelation, which illuminates simultaneously a past outer event and a present inner awareness, is not possible. Only some similar operation of Grace makes explicable the devotion to the Maharshi which becomes a living experience of the spirit in the deepest reaches of its freedom to many who have never seen Sri Ramana, have never been to India, and in some cases have very little acquaintance with or knowledge of Hindu religion.

Christianity in its attempts to provide a theological account of similar facts in the life and influence of Jesus evolved the doctrine of the Trinity, and a Christian will naturally think in terms of this doctrine in any attempt he may make to understand Sri Ramana. There is the claim of 'Sonship' to a divine 'Father' who makes a 'personal' demand of obedience 'even unto death'. There is the inflow of the Spirit which made obedience possible.

For readers unversed in orthodox Christian theology I should explain that the Greek word '*ho theos*' (God) is used in the *New Testament* of the first Person of the Trinity: the 'Father'. The Son is not God in an absolute sense but God as Christ: the Universal Man who is revealed for Christians in Jesus. The Divine Son becomes Man. The Father while one with the Son and incarnate in the Son yet remains transcendently 'more' than the Son. The way for the Christian to the realization of Sonship in all its fullness lies through death.

It is with the centrality of death in this Christian 'way' I am here concerned. The Christian seeks to realize and accept in his life the meaning of death. Death is the limit to life in time and seems to threaten extinction. Yet only through death of the ego can his full relationship with God be realized. Life is -- religiously understood -- a birth through time and death-to-time into eternal life. In so far as a man centres himself in God as the source of his being he finds the meaning of his existence and his true Self : the Divine Image.

It is clear these fundamental Christian insights are of immense value and importance to a Christian understanding of Sri Maharshi and his death-experience. The life of the spirit for all men always involves in some degree a dying-to-time while still in the body. At the very head-waters of European thought Heraclitus said : 'the name of the bow is life, its work is death'. For Plato philosophy is 'the practice of dying'. For Jesus 'the Father raiseth up the dead'. In the case of Sri Ramana there was an abrupt and radical completeness about his death-to-time, while continuing to live physically in time, that commands astonished attention. The psyche in its sleep-return to 'ungrund' seems to have, in that unconditioned freedom, broken from time into the full reconstitution of its Divine Image -- and then freely returned into time full of grace and truth. To the grace and truth many have witnessed : men and women from the most varied backgrounds and religious persuasions witnessed too to the extraordinary numinous power radiating from the personal presence of the Maharshi.

In the present age when purely contemplative modes of the religious life are, if not entirely discounted, yet little understood or valued in the west, the presence of a supreme contemplative sage in the east, who elicits devotional response and faith in men nurtured in diverse religious traditions throughout the world, is a fact full of hope and meaning for the future. In most expressions of devotion to Sri Ramana -- even when issuing from those intellectually sophisticated in the highest degree -- there is patent a childlike joy and trust in Bhagavan. Those who find such trust inexplicable should recall the saying of Heraclitus : 'the Kingdom is of the Child', and the words

song of awakening

By saniel bonder

the wondrous tale
of venkataraman :
that when he conducted
his own brief enquiry
when he died to himself
and awoke as you
he was no aged yogi
no virgin-born son
no precocious saint
but a simple village kid
tough-minded
uncompromising
who was able to put aside
his dreams and games forever
and to confront his own death
to dive deep within
and to find
his real self
ramana
ramana arunachala
ramana siva
ramana heart of all beings
ramana light of all minds
ramana my lovely gentle master
ramana my lovely gentle self
ramana the ocean of love
ramana the mountain of wisdom
ramana arunachala
ramana hill of grace

of Jesus : 'except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven'.

We know that Sri Ramana himself revealed throughout a long life, a childlike innocence and gaiety of heart, coupled with an awe-inspiring majesty, at all times, and more especially at the end, through a lingering and painful illness, in the face of death !



The impact of Sri Bhagavan's Presence defies description. All who came to Him received His Grace in abundance, yet He Himself remained simple and unaffected!

The author, one of the earliest western disciples of Sri Maharshi, full of devotion to the Master, was also an erudite scholar.

By Sadhu Ekarasa (Dr. Mees)

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA: GOD-REALITY INCARNATE¹

IF a man were to do the greatest deed in the world and go and sit in the presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi he would realize that his deed was as nothing compared to the perpetual Deed of Self-realization of the Sage.

If a man were to write the greatest book in the world and lay it as an offering before the Sage he would realize that the Sage was a greater Book, written from day to day, without any conscious effort, in the inner being of all who cared to come and read it.

Any endeavour to write about the philosophy of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is like painting the lily. It is impossible to present the Maharshi's philosophy in any better and clearer way or form than he has done himself. In the case of other personalities it is always possible to make a distinction between theory and practice, or between spirituality and intellect on the one hand and action on the other. With the Maharshi no such distinction exists.

It is in accordance with the spirit of the time that every man, thing, or event of interest should be written about. The Maharshi is beyond the spirit of our time and long after the spirit of this age will have been succeeded by the spirit of another age, Sri Ramana Maharshi will be remembered as an Immortal. His immortality stood out from his every word and look. It lives in the inner heart of all who have had the great privilege to sit in his

¹from an article in the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* of 1946, published by Sri Ramanasramam.

I asked : "Are only important events in a man's life, such as his main occupation or profession, predetermined, or are trifling acts in his life, such as taking a cup of water or moving from one place in the room to another, also predetermined?"

Bhagavan : "Yes, everything is predetermined."

I : "Then what responsibility, what free-will has man?"

Bhagavan : "What for then does the body come into existence? It is designed for doing the various things marked out for execution in this life. The whole programme is chalked out. 'Not an atom moves except by His Will' expresses the same truth. As for freedom for man, he is always free not to identify himself with the body and not to be affected by the pleasures or pains consequent on the body's activities."

Day by Day with Bhagavan, p. 99

presence. It is reflected only poorly in the books and articles that have been written about him. How could it be otherwise? No one can truly describe God or Truth, or an embodiment of Truth. The *Mounam* (mystic silence) which expresses God reality, is the fit way of describing the Sage of Silence also.

After having studied the lives and ways of teaching of the Saints and Sages of the world belonging to various traditions and various periods of time, it strikes one that Sri Ramana falls into a class of his own. He was one who spontaneously and instantaneously came into his spiritual heritage without even having been told that there was a heritage to claim. He knew it of his own inner experience without receiving any directions on the way.

With regard to those who came to him for realization, inspiration and instruction, Bhagavan responded according to their own needs and aptitudes. As God, the Reality in the innermost heart, worked and works his ways directly within his soul, in the same manner he works his ways directly within the heart

of those who aspire to be, or consider themselves as his disciples. For this Bhagavan needed no *mantras*, no verses, no ritual or conventional formalities. For he was a *Guru* in the true sense of the word. The word *Guru* means 'dispeller of darkness'. The Darkness which needs dispelling is that of Ignorance of God-Reality. The Light that dispels it is the Light of the Natural State of Being. The Maharshi's way is as direct as it is simple. But the simple is often found to be the most difficult. Bhagavan's simplicity was so profound that it failed to reach the consciousness of many who came to him for something definite, or rather, something finite. They desired knowledge, vision, grace, bliss, all kinds of directions and numerous mundane things. The enquirer generally did not realise that these things themselves were only mental concepts which stood in the way of his development. Only if he was able to ignore these concepts and surrender them, as it were, at the feet of the Maharshi, his continuously radiating Light was able to penetrate the Darkness of his consciousness. It is often imagined that 'renunciation at the feet of the Guru' implies renunciation of worldly matters like worries, family, occupation, sinfulness and so on. But actually it implies renunciation of the mind, or, in other words, of all mental pre-occupations, pre-conceived ideas, prejudices, dogmas, physical attachments, tendencies and desires, for these various categories of thought-forms form the substance of the separate 'I'. Many times it has happened that visitors and resident-disciples have asked Maharshi to vouchsafe them initiation, grace, blessings or spiritual experience, and that he replied: 'I am always giving it. If you cannot apprehend it, what am I to do?' Often, however, the Maharshi, when he saw that a disciple did not respond to his *Mounam*, gave instruction on a level suited to the mind of the disciple by reciting a story, writing verses or by explaining philosophical questions.

Dwelling in the Eternal, the Maharshi made no distinctions of person, and 'looked with an equal eye' on a learned scholar and a simple peasant, a Maharaja and a sweeper, an old man and a young woman, a man and a dog, a householder and a monk. But although Sri Ramana realized the mystic Oneness of

souls in God-Reality, he also recognised that distinctions in the relative world of appearances have their relative value until transcended. Once a visitor said during a conversation : 'There should be equality among men.' Sri Ramana promptly remarked : 'Then let them go to sleep ; in sleep all are equal !'

In contra-distinction to other *gurus* of a less exalted level, who are inclined to be aware of their spiritual superiority in relation to others Sri Ramana Maharshi considered all beings to be potential *Jnanis*, whether they were aware of it or not. Some of his utterances run parallel to that of the eighth century mystic, Hui Neng, who said : 'The only difference between a Buddha and an ordinary man is that one realises it while the other does not.' In one conversation Sri Ramana said : 'Vivekananda asked Sri Ramakrishna : "Have you seen God?" I say : "Is there anybody who has *not* seen God?"'

Sri Ramana proclaimed that life is full of latent happiness for those whose lot it is to struggle with the most depressing situations and propensities in *samsara*, because the Divine Heritage is ever there, waiting to be received. God-Reality is ever present within the heart of all. The act of full surrender of the man of Darkness to the Lord of Light is bound to reveal it as the dawn dispels the darkness of the night. And just as the dawn is not the first dawn, but reveals the eternal light of the sun, the dawn of Self-realization is not a new creation, but the remembering of a lost state of consciousness. It is an entering into the ancient heritage. In this connection Sri Ramana taught that the *Guru* lives as the Immortal and Eternal Light within every being. The Path to that Guru is the Guru in the world of manifestation. The Path to the Father is through the Son. To quote the Maharshi's own words : "One must not look upon the Guru as a person ; he is not anything else than the Real Self of the disciple. When that Self is realized, then there is neither Guru nor disciple."

Knowing the value of the tradition that he should not look upon the Guru as a person, there is for the disciple yet a very sweet and wonderful element of hope and promise

NIGHT¹

By Lama Anagarika Govinda

Night opens wide
The gates of space,
Makes of the earth
A flying star,
On which we travel
Through the All
Like arrows, speeding
To an unknown aim.

The magic orb
Moves ceaselessly
Through unknown realms.
From where? Where to?
It carries us
From void to void,
Through time—and
Through eternity.

And thus we move
Within the space
Of our mind-created All,
From dream to dream,
From orb to orb,
Until the void within us
Can absorb—the Light
That is both origin and aim.

¹From *Mandala*.

in it to think that Bhagavan Sri Ramana, although a Divine Sage, is also a son of human parents like himself. What a world of possibilities for his own future is suggested by this knowledge ! He has heard of liberated *devas* or angels, but what use is their achievement to him, for he is not one of them ? But a liberated *man* is another matter !

In this light, the coming of Bhagavan Sri Ramana to Arunachala assumes significance not only for the spiritual children of the Maharshi, but for all humanity.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

SRI MURUGANAR

234.

Questing within and asking "Who am I,
This indispensable, true, living Self?"
Such search is the one single stream of
Life.
That runs pulsating through all faiths
That teach the way to life eternal.

235.

Like the thread that holds together
The beads that else might fall apart,
The Lord immutable, over the same,
The light that dwells in every being,
Shines through the heart of every faith.

236.

As one sole fire
Clinging to different earthen lamps
Appears as many flames,
The one unchanging Self
Clinging to different bodies
Appears as many.

237.

If no word can name the Himalaya
Of transcendence standing
In the vast inner space,
What are the loud polemics
Of cults and schools discussing the Supreme
But bustle of a bazaar?

238.

Different faiths, each spreading light,
Sprang up because of differences
In mental ripeness. Wisdom consists
In seeing the basic harmony
That underlies these cherished faiths.

239.

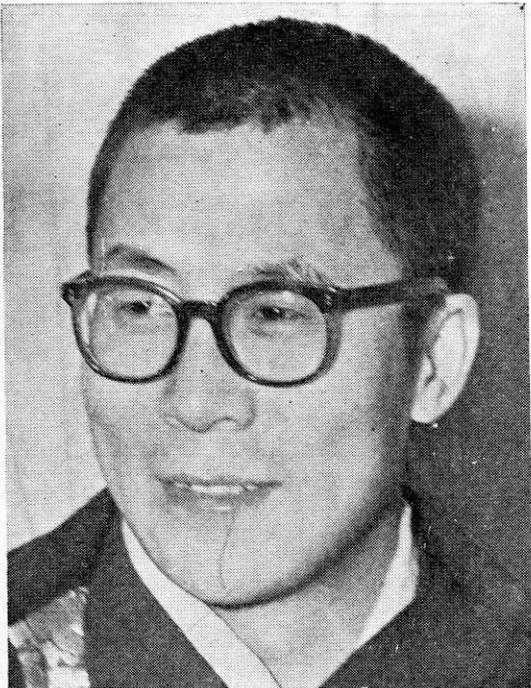
Those who diving deep within
Have found the Self have nothing else
To know. And why? Because they have
Gone beyond all forms themselves
And are awareness without form.

240.

Those who within this living shrine have
sought
The Lord and seen Him there with vision
clear
Will recognize Him sporting in each nook
Of the wonderful, vast temple of the
world.

241.

Those who have sought within and found
the Lord,
The Life of life there dwelling, shining clear,
Behold even in the meanest worm, despised
By others, the loved Presence of the
Supreme.



By The Dalai Lama

Absolute Truth, as different from relative truth, is like empty space — beyond every form of obstruction and complication. When in the search for it one overcomes the sense of discrimination between oneself and others, true love is generated all round.

DUAL TRUTH

BUDDHISM has flourished in Tibet for over a thousand years. During these centuries, it has been carefully preserved and has become the basis of our culture. Nevertheless, although our culture has been nourished by many things of worth from neighbouring countries, we have on the whole been very much on our own.

In Tibet we practise Buddhism in its entirety. In garb and conduct the monks practise according to the rules of the Vinaya Sutras ; in the training of mind, we follow the Mahayana philosophy ; and we also practise Tantric Buddhism. That is why I have used the phrase "in its entirety". Today, however, we are passing through a period of unimaginable difficulty and hardship.

The world today is engulfed in conflicts and sufferings to such an extent that everyone longs for peace and happiness ; that longing has unfortunately led them to be carried away by the pursuit of ephemeral pleasures. But there are a few learned people who, dissatisfied by what is ordinarily seen or experienced, think more deeply and search for true happiness. I believe that the search will continue. As we make greater material progress and are able to satisfy our daily needs more fully, man will continue to search for Truth, not being satisfied with material progress alone. Indeed, I am convinced that the search for Truth will still grow keener. In past centuries, there have been many learned Teachers who have laid down various paths to the realization of Truth. Among them, Lord Buddha is one, and my study of Buddhism has led me to form the opinion that, despite the differences in the names and forms used by the various religions,

the Ultimate Truth to which they point is the same.

In Buddhism we have Relative Truth and Absolute Truth. From the viewpoint of Absolute Truth, what we feel and experience in our ordinary daily life is all delusion. Of the various delusions, the sense of discrimination between oneself and others is the worst form, as it creates nothing but unpleasantness for both sides. If we can realize and meditate on Ultimate Truth, it will cleanse our impurities of mind and thus eradicate the sense of discrimination. This will help to create true love for one another. The search for Ultimate Truth is, therefore, vitally important.

In the search for Ultimate Truth, if it fails to dawn on us it is we who have not found it. Ultimate Truth exists. If we think deeply and reflect carefully, we shall realize that we ourselves have our existence in Ultimate Truth. For example, I am talking to you and you are listening to me. We are generally under the impression that there is a speaker and an audience and that there is the sound of words being spoken; but, in Ultimate Truth, if I search for myself I will not find it, and if you search for yourselves you will not find them. Neither speaker nor audience, neither words nor sound, can be found. They are all void like empty space, yet they are not completely non-existent. They must exist, for we are able to feel them. What I am saying is being heard by you, and you are in turn thinking on the subject. My speech is producing some effect, yet if we search for them we cannot find them. This mystery relates to the dual nature of Truth.

Anything whose existence is directly perceivable by us can be classified as pertaining to relative Truth. But, in Ultimate Truth, neither the seeker nor the object being searched for exists. Ultimate Truth is void like empty space, beyond every form of obstruction and complication. Once we understand this, we can achieve true mental peace. It is my hope that, as the world becomes smaller and smaller owing to material progress and better communications, we shall, as a result, all be able to understand more about Ultimate Truth. When this happens I have great hope that we shall achieve true world peace.

THE QUICKEST PROCESS

By "Sein"

I was talking with Sri Muruganar and as usual he started explaining the unique technique of Sri Bhagavan's *Who am I?* This Self-enquiry is the only solution for all problems, material and spiritual, he affirmed.

When I asked him whether there was not any quicker process to attain the fruit of this enquiry, he laughingly assured: 'Yes, there is. Sri Bhagavan Himself has indicated it.' He explained further that now everyone is eager to know or learn something or other and the more one learns the more one feels the need to know more — there is no end to this way of learning. But Bhagavan says 'Learn about the one who wants to learn and then everything else will be learnt'. Bhagavan assures that everything else will follow if one learns about oneself first and this is the same as Christ's assurance that if you realise the Kingdom of Heaven in your heart 'everything else shall be added unto you'.

So the quickest way or short-cut to Sri Bhagavan's path, which some find difficult because it is so very simple, is to start treading it right *now* asking who it is who wants to know!

I found this discourse illuminating by its directness of approach.

From Death Lead me to Immortality¹

By V. Ramanathan

Fear of death constantly hangs over every one in *samsara*. *Jnana* alone puts an end to it, as exemplified in Sri Ramana's life from the moment of his enlightenment to his Maha Nirvana.

IT may be said that the import of Sri Ramana Maharshi's life from the start of his spiritual career to the very end had been ordained to explain and exemplify the verity and validity of the Upanishadic verse cited above.

The quotation is the last part of a triplet in the Upanishad and the Upanishad itself declares that this is self-explanatory and explains what is cryptic in the previous two.

In Sri Maharshi's case it is evident that this prayer is not a mere chant or an end devoutly to be wished for, but a matter for accomplishment here and now. The experience of death when only 16 years old culminated in immortality.

All the aids of modern science and advance and the consequent enslaving of nature may avoid the ills of life and even prolong it, but death like the Sword of Damocles will continue to hang over the heads of those immersed in *samsara*. The inevitable end may be put off but not annulled. "In the midst of death we live." Whatever is born must die. The

sages of India add that the dead shall be reborn till one consciously dies to the body and dries up this stream of *avidya* in realising the SELF.

The inward process of moving from an arena of death to what survives it rehearsed in all seriousness by the lad Ramana is oft narrated. It has to be done here too, albeit briefly. The fatherless young Ramana was a dependent along with his brothers on a none too affluent uncle who had a family of his own. When alone one day he felt some inexplicable dispensation that death was creeping in on him; now that it was so near, the boy fearlessly faced it. He felt that he was dead. He felt that his body lay cold and inert; but who was dead? Certainly not he who witnessed the dead body. This train of thought went on. Then when all that he usually thought himself to be was naught there still persisted a witnessing awareness which in a flash he realised to be the real self-effulgent, limitless 'I',

¹ "Mrtyor M'amrtam gamaya" — *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (1-3-28).

free and apart from all the trammels that made up his former 'I'. He consciously died and awoke as the undying divine, the unqualified delight of the Self. From death he leapt over to immortality, hence was he Skanda.

Reducing by the fire of introspection the three sheaths (the gross, the subtle and the causal) to ashes, he became Siva.

Here is an account of what happened once may be in the forties of this century. Bhagavan was reclining on his sofa, as was his wont. It was about 9 on a sunny May morning. A few of us had our fill of profound meditation under his inspiring gaze of mystic communion. A voice broke the silence saying, "When even at his home in Madurai Bhagavan had realised his Self, where was the need for his arduous *tapasya* at Tiruvannamalai?" The Master smiled, gathered himself up and sitting bolt upright said, "Oh, is that so? The experience at Madurai was basic and complete. The experience got fully and clearly established and it became so full and unremitting that it persists always, even in *sushupti*, dreamless sleep. Later reading revealed that this experience is common to all that tread the path and is not conditioned by time or clime, birth or education."

On one of his birthday celebrations he said, "What is the sense in celebrating the day of the birth of the body which should one day die. It would be better if that day were celebrated on which the end of birth was sealed by conscious dying." The reference was obviously to his death experience at Madurai. He made us realise that only by so dying consciously before physical death can one conquer death. The talk led to the *vichara* line of introspection adopted by Bhrigu in *Taittiriyaopaniṣad*, tracing the march by '*neti, neti*' ("not this, not this"), from a lower reality to a relatively superior reality till it culminates in identity with the ever-conscious Self which animates the inert body.

On another occasion someone asked the sage as to the intensity of pain from the cancer that was incessantly tunnelling up his left upper arm. Bhagavan seemed to be looking steadily at some distant object and said smilingly, "If comparison may be given, just

imagine a thousand scorpions stinging you all at once and all the time, it is to some extent so." How detached from the body was he! It was ever a flaming soul within the spell of a body which could neither affect the soul's inherent bliss nor limit the radiation of the radiant consciousness.

The scene of his passing away is equally revealing. It is an eloquent commentary in action on what the world calls death and what it means to be a *jivanmukta*. It is said that towards the end he got himself seated in *sukhasana* and heaved a heavy breath. One that stood by mourned in his heart that such an enlightened one too should have the pangs of death. Another hastened to apply the oxygen inhaler. Bhagavan smiled at the first and by a movement restrained the other and let his head droop as though bowing out of the world. It is also said that immediately a vibrant illumination suffused the tiny room kindling an uncommon experience in all that stood by while at the same time a shaft of light trailed its way from over the top of the Nirvana room to the peak of the Hill of Arunachala, whence perhaps it came. How directly does the *Chandogya Upaniṣad* describe this (8.3.4):

"Now that serene one who rising up out of the body reaches the highest light and appears with his own form — he is the soul."

(R. E. Hume's translation)

In Sri Bhagavan's life and death an aspirant can find the validity of Vedanta as well as derive inspiration and guidance. His life illustrated how a *jivanmukta* rooted in *sthitaprajna* (steady awareness) behaves in daily life, and how he quits this earthly scene. The *Brihadaranyaka Upaniṣad* (4:4:6 and 7) succinctly puts what Sri Bhagavan used often to repeat, that the realised soul has not to go anywhere when the body meets its end:

"Now the man who does not desire — he who is without desire, who is freed from desire, whose desire is satisfied, whose desire is the Self — his breaths do not depart. Being Brahman he goes to Brahman."

"When all desires that cling to the heart disappear, then a mortal becomes immortal."

THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS¹

By Farid Al-Din Attar

(Translated by S. C. Nott)

[Attar's poem is an elaborate allegory. All the birds of the world have assembled and asked the Hoopoe to lead them to the abode of the Simurgh, the King of all birds and the sovereign lord of creation. The Hoopoe describes at length to them the terrors and sufferings of the journey they will have to make. They must pass through seven valleys, to wit, the Valley of the Quest, the Valley of Love, the Valley of Understanding, the Valley of Independence and Detachment, the Valley of Pure Unity, the Valley of Astonishment, the Valley of Poverty and Nothingness. This description — interlarded with a variety of stories, anecdotes, parables and reflections — occupies the greater part of the poem which concludes with the following words:]

WHEN the birds listened to this discourse of the Hoopoe their heads drooped down, and sorrow pierced their hearts. Now they understood how difficult it would be for a handful of dust like themselves to bend such a bow. So great was their agitation that numbers of them died then and there. But others, in spite of their distress, decided to set out on the long road. For years they travelled over mountains and valleys, and a great part of their life flowed past on this journey. But how is it possible to relate all that happened to them? It would be necessary to go with them and see their difficulties for oneself, and to follow the wanderings of this long road. Only then could one realize what the birds suffered.

In the end, only a small number of all this great company arrived at that sublime place to

which the Hoopoe had led them. Of the thousands of birds almost all had disappeared. Many had been lost in the ocean, others had perished on the summits of high mountains, tortured by thirst; others had had their wings burnt and their hearts dried up by the fire of the sun; others were devoured by tigers and panthers; others died of fatigue in the deserts and in the wilderness; some went mad and killed each other for a grain of barley; others, enfeebled by suffering and weariness, dropped on the road unable to go further; others, bewildered by the things they saw, stopped where they were, stupified; and many, who had started out from curiosity or pleasure,

¹ from *The Teachings of the Mystics*, selected and edited by Walter Stace: Published by the New American Library.

Now light comes to you, O Soul, from the Spirit and darkness from the body ; and if you understand this, you ought not to grieve that you must quit the body. For it is through the body that you suffer the greatest loss, and are prevented from apprehending those things which it behoves you most to know.....

HERMES

perished without an idea of what they set out to find.

So then, out of all those thousands of birds, only thirty reached the end of the journey. And even these were bewildered, weary and dejected, with neither feathers nor wings. But now they were at the door of this Majesty that cannot be described, whose essence is incomprehensible -- that Being who is beyond human reason and knowledge. Then flashed the lightning of fulfilment, and a hundred worlds were consumed in a moment. They saw thousands of suns each more resplendent than the other, thousands of moons and stars all equally beautiful, and seeing all this they were amazed and agitated like a dancing atom of dust, and they cried out :

“O Thou who are more radiant than the sun ! Thou, who hast reduced the sun to an atom, how can we appear before Thee ? Ah, why have we so uselessly endured all this suffering on the Way ? Having renounced ourselves and all things, we now cannot obtain that for which we have striven. Here, it little matters whether we exist or not.”

The birds, who were so disheartened that they resembled a cock half-killed, sank into despair. A long time passed. When, at a propitious moment, the door suddenly opened, there stepped out a noble chamberlain, one of the courtiers of the Supreme Majesty. He looked them over and saw that out of thousands only these thirty birds were left.

He said : “Now then, O Birds, where have you come from, and what are you doing here ?

What is your name ? O you who are destitute of everything, where is your home ? What do they call you in the world ? What can be done with a feeble handful of dust like you ?”

“We have come,” they said, “to acknowledge the Simurgh as our king. Through love and desire for him we have lost our reason and our peace of mind. Very long ago, when we started on this journey, we were thousands, and now only thirty of us have arrived at this sublime court. We cannot believe that the King will scorn us after all the sufferings we have gone through. Ah, no ! He cannot but look on us with the eye of benevolence !”

The Chamberlain replied : “O you whose minds and hearts are troubled, whether you exist or do not exist in the universe, the King has his being always and eternally. Thousands of worlds of creatures are no more than an ant at his gate. You bring nothing but moans and lamentations. Return then to whence you came, O vile handful of earth !”

At this, the birds were petrified with astonishment. Nevertheless, when they came to themselves a little, they said : “Will this great king reject us so ignominiously ? And if he really has this attitude to us may he not change it to one of honour ? Remember Majnun who said, ‘If all the people who dwell on earth wished to sing my praises, I would not accept them ; I would rather have the insults of Laila. One of her insults is more to me than a hundred compliments from another woman !’”

“The lightning of his glory manifests itself,” said the Chamberlain, “and it lifts up the reason of all souls. What benefit is there if the soul be consumed by a hundred sorrows ? What benefit is there at this movement of either greatness or littleness ?”

The birds, on fire with love, said : “How can the moth save itself from the flame when it wishes to be one with the flame ? The friend will seek to content us by allowing us to be united to him. If now we are refused, what is there left for us to do ? We are like the moth who wished for union with the flame of the candle. They begged him not to sacrifice himself so foolishly and for such an

impossible aim, but he thanked them for their advice and told them that since his heart was given to the flame forever, nothing else mattered."

The Chamberlain, having tested them, opened the door; and as he drew aside a hundred curtains, one after the other, a new world beyond the veil was revealed. Now was the light of lights manifested, and all of them sat down on the *masnad*, the seat of the Majesty and Glory. They were given a writing which they were told to read through; and reading this, and pondering, they were able to understand their state. When they were completely at peace, and detached from all things they became aware that the Simurgh was there with them, and a new life began for them in the Simurgh. All that they had done previously was washed away. The sun of majesty sent forth his rays, and in the reflection of each other's faces these thirty birds of the outer world contemplated the face of the Simurgh of the inner world. This so astonished them that they did not know if they were still themselves or if they had become the Simurgh. At last, in a state of contemplation, they realised that they were the Simurgh and that the Simurgh was the thirty birds. When they gazed at the Simurgh they saw that it was truly the Simurgh who was there, and when they turned their eyes towards themselves they saw that they themselves were the Simurgh. And perceiving both at once, themselves and Him, they realized that they and the Simurgh were one and the same being. No one in the world has ever heard of anything to equal it!

Then they gave themselves up to meditation, and after a little they asked the Simurgh, without the use of tongues, to reveal to them the secret of the mystery of the unity and the plurality of beings. The Simurgh, also without speaking, made this reply: "The sun of my majesty is a mirror. He who sees himself therein sees his soul and his body, and sees them completely. Since you have come as thirty birds, si-murgh, you will see thirty birds in this mirror. If forty or fifty were to come, it would be the same. Although you are now completely changed you see yourselves as you were before.

'Natural death is, as it were, our haven after a long voyage and our repose. And as a good sailor when he nears the harbour lowers his sails and gently enter it, so should we lower the sails of our worldly occupations and return to God with all our mind and heart, so that we may enter our haven with all gentleness and all peace. And our own nature teaches us much as to this gentleness; because in such a death there is no pain, nor any bitterness; but as a ripe apple lightly and without violence detaches from the bough, so our soul, without pain, leaves the body in which it has been.' (Tullius in his *De Senectute*).

DANTE (II Convito)

"Can the sight of an ant reach to the far-off Pleiades? And can this insect lift an anvil? Have you ever seen a gnat seize an elephant in its teeth? All that you have known, all that you have seen, all that you have said or heard -- all this is no longer that. When you crossed the valleys of the Spiritual Way and when you performed good tasks, you did all this by my action; and you were able to see the valleys of my essence and my perfections. You, who are only thirty birds, did well to be astonished, impatient and wondering. But I am more than thirty birds. I am the very essence of the true Simurgh. Annihilate then yourselves gloriously and joyfully in me, and in me you shall find yourselves."

Thereupon, the birds at last lost themselves for ever in the Simurgh -- the shadow was lost in the Sun, and that is all.

All that you have ever heard or seen or known is not even the beginning of what you must know, and since the ruined habitation of this world is not your place you must renounce it. Seek the trunk of the tree, and do not worry about whether the branches do or do not exist.

**ALL MEN
HAVE THE SAME
COLOR BONES**

By paul rePS

All men have the same Color Bones
And the same faith.
Islam literally means surrender as devotion.
He, Allah, is one, he on whom all depend.
Neither begetting nor begotton, he alone is.

TALK

“ If he alone is, then are we ? ”

Muslims present Brahman as Allah.
Chinese state Brahman as Tao.
Buddhists name Tao Sunyata.
Christians claim the one as God.
Science posits energy.
All rivers flow towards the sea
and sea inflows each waterdrop
as our breathflow.

“ So . . . ? ”

When in life as in death
we drop differences
we wholly agree.
We let go stress and move smooth,
Lifting arms with trees and weeds,
grace in pours. This feels good.

DO

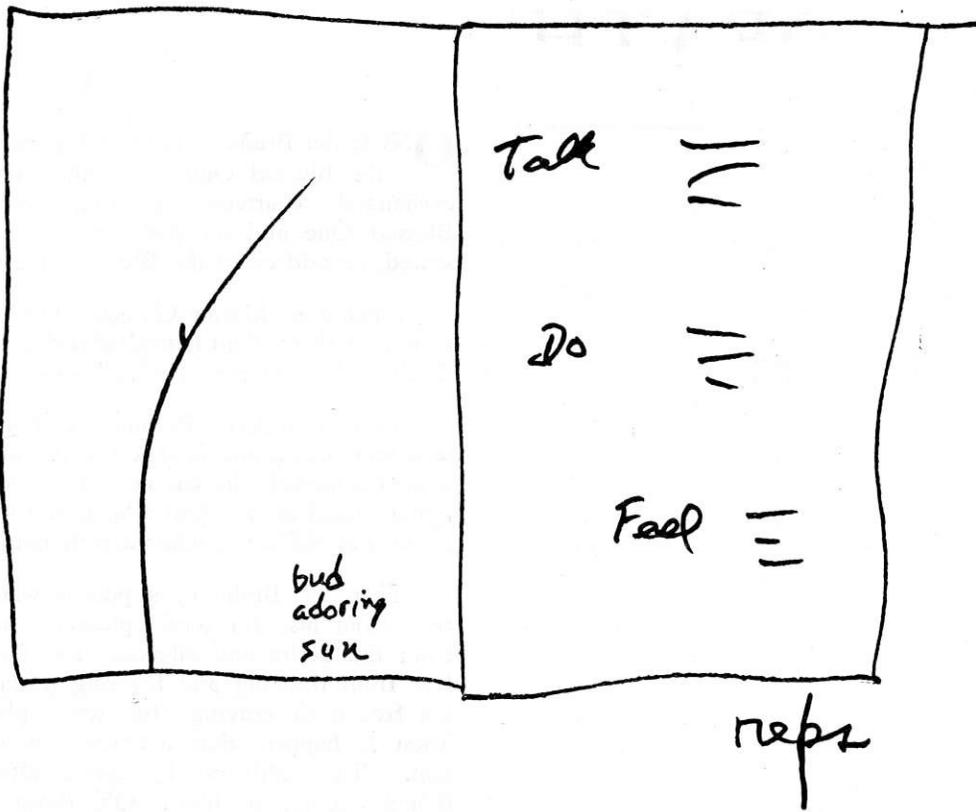
“ How high ? ”

List 12 motions for in pouring.
In stretch ? Smile ? Song ? Adore ?
Why isn't pray play ?
Losing something flexive
we refuse child and animal revealing.

FEEL

Two at sea cling to a log.
One drowns, the other is saved.
Which one is saved ?

FEAR
OF



FEAR OF DEATH¹

ONCE the Brahmin Janussoni went to meet the Blessed One. Having arrived, he exchanged courteous greetings with the Blessed One and sat down at one side. So seated, he addressed the Blessed One thus :

“I maintain Master Gotama, and hold the view that there is no mortal who does not fear death and is not afraid of it.” -----

“There is indeed, Brahmin, such a mortal who fears death and is afraid of it. But there is also a mortal who has no fear of death and is not afraid of it. And who is the one fears death and the other who fears it not ?

“There is, Brahmin, a person who is not free from lust for sense pleasures, not free from the desire and affection for them, not free from thirsting and fevering (after them), not free from craving (for sense pleasures). Then it happens that a grave illness befalls him. Thus afflicted by grave illness, the thought comes to him : ‘Oh, those beloved sense pleasures will leave me, and I shall have to leave them !’ Thereupon he grieves and is worried, he laments, beats his breast and is deeply perturbed. This mortal, Brahmin, is one who fears death and is afraid of it.

“Further, O Brahmin, there is a person who, concerning the body, is not free from lust for it, not free from desire and affection, from thirsting and fevering, not free from craving (for the body). Then it happens that a grave illness befalls him. Thus affected by grave illness, the thought comes to him : ‘Oh this

¹from *Anguttara Nikaya*, Tr. by Nyanaponika Thera.

beloved body will leave me, and I shall have to leave it.' Thereupon he grieves . . . and is deeply perturbed. This mortal too, O Brahmin, is one who fears death and is afraid of it.

"Further, O Brahmin, there is a person who has not done anything noble, has not done anything good, has not given protection to those in fear ; but have done what is evil, cruel and wicked. Then it happens that a grave illness befalls him. Thus afflicted by grave illness, the thought comes to him : 'Oh, I have not done anything noble and good, and did not give protection to those in fear ; but done what is evil, cruel and wicked. To the destiny of those who do such deeds, I shall go hereafter.' Thereupon he grieves and is worried, he laments, beats his breast and is deeply perturbed. This mortal too, O Brahmin, is one who fears death and is afraid of it.

"Further, O Brahmin, there is a person who has doubts and perplexity, and has not come to certainty in the Good Law. Then it happens that a grave illness befalls him. Thus afflicted by grave illness, the thought comes to him : 'Oh, I am full of doubts and perplexity, and have not come to certainty in the Good Law !' Thereupon he grieves and is worried, he laments, beats his breast and is deeply perturbed. This mortal too, O Brahmin, is one who fears death and is afraid of it.

"These, Brahmin, are the four mortals who fear death and are afraid of it.

"But which mortal, O Brahmin, does not fear death and is not afraid of it ?

"There is, Brahmin, a person who is free from lust for sense pleasures, free from desire and affection for them, free from thirsting and fevering (after them), free from craving for sense pleasures. When grave illness befalls him, no such thoughts come to him : 'Oh, these beloved sense pleasures will leave me and I shall have to leave them !' Hence he does not grieve and is not worried, he does not lament and does not beat his breast, nor is he perturbed. This mortal, O Brahmin, is one who does not fear death and is not afraid of it.

The Self existed before the birth of this body and will remain after the death of this body. So it is with the series of bodies taken up in succession. The Self is immortal. The phenomena are changeful and appear mortal. The fear of death is of the body.

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

"Further, O Brahmin, there is a person who, concerning the body, is free from lust for it . . . When grave illness befalls him, no such thoughts come to him : 'Oh, this beloved body will leave me and I shall have to leave it !' Hence he does not grieve . . . This mortal, too, O Brahmin, is one who does not fear death and is not afraid of it.

"Further, O Brahmin, there is a person who has not done anything evil, cruel or wicked, but has done what is noble and good, and has given protection to those in fear. When grave illness befalls him, these thoughts come to him : 'I have not done anything evil, cruel or wicked, but have done what is noble and good, and have given protection to those in fear. To the destiny of those who do such deeds, I shall go hereafter.' Hence he does not grieve . . . This mortal, too, O Brahmin, is one who does not fear death and is not afraid of it.

"Further, O Brahmin, there is a person who has no doubts and perplexity and has gained certainty in the Good Law. When grave illness befalls him, this thought comes to him : 'I am free of doubt and perplexity, and have gained certainty in the Good Law.' Hence he does not grieve and is not worried, he does not beat his breast, nor is he perturbed. This mortal, too, O Brahmin, is one who does not fear death and is not afraid of it.

"These, Brahmin, are the four mortals who do not fear death and are not afraid of it." —

"Wonderful, Master Gotama ! Marvellous, Master Gotama ! . . . May Master Gotama accept me as a lay devotee who has gone for refuge to him from this day on, so long as life lasts."

THE COMMUNION OF ST. FRANCIS

He who accepts God as the sole Truth is fully surrendered to Him and is therefore free of self-will, as explained by St. Francis of Assisi in the course of a conversation with his brother, Tancrede. This is an extract from *Sagesse d'un Pauvre* by P. Eloi Leclerc, translated by Marc Chaduc.

"I THINK it is difficult to accept (the everyday) reality. And in fact, no man ever accepts it fully. We always want to add something to our stature, in one way or the other. Such is the aim of most of our actions . . . until the day comes when we have to face failure, a crushing failure, and then there only remains for us this sole immeasurable truth -- *God Is*. We discover then that only He is almighty, and that only He is holy : the sole Good. The man who accepts this reality and deeply rejoices in it has found peace. God is -- and that is enough . . . Whatever happens there is God, God's effulgence. It is enough for God to be God. Only the man who accepts God in this way is able to accept himself fully. He becomes free of any self-will. Nothing comes to disturb the Divine Play of Creation within him. His will has become purified and has become at the same time as wide and as vast as the world : a simple and pure will in the eyes of God, which embraces everything, which welcomes everything. Nothing separates him from the creative act and he is fully surrendered to God, Who works in him what He wills, leads him where he wills.

And this saintly obedience gives him access to the depths of the universe, to the power which moves the stars and makes the most humble flowers of the fields bloom in such a lovely way. He sees clearly throughout the world. He discovers this supreme goodness which is at the heart of all beings and which will one day radiate from everything ; but he already sees it flowing through and blooming in each being. He himself participates in the great form of goodness. He becomes merciful, solar, like the Father who makes this sun resplendent, showering bounty on good and evil alike. Ah, Brother Tancrede ! How great is God's glory ! The world is bathing in his beauty and his mercy."

HASTAMALAKA

STOTRA¹

(Translated into Tamil by SRI BHAGAVAN
from the original Sanskrit of SRI SHANKARACHARYA)

A Brahmin woman went to the Jumna to bathe. Finding a yogi sitting in meditation on the bank she left her only child, a baby of two years old, near him, asking him to take care of it until she returned from bathing. On returning she found to her dismay that the child had died in the meantime through some accident or other. The bereaved mother lamented his death so loudly that the yogi awoke. On understanding what had happened he was moved to pity and in order to console the poor woman gave up his own body by yogic power and entered that of the dead baby. Seeing the child revive the mother was overjoyed, took it up and returned home without troubling to find out the secret of the child's miraculous revival.

The child did not grow up as a normal boy. He was too contemplative to learn, lisp, play or entertain his parents in any way, so they thought that he must be deaf and dumb.

A few years afterwards Sri Shankaracharya was travelling in the neighbourhood. The parents took their child to him and prayed that he might be pleased to restore it to normal health by means of his divine powers. The Acharya took in the situation at a glance and addressed the following questions to the boy. The boy in his turn replied immediately, astonishing the audience with the sublimity of his wisdom.

When the parents learnt the truth they left him with Sri Shankaracharya. He was known from this time as Hastamalaka — one of the four leading disciples of the great master.

Hastamalaka means "an embellica fruit on the palm of one's hand". The stanzas expound the sublime Truth as clearly as the fruit seen on one's palm.

TEXT

1. "Who are you? Whose child are you? Whither are you bound? What is your name? Whence have you come? O Child! I should like to hear your reply to these questions." Thus spoke Sri Shankaracharya to the boy, and Hastamalaka replied as follows:

2. "I am neither man, god, *yaksha*, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra, *brahma-*

chari, householder, forest-dweller, nor *sannyasi*; but I am pure Awareness alone.

3. "Just as the sun causes all worldly movements, so do I -- the ever-present, conscious Self -- cause the mind to be active and

¹ from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi* by Arthur Osborne.

the senses to function. Again, just as the ether is all-pervading yet devoid of any specific qualities, so am I free from all qualities.

4. "I am the conscious Self, ever-present and associated with everything in the same manner as heat is always associated with fire. I am that eternal, undifferentiated, unshaken Consciousness, on account of which the insentient mind and the senses function, each in its own manner.

5. "I am that conscious Self of whom the ego is not independent as the image in a mirror is not independent of the object reflected.

6. "I am the unqualified, conscious Self, existing even after the extinction of *buddhi* just as the object remains ever the same even after the removal of the reflecting mirror.

7. "I am eternal Consciousness, dissociated from the mind and senses. I am the mind of the mind, the eye of the eye, ear of the ear and so on. I am not cognisable by the mind and senses.

8. "I am the eternal, single, conscious Self, reflected in various intellects, just as the Sun is reflected on the surface of various sheets of water.

9. "I am the single, conscious Self, illumining all intellects, just as the Sun simultaneously illumines all eyes so that they perceive objects.

10. "Only those eyes that are helped by the Sun are capable of seeing objects, not others. The source from which the Sun derives its power is myself.

11. "Just as the reflection of the Sun on agitated waters seems to be broken up, but remains perfect on a calm surface, so also am I, the conscious Self, unrecognisable in agitated intellects though I clearly shine in those which are calm.

12. "Just as a fool thinks that the Sun is entirely lost when it is hidden by dense clouds, so do people think that the ever-free Self is bound.

D. : Jiva is said to be bound by karma. Is it so ?

M. : Let karma enjoy its fruits. As long as you are the doer so long are you the enjoyer.

D. : How to get released from karma.

M. : See whose karma it is. You will find you are not the doer. Then you will be free. This requires grace of God for which you should pray to Him, worship Him and meditate on Him.

That karma which takes place without effort, i.e., involuntary action, is not binding.

Even a jnani is acting as seen by his bodily movements. There can be no karma without effort or without intentions (*sankalpas*). Therefore there are *sankalpas* for all. They are of two kinds : (1) one, binding — *bandha hetu* and the other, (2) *mukti-hetu* — not binding. The former must be given up and the latter must be cultivated. There is no fruit without previous karma ; no karma without previous *sankalpa*. Even *mukti* must be the result of effort so long as the sense of doership persists.

Talks, p. 108.

13. "Just as the ether is all-pervading and unaffected by contact, so also does the ever-conscious Self pervade everything without being affected in any way. I am that Self.

14. "Just as a transparent crystal takes on the lines of its background, but is in no way changed thereby, and just as the unchanging moon on being reflected on undulating surfaces appears agitated, so it is with You, the all-pervading God."

THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE AND THE PATH

By Muz Murray-Gardenchild

So long as one thinks that the world is as real as it looks, one is always involved in feverish and pointless activity, forgetful of a more glorious state of existence. But it is different when the 'inner eye' is opened, as the author explains out of his own experience.

ON my travels many people ask me how I came to be on 'The Path'. The *Path* of course is not a path at all, but simply that condition of the spirit in man in which he has become aware of an inner need to know the nature of his being. *Who am I? What am I? Whence came the world? What am I doing here?* are the constant questions living within him. The Path can thus be understood as the yearning quest in the soul of someone seeking an answer to the awful *Why* of existence.

Most of us can perhaps go on for years not giving the idea a thought, or dismissing it as unanswerable, or pretending to ourselves that we don't give a damn. When we are overtaken by inexplicable fears or feelings of inadequacy, we tend to cover them up by throwing ourselves into feverish and generally pointless activity -- a full involvement in the daily round of life -- in petty pleasures or political strife, or in sport, sex, art, music, religiosity, war or whatever. But eventually the futility of it all catches up with us, if it has no cohesive underlying meaning within. There seems to come a time in the life of every man when the shallowness of his existence is revealed to him.

If he perceives only the hollowness of his being and the meaninglessness of his life, then he may become stricken with despair, take to drink or drugs to cover his pain, commit suicide, or find himself driven 'on the Path' out of necessity to find some reason for existing.

But suppose that he has been made aware of the shallowness of his everyday vision of life by comparison with a greater vision, through experiencing a state of consciousness which gives him a new and enthralling insight into the wondrous nature of existence -- then the chances are that he has had a mystical experience. The mystic is one whose "eyes have seen the glory" of the true nature of things. To him, as to the atomic scientist, the world and the so-called 'physical' universe is no longer as material as we suppose it to

**And what is the end of the illness ?
Nothing worse than death. Will you realise
once for all that it is not death that is the
source of all man's evils, and of a mean
and cowardly spirit, but rather the fear of
death ? Against this fear then I would have
you discipline yourself ; to this let all
your reasonings and your trainings be
directed ; and then you will know that
only so do men achieve their freedom.**

EPICETUS

bc. He sees the world as a living symbol of more glorious states of existence. He has had a glimpse of other dimensions, of other states of 'reality', of a paradise in which all things exist here and now but which he rarely perceives. Once he has seen with his 'inner eye', his conception of reality is changed.

In general, even with all its unreal and surrealistic happenings, we consider this our everyday world as reality — and on the relative level so it is. Relative only to our average level of conscious perception that is. If we have never experienced any other 'reality' or 'extraordinary state of consciousness' (other than dream states), then we are only able to relate to this world as it appears to our senses. Consequently the visionaries whose conscious receptivity is operating at a higher frequency and who attempt to relate their experiences of other states of reality are dismissed as deluded fools, cranks, or madmen by those who have unfortunately never known any condition of 'seeing' or 'knowing' other than that afforded by the use of the five limited senses ; but the mystical experience transcends the senses and the intellect, and is *perceived directly*.

Around the average human being there seems to be some sort of 'psychic insulating shell', created by the sense-of-ego and the five senses, and safeguarding him from premature perception of the 'glory' — of the light and splendour within all manifest things. As it would be disastrous for a chick in the egg to break out of its shell before the inner conditions for its maturity had developed — so it

is with man. It would appear that until a certain quality of spiritual and mental togetherness has developed within him, in greater or lesser degree, then he is not equipped to cope with insight into the inner realities of existence. To have an artificially induced glimpse of reality before the heart and mind are ready for it can drive a person insane. (That is, incapable of further coherent thought and action on *this* relative plane).

For this reason mental disorientation often occurs with the use of psychedelic drugs such as LSD or mescaline. Drugs can powerfully destroy the earthbound concepts of body, space and time, as perceived by the senses, which can hurl the unprepared mind into a terrifying intra-dimensional wilderness. When the 'psychic-filters' between the surface-mind of man and his subconscious realms are suddenly removed by drug-activity, the protective 'shell' is cracked, and if he is spiritually or psychically unready for even such low-level revelations, then the results can be mind-deranging. Stripped of his habitual sensory faculties and sense-of-ego, he is exposed either to the delirious joy and ecstasy of mental freedom, or, if he retains the sense-of-ego then he can find himself in the grip of inexpressible terror in a hellishly chaotic and formless universe. The terror seems to come from not being able to adjust quickly enough to other conditions of existence and having the ground of his previous 'knowledge-of-the-world' pulled from under his feet. Similar conditions prevail for the developing spiritual seeker as his 'psychic shell' begins to dissolve. Hence the need for a guide or teacher. No true yogi tries to force the pace of a student's growth, nor promises enlightenment-in-five-minutes, but allows the student to determine his own rate of development, and advocates a slow step-by-step opening-up of his mind and spirit, together with the dissolution of his sense-of-ego.

Developing oneself in such a manner is the most beneficial for creating the needful conditions in body and mind towards an ultimate harmonious 'union' with *Absolute Knowledge*, (otherwise known as the "God-experience"), or at least, towards preparing the ground for insightful mystical experience. Admittedly, the kind of mystical experience in which the

observer and the thing observed are still apparent to the mind, is only of a relativistic nature -- on variously ascending levels -- but it *is* however of a higher aspect of consciousness. Even during the state of 'cosmic consciousness', which according to Western definition is -- a complete identification and absorption in the total cosmic creation -- there is still an entity who *knows that he is one* with everything -- and that everything is himself. This falls just short of the ultimate realisation of the Self in which 'IS-ness' or 'I-ness' alone exists without any differentiation between the knower, known or knowing itself.

However even the effect of lesser states of mystical consciousness causes a catalytic elevation of spirit and -- in varying degrees -- a refining of the artistic and poetic, or moral and ethical sensibilities in man, thus serving as valuable and encouraging stepping stones along the 'Inward Path' -- from relative, to Absolute Knowledge or Truth.

Unfortunately today's mis-education system is not geared towards Self-understanding or intuitive development, but seems bent only on producing keen intellects. A keen intellect is not a necessary quality for mystical experience, and is often a major disadvantage. The mystical experience occurs to simple peasants and tradesmen as well as to profound thinkers. Although the peasant may have an inborn wisdom it is not intellectualised 'Knowledge' but a natural inner-knowing, and thus he is in a far better intuitive condition to receive mystical insight, having an uncluttered mind.

For those who have once had a revelatory insight, a moment of mystical consciousness is regarded as the most real and elevating experience of a lifetime: a state of being which -- by comparison with anything previously experienced since birth -- makes our everyday world either pale into a mirage-like unreality and relative insignificance, or opens it up into a multi-dimensional super-reality full of depth and richness of meaning. The latter was the experience of Jacob Boehme who saw into the 'interiors' of flowers and herbs and thus the healing properties of each were revealed to him.

**Yama, the outer god, is but a name;
the One Self, Inner Ruler, is true Yama.
Him who has satisfied that Inner God,
Yama, the outer god, will never touch.
Therefore, consult your own heart if you
are in doubt.**

MAHABHARATA

At the age of twenty-four I was completely ignorant about mystical consciousness and viewed such presumed delusions with a rabid scepticism. Therefore my about-face was all the more wondrous to me because of it.

It was in Cyprus, January 1964, during seven years of vagabondage around the world -- when it happened. One evening I was sitting gazing vacantly at the sea in the after-glow of sunset, having just finished a meal in an old Greek eatery, feeling very tranquil and relaxed, when I began to feel a strange pressure in my brain. It was as if some deliciously loving hand had crept numbingly under my skull and was pressing another brain on top of mine. I felt a thrilling liquidity of being and an indescribable sensation as if the whole universe was being poured into me, or rather, more as if the whole universe was welling-up out of me from some deep centre. My 'soul' thrilled and swelled and I found myself among and within the stars and planets and strange entities of space. Wave after wave of revelation swept through me, too fast for my conscious mind to record other than the joy and wonder of it. In those moments I lived and understood the meaning of the esoteric saying, "As above -- so below". Every single cell in my body -- wherever it was during that bodiless experience -- seemed to record and intuit the experience, retaining it like the negative film emulsion in a camera, and I was aware that every cell had its own consciousness, although collectively they were all subject to a controlling consciousness which was mine. And it seemed that the whole of humanity was in the same condition; each 'individual' believing in his own separate mind, but in reality still subject to a single controlling consciousness -- that of

MOMENT OF SILENCE

By Kavana

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

Absolute Consciousness Itself. (Recently, 1972, I read that scientists are now beginning to 'discover' that single cells can 'see' and 'hear' and have limited autonomous consciousness). The awe and wonder of the things experienced were beyond speech and I was unable and unwilling to profane the experience by attempting to express it even to my closest friends, although paradoxically I longed to do so.

But it was such that my whole secure, dry, cocksure intellectual world was turned topsy-turvy and inside-out, and for once in my life I was free and overjoyed with existence. All the following week I walked about in great happiness, with a crystal vision which gave greater luminosity to the air and all but made the people and the buildings around me transparent.

For the next few years I had to rethink everything I thought I knew and slowly absorbed the knowledge in my cells. But the intellect still demanded satisfaction, having been by-passed by the experience, and I devoured every book on cosmic consciousness and mysticism I could find, until I came across the writings of Martinus, a contemporary Danish mystic, some of whose experiences were very similar in content to mine. Thus my intellect was satisfied, I had taken no drug.

I was not having delusions, (not that the 'inner me' thought so for a moment) nor was I going mad. But someone else had seen what I had seen, had been where I had been.

As the experience soaked into me, filtering through my mind, my character and lifestyle began to change. Without conscious effort or intention, I began to withdraw from stimulants in my diet. I found myself growing away from blood-foods such as meat, fish and eggs ; and alcohol and tobacco seemed no longer valid or necessary to me -- this is merely to record the changes I noted in myself over the following months which seemed relative to that experience. I became consumed with the meaning of life. What is existence? What is reality? What kind of a weird creature am I? I could no longer take anything for granted. Thus, I found myself '*On the Path*'.

After a harrowing trek down through Africa, I felt that meditation was the next necessary step for self-unfoldment, although I was still hazy as to what meditation was all about. (Now after seven year's practice, I begin to get the first glimmerings of its true nature and quality). But in my time of need I came into contact with a Master on a visit from India, who initiated me into a mantric, or Holy Sound, technique of meditation.

From that time on I have taken guidance from many teachers in the world, but that does not necessarily bind me to follow any single one - for ever since I first saw and *experienced* a photograph of Bhagavan in a bookshop window (and I *had* to buy the book), his Presence and his Grace has slowly grown within me, and I have come to know who is my true inner Guru. Thus, though there is one in whom my heart most rejoices, to whom I may surrender before all, and whose radiance may bring me to the Light - that does not mean I must close my eyes, ears and heart to the rest of the universe. The formless Guru exists in every form. One may see the inner Guru manifesting in all outward things, be it the embodied Sage on a mountain, a child at play, or the sunlight in the chalice of a flower. My 'Path' is thus to try and experience the underlying *Truth* of everything - at any cost to my illusions.

**THE
MYSTIC
JAN VAN
RUYSBROECK**

By Gladys Dehm¹

**This great Flemish mystic taught that
one must abide in God for true understanding
and not seek to reach it through doctrine
or subtle reasoning. There is true
'naked understanding' when
the mind is emptied of its contents.**

THE great Flemish mystic Jan Van Ruysbroeck was born in the village of Ruysbroeck near Brussels in the year 1293.

He took Holy orders in 1317 and was a parish priest in Brussels for many years.

Jan Van Ruysbroeck led a very intense spiritual life ; gradually the exterior forms of worship having fallen away they gave place to a love for silence and solitude. This longing was fulfilled at the age of fifty when Jan Van Ruysbroeck, accompanied by two close friends returned to the old hermitage of Groenendaal situated in the forest of Soignies near Brussels. When he sought the calm of nature Jan Van Ruysbroeck had been a secular parish priest for twenty-six years.

In the quiet surroundings of the retreat the gentle priest devoted himself wholly and completely to the inner life. His holiness drew to him many kindred spirits and gradually disciples gathered about him seeking to share with their teacher the same ardent spiritual life. Jan Van Ruysbroeck remained at Groenendaal thirty-eight years, a lover of silence and contemplation. He sought to teach his disciples however, that the intense inner life must be accompanied by outer compassionate activity towards other creatures — the one balancing the other. Humble works were to be courted, opportunities for which arose in the priory where services of the 'most lowly kind' were not to be shunned.

Jan Van Ruysbroeck was spiritual father till the age of eighty-eight years. He died in 1381.

In his works the great mystic emphasizes the truth that the God-awakened man experiences on the highest level an undifferentiated unity. The stages leading up to this beatitude are clearly and loftily expressed. In 'The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage' there are three stages described leading to the mystical union — the virtuous life, the interior striving and the final bliss.

¹ formerly *Gladys de Meuter*.

During his lifetime Jan Van Ruysbroeck was accused of teaching a pantheistic vision of union. His teachings are aligned with those of Plotinus, the *Mandukya Upanishad*, Meister Eckhart and many others.

That which the mystic sought to make clear is the fact that intellectual perception of truth is not to be confused with the actual experience itself. Doctrinal teaching is the work of the intellect; experience of the undifferentiated unity soars above and beyond. The distinction between subject and object thereby disappears totally and what remains IS.

Although it may be interpreted differently the experience remains ever the same to every mystic who has been raised above intellectual-sensory perception.

In dynamic, fluent and poetical style the Flemish mystic leads the student along the stages leading to mystical union, and this Way is taught from the rich inner harvest of the mystic's own experiences.

The teachings recall those of other teachers: the 'deepest depth' signifies the infinite. The path is 'wayless' because it knows no division. The 'Onefold' clearly puts away any multiplicity. When the mind has been emptied of its contents there emerges a 'naked understanding.' The 'idle void' is that utter stillness when motion and activity cease. And of the sacred Silence is written: 'This is the dark silence in which all lovers are lost to themselves.'

Jan Van Ruysbroeck, lover of the Great Silence knew the Divine Embrace the glory of which he generously and sincerely sought to convey to others whose 'ears were opened and sight ready to behold.'

Together with kindred spirits St. John of the Cross and Meister Eckhart, Jan Van Ruysbroeck leaves the written teaching to those who desire and ardently seek the 'Wayless' truth.

The Adornment Of The Spiritual Marriage

He who loves God inwardly, who in fruitive love has possession of God, and who himself clings to active love living his whole life in virtue and righteousness: because of these three things and by the mysteries revealed by God, such a man enters into the God-beholding

life. Yea, that lover who is righteous and loves inwardly will please God so that He will be chosen and uplifted into a superessential contemplation in accordance with the Divine Way and in the Celestial Light. Such contemplation places us in clarity and purity beyond our understanding, for it is a unique adornment and a celestial crown, besides being the everlasting reward for our whole and virtuous life. None are able to attain to it through subtlety and reasoning, neither through any practice whatsoever. It is God whom it pleases to unite that one in His Spirit; it is God who enlightens one to behold Him, no one else. The Divine Nature is mysterious, it is everlastingly and actively seeing and loving in accordance with the Three Persons, and it has eternal fruition in a togetherness of the Persons in the unity of the Essence. In this togetherness lies the essential unity of God, all spirits inwardly drawn are one with God immersed in love, being the same as that which the Essence is to Itself in accordance with the mode of everlasting Bliss. In this highest unity of the divine Nature, every work in heaven and on earth is done by the heavenly Father who is its origin and beginning. He says in the depths of the spirit: Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; Go ye out to meet Him.

We will now explain these words in their relation to that superessential contemplation which is the origin of all holiness . . . No one will thoroughly understand its meaning through subtle reasoning and consideration; for all that which may be humanly understood, is alien to, and far below, the truth of which I speak. But he who is united to God, and who is in truth enlightened, he is able to comprehend the truth by itself. For so to understand God beyond all similitudes, as He is within Himself, is to be one with God, having no recourse to an intermediary, and shorn of any otherness which can be a hindrance or intermediary. Therefore I ask anyone who cannot comprehend this fully . . . not to be offended by it and leave it lie where it is: for that which I am about to reveal is truth, and Christ the Eternal Truth has himself uttered it many times, if we were only able to reveal and expound it correctly. Therefore, whoever desires to understand this must have suffered the death of himself, must abide in

God, and must turn his gaze inwardly towards the eternal light within his spirit where is revealed by Itself the Hidden Truth. For it is the will of the Heavenly Father that it should be revealed unto us ; He being the Father of Light He utters the everlasting one and deeply hidden Word within our spirit without means of an intermediary and without interruption. In this Word is contained Himself and all things. This Word signifies *Behold*. This heralds the coming forth and the emergence of the Son of Eternal Light, in whom is seen and contained all blessedness.

When we have become seeing we may joyfully behold the eternal arrival of our Bridegroom -- what is this arrival of our Bridegroom which is everlasting ? It is the ceaseless new emergence and new understanding, for the soil from which the Light shines, and which itself is the Light, is fruitful and life-giving, and therefore the Eternal Light renews and manifests itself without interruption in the depths of the spirit. Behold, every creaturely activity, and every practice of virtue, must here have an end ; for here the activity of God takes place alone in the lofty nobility of the spirit. Here there is naught else but an everlasting contemplation of that Light, through that Light and within that Light. The emergence of the Bridegroom is speedy that he is forever coming, and yet abiding within with immeasurable riches ; yet appearing anew, ceaselessly in His own Person with such radiance anew that it appears as though he had never been before . . . the gladness and joy which accompany the Bridegroom's coming are measureless and without limits for they contain Himself. This is the reason why once the eyes of the spirit have beheld its Bridegroom they can never be closed again. The spirit continues to behold and contemplate the secret glory of God, and the spirit is made so aware for the arrival of the Bridegroom that it becomes itself that Breadth of which it is aware. So it is that God is comprehended and contemplated through God ; wherein lies all our felicity -- thus we receive ceaselessly, the everlasting arrival of our Bridegroom within us.

. . . Thus the God-seeing strive after their Everlasting Image, after which they have been

**Know that the body is like a garment.
Go seek the wearer of the garment.**

**You are such that without the material
body you have a spiritual body : do not
then dread the going forth of the soul
from the body.**

RUMI

fashioned ; they see God in all things, distinguishing nothing else, in their simple beholding bathed in the Divine Radiance. This is the loftiest and the most salutary contemplation which can be attained in this life ; for in such contemplation, a man best retains mastery over himself and freedom.

Within the depths of the Ineffable is brought about a divine fruition. This fruition contains death, a doing away and dying into the Essential Nudity, where all the names of the Divine, all conditions, and all those images appearing in the mirror of Divine Truth melt into the One and the Ineffable, in waylessness and void of reason. For within this bottomless abyss of the Simplicity, all things are robed in fruitive clasp of an outpouring Love . . . and this is that waylessness which inward going spirits have chosen above all. It is within this dark silence that lovers lose themselves.

Jesus comes, and beholds the man, and discloses to him, in the light of belief that in His Godhead He is immeasurable and beyond knowing, beyond reaching, and abysmal, within uncreate Light and beyond every finite conception. In the active life this is the loftiest knowledge man may have of God ; that he should acknowledge, in the light of belief that God is beyond understanding and beyond knowledge. And it is in this light that Christ addresses the man's longing : Tarry not and come down, for this day I must be at thy house. This quick descent, to which he is called by God, is naught else but a descent through longing and through love into the depths of the Godhead to which no intelligence has access in the created light. But where intelligence has no access, longing and love, beyond everything that it

There is no death of anyone but only in appearance, even as there is no birth of anyone save only in seeming. The change from being to becoming seems to be birth, and the change from becoming to being seems to be death ; but in reality no one is ever born, nor does one ever die.

APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

can comprehend, then it rests and abides in God, and God abides in it. When the soul soars beyond the multiplicity of creatures, and beyond the activities of the senses, and beyond the light of nature, then it is embraced by Christ in the light of belief, and becomes awakened, and acknowledges that God is beyond knowing and beyond understanding. When it yearns for this incomprehensible God, then it is met by Christ, and is filled with His treasures. And when it loves and rests beyond all treasures, beyond itself, beyond all creatures, then it abides in God, and God abides in it.

The Book of Highest Truth

Within the inward man, adorned by God with virtues, and, beyond that, raised into a contemplative life, no intermediary exists between God and himself in his loftiest introversion except his awakened reason and a love rendered active. He adheres to God through these two things ; this is 'becoming one with God,' as Saint Bernard explains. But beyond reason and beyond active love, he is raised to a naked contemplation, and remains in essential love without activity. There he dwells one in love and one in spirit with God . . . through this essential unity with God his understanding in infinitely transcended ; and he shares a common life with all God-beholding men . . .

. . . Therefore also, such awakened men are, with a liberated spirit, made to transcend reason into a naked and imageless viewing wherein dwells the everlasting indrawing call of the Divine Unity, and with an imageless and naked understanding, they proceed

through all works and all practices, and all things, until they arrive at the peak of their spirits. There, their naked understanding is showered with the eternal Glory, even as the air is showered with sunshine. And the naked, uplifted will is transfigured and showered with abysmal love, even as fire passes through iron. And the naked, uplifted memory experiences its warm establishment in an abysmal Imagelessness . . . so is the created image united beyond reason in a threefold manner with its Everlasting Image, which is the source of its life and being ; and this source is preserved and owned, essentially and everlastingly, through a simple beholding in an imageless emptiness ; and so a man is raised beyond reason in a threefold way into the Unity, and in a onefold way into the Trinity.

Then there takes place the union without distinction. For you must grasp the Love of God not only as an outpouring with all goodness, and as indrawing again into the Unity ; but it is also, beyond all distinction, a fruition which is essential in the naked Essence of the Godhead. Consequently, enlightened men have discovered within themselves a contemplation which is essential beyond reason and having no reason, and a tendency which is fruitive and which goes through every condition and all being, and through which they drench themselves in a pathless abyss of fathomless blessedness, where the Divine Trinity have possession of Their Nature in the Unity which is essential.

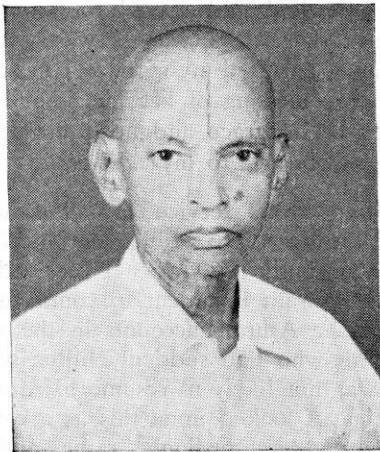
. . . by this fruition all spirits which are uplifted are melted away and pass as naught in the Essence of God, which of all essence is the Superessence.

. . . There light becomes darkness ; there the Trinity gives way to the Essential Unity, and dwells without distinction in fruition of essential beatitude.

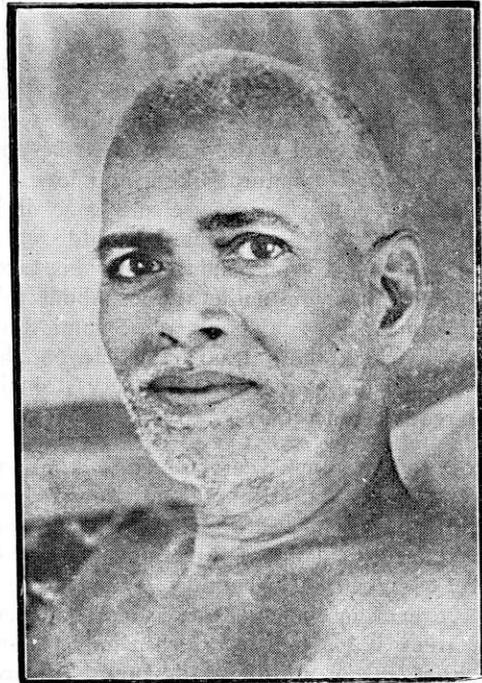
. . . The Divine Essence knows no waxing nor waning, nor can anything be added to It or detracted from it.

. . . There all raised spirits are, in their superessence, one blessedness and one fruition with God without distinction ; and there this blessedness is so onefold that there can be no distinction experienced at all.

How I Came to Bhagavan



By G. Santhanam Aiyengar



UNTIL my thirty-second year I did not have any special inclination for spiritual pursuits. I was living with my wife in Tanjavur where I was a teacher. But suddenly my outlook on life changed. I distinctly remember even now the exact date on which it happened. It started with a vivid sense of the impermanence of all the things which I had valued in life. I realised that God is the only unchanging Reality. I therefore began to adore Him and to pray to Him in the usual manner by reciting hymns of praise like the *Dakshinamurti Stotra* and *Subrahmanya Ekujanga Stotra* of Sankaracharya, the *Dhyana Sopana* of Vedanta Desika and *Mukundamala* of Kulasekhara. Sometimes tears flowed from my eyes while reciting them.

Shortly after this my wife died. Although I was only thirty-three at that time I did not remarry. The worldly life had lost its charm for me. I continued my daily prayers. To the hymns of praise I added *nama japa* or the repetition of the name of Rama into which I was initiated by one Guha Das of Sengali-

puram. I maintained a diary in which I used to note down the time spent by me daily in prayer, meditation, etc. I devoted on an average six hours a day for these practices. Although my hymns and prayers were addressed to several gods, Rama was the god for whom I had a natural liking and love. I used to sit before his picture and gaze at it intently. On such occasions I would see a halo of stars and bright lights round his face. Sometimes I saw him smile at me. About this time I came across a book of Swami Ram Tirtha in which there was an article on the *True Self*. This appealed to me very strongly and I read it repeatedly.

After about two years of this kind of *sadbana* I prayed to Rama one day before going to bed to vouchsafe His grace to me and to uplift me spiritually. I prostrated before his picture with extreme devotion. That night I had a dream in which I saw some thatched sheds, trees and a hall in which a holy person was sitting in the middle of devotees. I heard a voice telling me to wake up and go immediately to see Sri Ramana Maharshi who was bestowing His grace on all. This dream made such a deep impression on me that I caught the next train to Tiruvannamalai and arrived there the following day.

I had previously visited Tiruvannamalai on my way to Tirupati, but I had not then heard of the Maharshi or His Ashram and had therefore gone away after seeing the Arunachaleswara temple and Pavala Kunru. When, therefore, I reached the Ashram I was surprised to see the very same buildings and trees which I had seen in my dream. After taking my bath I went to the hall and sat before Bhagavan. As I looked at Him I saw around Him a halo which was exactly like the one I used to see around Rama. During the two days of my stay I spent almost all my time sitting before Him experiencing a strange peace and tranquillity. When I took leave of Bhagavan I implored Him to bestow His grace upon me. He nodded His head in assent.

Gradually it began to dawn upon me that it was Rama who had directed me to Bhagavan and that Rama and Ramana were one and the same. But when the person who

Bhagavan : It is true that the work meant to be done by us will be done by us. But it is open to us to be free from the joys or pains, pleasant or unpleasant consequences of the work, by not identifying ourselves with the body or that which does the work. If you realise your true nature and know that it is not you that do any work, you will be unaffected by the consequences of whatever work the body may be engaged in according to destiny or past karma or divine plan, however you may call it. You are always free and there is no limitation of that freedom."

Day by Day with Bhagavan, p. 97

had initiated me into *nama japa* came to know of my visit to Sri Ramanasramam he was displeased and warned me that I would meet with some disaster. I, however, began to study books about Bhagavan and went to the Ashram regularly every year during the *Jayanti* and the *Mahapuja*, staying for two or three days. Once I came at the time of the *Deepam* Festival and stayed for seven days. On one of these days, when I was alone with Bhagavan, I narrated my story to Him and had the supreme blessing of hearing from His lips that I had His grace and need not fear any disaster or obstacle to my *sadbana*.

I retired from service in 1956 when I attained the age of sixty, but continued to live at Tanjavur until 1960 when I received a call from the Ashram President to come and help him with the Ashram accounts in the absence of Chelliah who had suddenly fallen seriously ill and was not likely to resume his duties for a long time. I looked upon this as a call from Bhagavan and accordingly came and took charge of the Ashram accounts. I have since then been attending to this work more or less continuously and at the same time devoting as much time as possible to prayer, meditation and Self-enquiry as taught by Bhagavan. I also teach the boys of the *Vedapatasala*, English, Tamil and arithmetic for an hour daily. I wish and hope to spend my remaining days doing such service to Sri Bhagavan !

SIVANANDA

LAHARI

WAVES OF BLISS

ARISING FROM

DEVOTION TO SIVA

We published in our last issue an English version of ten stanzas selected by Sri Bhagavan from the Vivekachudamani of Sankaracharya. In this issue we present a similar free rendering of ten slokas chosen by Sri Bhagavan from another work of Sankaracharya, entitled Sivananda Lahari or 'Waves of Bliss arising from Devotion to Siva'. The numbers in brackets indicate the numbers of the stanzas in the original.

TEXT

1. The seeds of the ankola tree make their way back to the parent tree, the needle is drawn to the lodestone, the chaste wife follows her husband, the creeper clings to the tree and the river flows towards the lord of rivers (i.e., the Ocean). When, in like manner, one's thoughts are drawn without intermission to the lotus feet of the Lord, that state is called *bhakti* (devotion). (61)

2. Firm devotion to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord produces, like clouds, a shower of bliss. When this shower fills one's mind, his crop of life yields a good harvest, not so that of others. (76)

3. The worship of gods who are subject to births and deaths does not make one happy

at all. There is no doubt about it. Only those who adore Samba,¹ the Lord who has transcended birth and death, enjoy supreme bliss. They are indeed blessed. (83)

4. Discussions such as : 'Is there really a pot? Or is the pot only a lump of clay? Or is it merely an aggregate of atoms? Is there only smoke on the mountain? Or is there also fire? Is there such a thing as cloth? Or is there only thread?' -- will these save you from the terrors of death? You are needlessly tiring your throat by these argumentative discussions. If you are wise you will

¹Siva. Literally one who is inseparable from the Mother.

simply adore Sambhu (Siva) and enjoy Supreme bliss. (6)

5. O Lord of Bhavani! Vaivasvata (the god of death) runs away from Thy devotee fearing that Thou wouldst kick him again in the chest. The gods wave before him lights from the bright gems set in their crowns when they bow down to him. Liberation (*mukti*) clings to him like a bride in an everlasting embrace. Is there anything impossible for one whose mind is fixed upon Thy lotus feet? (65)

6. One may be born a man or a god or an animal of the mountains and forests, or a mosquito or a cow or a worm or a bird or any other creature. What does the body matter if the mind takes delight in the flood of supreme bliss brought by the remembrance of Thy lotus feet? (10)

7. One may practise austerities in a cave or a house or in the open air, or in a forest, or on the top of a mountain, or standing in water or surrounded by fires, but what is the use? O Sambhu! Real Yoga is the state in which one's mind constantly abides at Thy feet. And one who has reached this state is a great Yogi. He alone enjoys bliss. (12)

8. A man of poor understanding goes into a deep lake or an uninhabited and fearful forest, or wanders about on big mountains in search of flowers for Thy worship. O Lord of Uma! No one knows how to offer to Thee the single lotus that is one's heart and remain blissful. What a wonder! (9)

9. What does it matter, O Lord, whether one is a student or a householder or an ascetic with matted locks, or anyone else? If the lotus that is one's heart is surrendered to Thee, O Sambhu, Lord of Souls, Thou belongest to him and bearest for him his burden of *samsara*. (11)

10. My primordial ignorance has, by Thy grace, fled, and sweet wisdom has entered by heart. O Wearer of the Crescent Moon! I contemplate and adore forever Thy lotus feet which not only bring prosperity to Thy devotees, but are also the means of Liberation. (91)

OBEDIENCE

By paul rePS

THE master Bankei's talks were attended to not only by Zen students but by persons of all ranks and sects. He never quoted sutras nor indulged in scholastic dissertations. Instead his words were spoken directly from his heart to the hearts of his listeners.

His large audiences angered a priest of the Nichiren sect because the adherents had left to hear about Zen. The self-centred Nichiren priest came to the temple, determined to debate with Bankei.

'Hey, Zen teacher!' he called out. 'Wait a minute. Whoever respects you will obey what you say, but a man like myself does not respect you. Can you make me obey you?'

'Come up beside me and I will show you,' said Bankei.

Proudly the priest pushed his way through the crowd to the teacher.

Bankei smiled. 'Come over to my left side.'

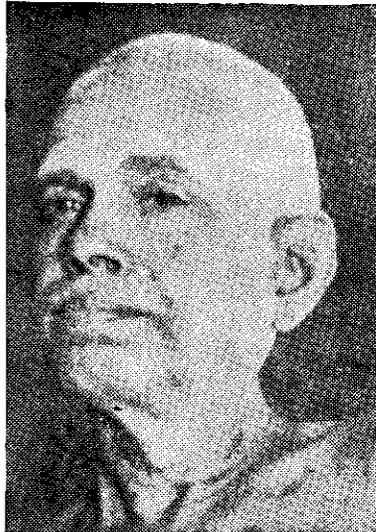
The priest obeyed.

'No,' said Bankei, 'we may talk better if you are on the right side. Step over here.'

The priest proudly stepped over to the right.

'You see,' observed Bankei, 'you are obeying me and I think you are a very gentle person. Now sit down and listen.'

—From *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*.



INITIATION BY LOOK

By U. M. G.

The Jnani's look has tremendous power as witnessed by countless devotees of Sri Bhagavan. The author describes the experience of three well-known devotees.

IT is said that initiation is of four kinds -- by look, by touch, by mantra and I think, in dream.

It is conceivable that the choice is determined by circumstances and temperament. Where the disciples are few, the teacher may like to impart it by touch. But when there are many, it may be impractical. It is said that the guru imbibes the sins of his pupils through repeated touch. Sri Ramakrishna is stated to have said that by giving initiation by touch to so many of his pupils, he had to take upon himself their sins. He said this, I think, in particular after touching or being touched repeatedly by Girish Ghose, the celebrated dramatist-disciple, who had lived rather a fast life in the earlier years.

Sri Ramana's look was *most* potent.

I will take in this article only three instances, out of the innumerable ones that can be taken to show the potency of the look. I take the cases of Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Ramdas and Arthur Osborne.

Initiation, which is but an expansion of consciousness, is to me, a manifestation of the ever present Grace. I take the first instance from *Tapovan Prasad* of October, 1971 and quote in full in case devotees are interested.

Swami Chinmayananda was asked when he had met Sri Ramana and he replied :--

"During my college days, while in the South, once I took a 'Travel-as-you-like' ticket. During my tour, I heard two people praising a rishi of Tiruvannamalai. I thought that rishis generally lived in the Himalayas. I felt curious and I inquired about him, his ashram etc. Some days later, I reached Tiruvannamalai by noon and went to the Ashram. When I entered the room, it was dark. Everybody sat motionless, eyes closed in meditation. I was unable to see anything because I had just come in from the blazing sun outside. I found myself seated before a cot on which somebody was reclining. I glanced at his feet, then his body and then slowly at his face. His eyes were half-closed and now and then he fanned himself. After a while he turned his face and just glanced at me. *It seemed like a casual glance -- but the effect was electrifying!*

Something happened within me which I could not describe. I felt as though that glance made me aware of my stupidities, my vulgarities. It made me conscious of myself. When I left, I knew, I was a completely changed man. But I denied this experience to myself, thinking that saints

knew how to hypnotise and this must be the case and afterwards I forgot all about it. Sometime later I was at Tapovan's feet when he was doing the *Mandukya Karika*. I had a similar experience after six or seven years of my stay with him. This experience reminded me of Ramana Maharshi and I went to Tiruvannamalai when he was ill with cancer. I had his *darshan* but did not ask him anything because he seldom spoke. After a few years I went to see him again, but he had already attained Maha-nirvana." (pp. 43-44. *Ibid*). (Italics mine).

The second case -- that of Swami Ramdas -- I take from *The Mountain Path* itself of Jan. '72, (p. 54-55) and I quote in brief, because the reader can refer to the original for a fuller reference. The year is 1922 :

"Maharshi was sitting on a raised seat. He had only a loin-cloth and nothing else on his body. Ramdas paid his respects to him and sat down. A few minutes afterwards Ramdas got up, went near the Maharshi and standing before him with folded hands prayed, "Swami, I need your grace." *The Maharshi then looked into Ramdas's eyes intensely for one or two minutes.* Ramdas's whole body thrilled and he felt a joy which he could not express in words *Maharshi poured light and grace into Ramdas profusely through his eyes,* and nodded his head from side to side so as to convey that he had answered Ramdas's prayer. He did not speak a word.

From there Ramdas went straight to the Arunachala hill and remained in a cave for twenty days. Day and night he was repeating the *Ram Mantra* without a break. After twenty days, when he came out of the cave one morning, he saw the light of God everywhere. His eyes were filled with that light and he was full of joy and ecstasy. He now sees God everywhere and everybody as God." (Italics mine).

Mr. Osborne's experience I quote in brief, in his own words :

"Bhagavan was reclining on his couch and I was sitting in the front row before it. He sat up, facing me, and his narrowed eyes

pierced into me, penetrating, intimate, with an intensity I cannot describe.

Next morning, for the first time, sitting before him in the hall, I tried to follow his teaching . . . I thought it was I who had decided. I did not at first realise that it was *the initiation by look* that had vitalised me and changed my attitude. Indeed, I had heard only vaguely of this initiation and paid little heed to what I had heard. Only later did I learn that other devotees also had had such an experience and that with them also it had *marked the beginning* of active *sadhana* under Bhagavan's guidance."

(*The Mountain Path*, Oct. '66, p. 352)

This is how Mr. Osborne explained how he came to Bhagavan, and stayed at his feet. I believe Paul Brunton gave a similar experience in his famous book, *A Search In Secret India*.

I have taken only three instances to illustrate this point, out of innumerable such cases. Many devotees, still living, would be able to supplement this from their personal knowledge.

It is to the great regret of the present writer (as it was with Chadwick) that many more words and incidents and anecdotes of the Master were not recorded for posterity. It is usually like this with all Great Teachers of mankind. When they are living, one is so enamoured of their presence that no-one thinks of posterity. Alas, when they are gone, one cherishes every word and incident remembered. I, for one, wish Suri Nagamma's letters were *all* published, instead of the mere 75 chosen.

I hope all devotees will record their experiences with Bhagavan, and his words as far as they remember.

I conclude : that this is the personal belief (call it intuition) of the writer, that as -- (1) Bhagavan lives, (2) his Grace is always there ; whosoever nowadays meditates on his photo, and particularly on his eyes, will, if he is deemed fit, receive the initiation through the eyes of the photo, as if he were still alive !

THE MAN IN THE SYCAMORE TREE¹

An Appraisal

By Muz Murray-Gardenchild

A NEW insight into the life of Bro. Thomas Merton is given by his life-long friend, author and photographer. Edward Rice, who describes him as a 'beatnik, peacenik, Trappist Buddhist monk' in a book bearing the title of this article, in which he supplies many candid and striking pen-and-camera portraits of Merton and his friends during both his lay-life and monastic years. The book is aptly sub-titled, 'An Entertainment with Pictures' and it is just that; even the inclusion of several humorous and Picassoesque cartoons of hermaphrodites and females dancing in the nude, which Merton used to enjoy doodling as a student.

This frank biography may be an eye-opener for many who know Merton only as a monastic recluse and through his reflective theological writings. It reveals him to be a man of burning emotions, passionately involved in the worldly spectacle of suffering and social injustice. He believed in the 'assertion of one's rights as a human being' and thus committed himself unreservedly to the efforts of the War Resisters and Peace Movements. Being always a champion of the underdog, Merton identified himself in turn with socially re-active elements such as the beat generation, the hip culture, the racially oppressed and even with the militant Black Power Movement. His anguished identification with the mistreated blacks of America was so strong that he wrote to a friend: "I am trying to

figure out a way I can get nationalised as a Negro as I am tired of belonging to the humiliating white race . . ." and again, "I am going to write to the Government about resigning from the human race. Or at least the white part."

Such extravagant attitudes seem to have characterised most of Merton's life. Even in his later years when he soberly remarked that as time goes on, 'one comes to look upon the world in general and the Church in particular with a kind of indifference that would shock many,' he was still capable of flamboyantly posturising for a photograph outside the monastery in which he is shown to be 'calling down the wrath of God upon warmongers and racists before a statue of St. Joseph.'

Rice writes endearingly of Merton in a concise, modern idiom, and although hiding nothing negative, there is a reflective gentleness in his approach and a sympathetic sharing of spiritual viewpoint. The biography covers their student days together, which seems to have been the usual round of wine, women and bawdy songs (with Merton at the forefront) during which he was, "Noisy, authoritative and sure of himself. But behind it all was that relentless, restless search to find himself, to learn who he was."

¹*The Man in the Sycamore Tree* by Edward Rice, is published by Image Books, a division of Doubleday & Co., Inc., New York. Price: \$1.95.

Beneath the brash exterior Merton was, in his own words: "filled with a deep, vague, undefined sense of spiritual distress, as if I had a deep wound running inside me and it had to be staunched . . ." To stem the flow he found solace in visiting many monasteries for short periods and became enchanted by the simplicity of their lifestyle. The idea of *giving up everything* deeply appealed to him and finally he took the plunge. After being turned down by the Franciscans because of his wayward background, he turned to the Cistercian Trappists who overlooked it, and -- at the age of 27 -- he entered the monastery of Our Lady of Gethsemani, where, as he said of himself, ". . . the one man in the world most unlikely to become a priest" found his spiritual home and vocation, and spent the next 27 years 'stripped down to the barest essentials' for living.

Compared with the world outside, this was a paradisiacal life for Merton, but being a rebel at heart he eventually found himself at odds with the monastic authorities when he felt that the daily Rule was being enforced by the letter and not by the spirit, and that business considerations had overcome the original purity of the abbey. His writings also came to be heavily censored by his superiors and he was not allowed to write frankly on themes which had become important to him, such as war and peace, violence, and non-violence, racism and later Buddhism and Zen. Thus he was forced to circulate his work privately. He was also clandestinely writing inspiring propaganda for the negro cause, considering Black Power to be: "one of the few fanatical movements for which I am able to have any respect whatsoever." The Movement however, looked upon him with some reserve and one of their leading spokesmen, Eldridge Cleaver, although particularly touched by Merton, thought him to be "Alternately confused, transpired and some kind of nut."

In spite of his 'all too human' worldly failings, in his writings Merton was a channel for sublime and penetrating glimpses of reality. His interest in Eastern philosophies was stimulated by a long correspondence with

leading Zen Buddhist scholar Dr. D. T. Suzuki, whose influence led him to embrace the Buddhist way of thought, which finally culminated in his becoming a 'free-lance monk' and travelling to the East to 'drink from ancient sources of monastic vision and experience'.

In India it appears that Merton experienced states of consciousness beyond words and linguistic conceptions and this reflected in his later writings on Zen. In an essay entitled "Transcendent Experience" he says:

"It becomes overwhelmingly important for us to become detached from our everyday conception of ourselves as potential subjects for special and unique experiences, or as candidates for realization, attainment and fulfilment. In other words, this means that a spiritual guide worth his salt will conduct a ruthless campaign against all forms of delusion arising out of a spiritual ambition and self-complacency which aim to establish the ego in spiritual glory. That is why a St. John of the Cross is so hostile to visions, ecstasies and all forms of 'special experience'. That is why the Zen Masters say: 'If you meet the Buddha kill him'."

Merton understood that in Zen enlightenment one does not *see* the Buddha during revelation, but rather one *is* Buddha, "for there is no longer any image, and consequently nothing to see, no one to see it, and a Void in which no image is even conceivable." In his letters Merton told friends that the Tibetan monks saw him as a Buddha, and perhaps in his own experiences he had come to meet the Buddha-nature in himself. Why else would he have knowingly touched the live wire which caused his mysterious death in a room in Bangkok -- unless it was to kill the Buddha?

Rice reports that a mediumistic Protestant Minister from Connecticut said that Merton came to him shortly after his death and told him that he had touched the wire in a "sub-conscious wish to join the Infinite -- I spent too much time looking in the wrong place," said Merton, "I should have looked within."

SCIENCE AND MYSTICISM

By Prof. Abinash Chandra Bose

Science and mysticism have different roles but they can work side by side, without clashing. However, the mystic aims at transcending the mind while science is confined within its limits.

SCIENCE seeks knowledge based on reason and logic. The scientist by means of observation, experiment and rational thinking arrives at an intellectual mastery over things. The history of science is the growing accumulation of such knowledge. Science is objective. Even when the scientist studies himself, he does so with detachment.

This makes an important difference between science and mysticism. The mystic's knowledge is Self-knowledge (*atmajnana*). So while the scientist needs intellectual training for correct observation and inference, the mystic needs spiritual training which helps him to emerge out of the darkness created by his ignorance. Through this training he comes to realise his true state. Difficulties in the path of this realisation are created in his mind by lingering darkness in the form of doubts. He has to overcome these. In the words of the *Bhagavad Gita*, a man can "establish himself in spiritual harmony (*yoga*) and stand erect (in spiritual strength and dignity) by tearing the doubt, born of ignorance (*ajnana*), with the sword of knowledge (*jnana*) which lies within himself." (IV. 42).

"There is nothing so pure as *jnana* (spiritual knowledge)", says the *Bhagavad Gita*. "Having obtained *jnana* one quickly attains the supreme peace (*para shanti*) of mind."

The progress of science in different ways is found in the succession of man's intellectual victories in the world of phenomena. For example, his transport system has developed from his use of animals, forced to carry loads on their backs, to spacecraft taking men to the moon and attempting to take them to remote planets.

These and other machines have been hailed as marks of great human progress, even of the

evolution of man. But science has not stopped with these. It has also made tremendous progress in the production of weapons of destruction, from the spear and the sword to rifles and guns, and, further on, to the atom bomb, the hydrogen bomb and nuclear weapons. The scientist takes great pains to produce, on a vast scale, not only machines to help men live a happy life, but also the means of total destruction.

It is beyond doubt that the indifference of science to spiritual values, and ethics, may, with increasing knowledge and power, turn out to be most disastrous for the human species. Distinguishing between 'vulgar logic' which treats man as an animal wearing clothes, and 'pure logic', Carlyle says (in his *Sartor Resartus*): "To the eye of vulgar logic, what is man? A carnivorous Biped that wears Breeches. To the eye of Pure Reason, what is he? A Soul, a Spirit, and Divine Apparition."

The mystic attains the highest fulfilment (*para siddhi*) through Self-knowledge. A Vedic sage says: "One is free from the fear of death, who has known the Atman -- serene, ageless, ever youthful." (*Atharva Veda*, X. 8. 44). By holding on to spiritual knowledge one comes to possess Divine Nature (*Bhagavad Gita* 14. 2). A sage in the *Yajur Veda* called Vena, (literally, the loving one) is said "to have had a vision of the Ultimate Reality (*tat sat*) in which all find one single home" (YV. Vs. 32. 8). Another sage says: "I have known this Great Being, shining like the sun beyond darkness. By knowing Him alone one transcends mortality. There is no other way to go." (YV. Vs. 31. 18).

These are from ancient records of the mystic's realisation of the Ultimate Reality. From the fact that this knowledge can be discovered through a mystic experience, it is evident that only a mystic can test the genuineness of the knowledge, and certainly not a logician or rationalist who has no means of understanding what transcends the mind. Hence the rejection of mysticism by a scientist who is no more than a scientist, is irrelevant to the question of its hold on spiritual truth. If judging by results one finds the good that mysticism can

do, one cannot oppose it on the ground that it does not follow science.

The supremely pure spiritual knowledge is reflected in the mystic in his character and life. People are drawn to him by the atmosphere of serenity and happiness which emanates from him (his *darshan*). No words are needed for communication, silence becomes a medium. His *darshan* or presence is a transforming power.

To this influence is added the love that mystics entertain for one and all. It is said in the *Veda* that it was out of love (*prema*) that the *Rishis* revealed the words of the *Veda*, which lay hidden in the depths of their being, to the world.

Nobody can speak of progress or evolution in the history of mysticism from the remote past to this day. The realisation of spiritual truth and attainment of spiritual and moral perfection are repeated from age to age.

There is persistence of the experience which forms a spiritual bond among men living in the remote past and in remote places at the present time. The unanimity in giving expression to this experience so hard to express, by mystics widely separated in time, race, and tradition, should be a convincing proof to scientists and rationalists. The attitude to mysticism has been hostile among certain people owing to their confusing the mystical with what is misty, and the mystic with the miracle-monger. Some have deliberately promoted the occult to a place beside mysticism. Occultism claims to be science without the rigid control of the intellect. Some, however, are of the opinion that the occult is not spiritual, while mysticism finds its validity as the direct realisation of spiritual knowledge -- a realisation which is not known to science.

There is no reason why science and mysticism should not work side by side, each limited to its own sphere of activity. It is interesting to find a leading rationalist, Bertrand Russell, advocating this view (in his *Mysticism and Logic*):

"The greatest men who have been philosophers have felt the need of both science and mysticism."

SANATSUJATIYA¹

CHAPTER II

1. Dhritarashtra :

Who is in a state of (true) Silence?² What is (true) Silence? O wise sage! Kindly explain the nature of (true) Silence. Does a learned man, O Silent Recluse, attain the state of (true) Silence by abstaining from speech? How is Silence to be observed?

2. Sanatsujata :

That which neither speech nor thought can comprehend is (true) silence. That from which the Vedas and the (world) arose is self-resplendent, O King!

3. Dhritarashtra :

Does a twice-born person (a Brahmin) who studies (or chants) the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda incur sin when he does sinful acts or does he not?

4. Sanatsujata :

O intelligent man! Neither the Rig Veda nor the Yajur Veda nor the Sama Veda will save him from the result of his sinful acts. I am telling you the truth.

5. The Vedas do not absolve from sins the hypocrite, who commits sinful acts. The Vedas abandon him just as nestlings desert their nests when they grow wings.

6. Dhritarashtra :

O wise sage! If the Vedas have no power to save one who studies them why do the Brahmins always boast of their efficacy?

7. Sanatsujata :

This world, O noble soul, truly consists of special names and forms of That (i.e. Brahman). After reaching this conclusion the Vedas hasten to explain that, nevertheless, It is entirely different³ from the world.

8. It is for realizing That, that austerities, sacrifices, etc., have been prescribed. By these a wise man acquires merit. After expiating his sins by his merits he becomes enlightened through knowledge.

9. The wise man realizes the Self through Knowledge. When he adopts other means it shows that he desires to enjoy the fruit of his actions. Carrying with him the reward of every act done by him in this world, he goes to the next world and enjoys it there. Afterwards he comes back to this world.

10. The reward of austerities (*tapas*) practised in this world is enjoyed in the next. The austerities of (true) Brahmins are very efficacious, while those of others are not so.

11. Dhritarashtra :

How can extremely efficacious austerities be made perfect? Please tell me how I should understand this.

12. Sanatsujata :

When austerities are not tainted (by selfish motives) they become perfect. They also become very effective.

13. O Kshatriya! All these matters about which you are asking me are rooted in austerities. Those who (truly) know the Vedas attain supreme immortality by virtue of their austerities.

14. Dhritarashtra :

O Sanatsujata! You have told me about pure austerities. Now tell me about impure austerities so that I may know the ancient secret of austerities.

15. Sanatsujata :

O King! Twelve obstacles (to spiritual progress), seven inglorious qualities and twelve good qualities such as knowledge are described in the scriptures and are known to the twice-born.

¹ Continued from the last issue.

² There is a play upon the words *mauna* (silence) and *muni* (a silent recluse) in this stanza which cannot be brought out in translation. The word *mauna* means abstention from speech as well as the highest beatitude.

³ i.e., in spite of its appearing as names and forms.

16. Anger, lust, greed, desire for worldly knowledge, cruelty, envy, pride, grief, longing for sense enjoyments, jealousy and contempt for others -- these twelve should always be avoided by a virtuous person.

17. O Indra among kings ! Each of these circles round a man waiting for an opportunity to assail him like a hunter stalking game.

18. One who always thinks of sense enjoyments, one who rises by pulling down others, one who regrets a gift made by him, one who is mean, one who has little understanding, one who glories in sense enjoyments, one who hates his wife -- these are the persons in whom one finds the seven inglorious qualities.

19. Wisdom, truthfulness, sense-control, scriptural learning, absence of malice, modesty, fortitude, absence of envy, observance of religious ceremonies, gifts, steadfastness, mind-control -- these are the twelve great beneficial qualities to be cultivated by a Brahmin.

20. He who never abandons these twelve good qualities can control the whole world. Those who possess three, two or even one of these will be gradually liberated and attain the state of silence.

21 to 23. Self-control lies in opposing the eighteen bad qualities, namely, falsehood, malignity, hankering after sense-enjoyments, ill-will towards everybody, ignorance, discontent, hatred of the world, excessive pride, quarrelsomeness, cruelty, false accusation, talkativeness, vain regret, impatience, fickleness, lack of learning, doing sinful acts and violence. He who is free from these bad qualities is regarded by the wise as a man of self-control.

24. Egotism is composed of these eighteen bad qualities which are opposed to self-control.

25. Renunciation is of six kinds which are all extremely good. The third is difficult, by which one transcends misery and accomplishes everything.

26. Giving away one's son and wealth to a deserving and needy person is the first kind of renunciation. The second is making gifts in the course of religious ceremonies ordained by the Vedas and other scriptures, with a strong sense of dispassion.

27. The third, O Indra among kings, is the renunciation of desires. One who has achieved the six kinds of renunciation is a careful (i.e. mindful) person. Mindfulness consists of eight qualities.

Note : Only three out of the six kinds of renunciation have been described. The text here seems to be incomplete.

28.-29. The bad qualities mentioned in connection with self-control should be abandoned. The abandonment of bad qualities is brought about by mindfulness⁴ which has eight characteristics, namely truthfulness, contemplation (*dhyana*), *samadhi*, investigation,⁵ dispassion, non-stealing, celibacy (*brahmacharya*) and non-acceptance (of gifts).

30. O Indra among kings ! Be a man of truth. The worlds are based on truth. They are the faces of truth. Immortality is based on truth.

31. One should turn away from evil and lead an austere life. This is the conduct ordained by the Lord. Truthfulness is the chief⁶ virtue practised by pious men.

32. When austerities are accompanied by the good qualities and are free from the bad qualities mentioned above they are very efficacious and perfect.

33. O Indra among kings ! I shall answer your question briefly. Such austerities are pure and overcome sins, birth, old age and death.

34. O Bharata ! Happy is the man who becomes free from the (distractions) of the five senses, the (distractions of the) mind and the (hauntings and fears of the) past and future.

35.-36. Dhritarashtra :

Some (Brahmins) talk highly of the five Vedas, including the Puranas among them, some talk of the four Vedas, some of the three Vedas, some of the two Vedas and some of one Veda. Some do not accept the Vedas. Tell me which of these I should regard as the best Brahmin ?

⁴ The word *apramāda* is the opposite of *pramāda*, which means forgetfulness or inadvertence.

⁵ *Lit.* question (*chodyam*).

⁶ *Lit.* the only virtue.

37. Sanatsujata :

O Indra among kings ! It was because the one real Veda, the only truth, was not properly understood that several Vedas came into existence. Rare is the person who inheres in Truth.

38. He who knows the Truth is a truly wise man. Gifts, scriptural learning and religious sacrifices are motivated by greed.

39. The desires of those who deviate from truth remain unfulfilled. It is because Truth is not realized that religious ceremonies have been extensively prescribed.

40. A Brahmin who studies much is to be regarded merely as a man of many words. Only he who does not deviate from Truth is to be regarded as a true Brahmin.

41. O Best of men ! The Vedas are themselves⁷ the authority in these matters.⁸ Therefore wise men (*Aryas*) who have studied the Vedas follow them (literally). They do not know what is to be known (i.e., Truth or Brahman).

Note : This and the following two verses are highly alliterative with a play on the words *vid* (to know) and its derivatives *Veda*, *Vedyam* (what is known) and *Vedita* (the knower). The meaning is not explicit.

42. There is hardly anyone who (truly) knows the Vedas.⁹ What is known¹⁰ can neither know itself nor (the real import of) the Vedas. He who knows (the real import of) the Vedas knows also what is known.¹¹ He who knows only what is known (i.e. the non-Self) does not know the Truth.

43. He who truly knows the Vedas knows also what is known.¹² But neither the Vedas nor those who merely study them truly know Him (Brahman). Still, the Brahmins who have studied the Vedas try to know their import with the help of the Vedas themselves.

44. Just as a branch of a tree is useful for pointing out the crescent moon, so also the Vedas are considered to be indirectly useful for realizing the eternal and Supreme Self which is the goal of life.

45. I know that a person who is clever and can expound (the Vedas) is called a

Brahmin. But only he who knows the Supreme Brahman is a (true) Brahmin.

46. This (Brahman) should never be sought for in what is not the Self.¹³ It is not to be looked for even in the Vedas. Only then does one see Him, the Lord.

47. One should silently meditate on Brahman, absolutely free from desires. Brahman will then reveal Itself to him and he will become the all-comprehensive (Brahman).

48. One becomes a *muni* (i.e. a silent recluse) by virtue of one's silent quietude, not merely by living in the forest. He who knows the Imperishable (Brahman) is the best of *munis*.

49. One who brings out (*vyakarana*) all the meanings (of words) is called a grammarian (*vaiyakarana*). Bringing out (or manifesting) is really the work of Brahman. But it is also, as a matter of courtesy, attributed to a grammarian.

Note : Here too there is an alliteration. There is a play in this stanza on the words *vyakarana* (grammar) and *vaiyakarana* (grammarian) which cannot be brought out in translation. The meaning is not explicit.

50. One who can clearly see¹⁴ all the worlds is a seer of all (*sarvadarsi*). But the wise man who inheres in Brahman, the Reality, is a knower of all (*sarvavid*).

51. O Kshatriya ! Even one who has acquired only (the qualifications such as) wisdom,¹⁵ realizes Brahman. So also one who follows the method laid down in the Vedas.¹⁶ This is what I say, O King !

(To be continued)

⁷ i.e., they are regarded as the ultimate authority.

⁸ i.e., religious and spiritual matters.

⁹ i.e., their real import.

¹⁰ The object or the non-Self, here the intellect.

¹¹ The non-Self.

¹² The objective world.

¹³ i.e., the body or the senses or the external world.

¹⁴ i.e., has acquired the power of seeing the various worlds like *Bhuh*, *Bhuvah*, etc.

¹⁵ See stanza 19.

¹⁶ i.e., hearing, reflecting and practising.

YOU ARE

THE SILENCE

By Sunya

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI says that the inner silence is ego-surrender, ego-free living. You are the Silence! Solitude is of the Self. One might be in the thick of the world and yet maintain perfect serenity of mind. Such a person is always in Solitude. A man attached to things will never get solitude, wherever he may be. A desire-free man is fear-free and death-free and always in solitude. *Mouna* is a state or mode of Being, which transcends thought and speech. It is mediafree contemplation without mental activities. *Sunya*-silence is ever-speaking -- always Self-radiating. It is the perennial flow of language (*Shabd*). It is interrupted by speaking, for words obstruct this mute language (or hide our conscious awareness). You speak and it becomes muted. You Be -- silent and It speaks.

Come holy Silence, come great bride of all creation. Come holy Silence, reach -- reach from the presence of God and envelop us. Let the inner sea heave no more in sound, hold the stars still in their commotion. Fold up all sounds until all is soundless and pure.

Ah, the holy Silence. There is nought besides.

Open ye gates -- for the Silence screens us purely, and we may slip through. All that matters is to be at Home in the house of the God of Life; there is the deep and lovely quiet of a strong heart at peace.

To be able to forget, to be able to yield to God who dwells in the deepest Silence. Only in sheer Silence are we in God, for when we know in fullness, we have left off knowing; when I can strip myself of the trash of personal feeling, ideas and concepts, and get down to my naked Sun-Self: the Self-luminous Silence.

If there were not an utter and absolute Light of Silence, an utter, sheer oblivion of ego -- at the core of everything -- how terrible the sun of day would be. But the very Sun himself is pivoted upon a core of pure Silence, and the integral soul has peace -- inward, lovely peace.

Has man killed the Silence of the earth and ravished all the peaceful, obvious places

where the *devas* used to alight? All the greatest teachers will tell you the end of all knowledge is oblivion of ego; sweet dark, Self-radiant Silence, where I cease even from myself and am consummated.

Come — let us build a temple dedicated to Silence; with seven veils and an innermost Holy of Holies of sheer Silence. There ego-oblivion dwells, and the silent soul may sink into God at last, having passed the veils.

Are you willing to be sponged out, erased, cancelled, made Nothing? Are you willing to Be nothing, dipped in oblivion? If not, you will never really change. The Phoenix renews her youth only when she is burnt, burnt alive, down to hot and flocculent ash. Then the small stirring of a new, small fledgeling in the nest, with strands of down — like floating ash — shows that she is renewing her youth: Immortal Bird.

And now the best of all is to Be alone to experience one's soul in Silence. To be nakedly alone, unseen, is better than anything in the world, a relief like death. To Be — alone, is one of life's greatest delights. What is lovelier than to be alone, escaping the petrol-fumes of human conversation — and the exhaust-smell of egos — and Be Alone?

Be Alone and feel the trees silently growing. Be Alone and see the moonlight outside, white and busy and silent. Be quite Alone and sense the living cosmos softly rocking, soothing, restoring, healing, when there is no grating of people with their ego-presence gnawing at the stillness of the *akashā*-air.

The unhappy psyches are those who cannot die and become silent and whole, but most even struggle on to assert themselves in aggressiveness and in wordiness: a man cannot fully live unless he dies and ceases to care; ceases to care and to try.

O ye seekers, when ye leave off seeking you will experience that there was never anything to seek for. You were only seeking to lose something, when you went forth so vigorously in search. Only the loving ones find love and they never have to reach for it.

A SONG

By Dilip Kumar Roy

To say: "I love thee in my heart"

Is an easy effusion. May I sing:

"Thy joy and pain with all my art
I will acclaim as thy gift, King!"

"Thou stayest far, yet none who's near
Is closer to my soul" — I sing.

Grant: I may ever hold thee dear
Remembering this great Truth, King!"

"All all I have I offer thee
In cloud and sunshine", Lord, I sing,
Now teach me to chant in ecstasy:
"In life and death I'm thine, O king!"

"I would outsoar our dismal vale
Of tears to win to thee" I sing.
Teach me to pledge my word to hail
Thy Grace through even my heartache,
King!

"There is a vast realm of consciousness still undreamt of; vast ranges of experience, like humming harps, which we as yet are not conscious of — within us. When a man has escaped from the barbed wire entanglements of his own concepts and his own mental and mechanical devices, there is a marvellous rich world of contact and sheer, fluid Beauty, a fearfree face-to-face conscious awareness in now naked Life."

— (From D. H. Lawrence:
Last Poems)

ALONENESS AND LONELINESS

By K. Padmanabhan

ARE you alone or lonely? There is a vast difference between the two states.

Aloneness is solitude and solitude is an inward state of the mind. Solitude is in the mind. Bhagavan said it does not depend on circumstances or on environment. You carry your mind wherever you go. You can feel crowded in your mind in a remote mountain fastness or completely alone in a milling throng.

When one is not agitated by thoughts and free from conceptual knowledge, then one is truly alone. Solitude is one's true state in the plenum of being. It is the clouds of conceptual thinking which cover over the knowledge -- "*I am as I am.*"

Loneliness is an illusory feeling of being cut-off from others and society and hemmed in by circumstances, weighed down by a mountain of one's own psychic construction.

It is not necessary to reject society -- one can remain in it but not be of it. Live in the world freely, but do not allow worldliness to live in you. Keep the boat on the water, but do not let the water get into the boat.

If life seems unkind to you, trying to extricate yourself from its influence by physical

isolation may result only in bringing about a state of constant loneliness. This will not be conducive towards the equanimity of a higher life, as you will still be consumed with the desire for companionship. God has given you the power to choose or refuse life. Better to choose it, use it, and live it, rather than run away from it, even though you may feel that to live is sometimes harder than to die.

You will overcome loneliness when you become aware of an inward Solitude. "Aloneness" rather than "loneliness" gives you more appreciation and love for the people among whom you live, and enriches togetherness.

True Solitude is Strength

It is the art of Aloneness, or inward Solitude, that induces in you the right kind of silence. Being alone gives you time to explore your soul, to come to understand yourself and what you are. It leads you on to real meditation in which thoughts are stilled -- and thus brings you finally to the solution of the question "Who am I?" the gospel of Sri Bhagavan.

"If of thy Mortal goods thou art bereft,
And from thy slender store, two loaves
to thee are left,
Sell one, and with the dole,
Buy hyacinths to feed thy Soul."

GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

Brahma continued :

THE *Devas* who were oppressed by Mahishasura (a demon in the form of a buffalo) came to the earth and sought refuge with the Goddess who was doing penance. They cried in fear : O Goddess ! Save us ! When she asked what the matter was, Indra and the other *devas* folded their palms respectfully and told Her about the oppression of Mahishasura. They said :

Mahisha sports in the woods of Nandana with the *Apsaras* (celestial nymphs), having brought under control Airavata (Indra's elephant) and other *dig-gajas* (elephants belonging to the eight cardinal points) and taking possession of Uchaisravas (Indra's Horse) and other horses. He also keeps millions of goats, which are the mounts of Agni, and allows his sons to ride them. He yokes the he-buffalo of Yama to his chariot. Siddhas are compelled to do his household work and wait upon him. If there is any good thing in all the three worlds which is not in his possession, his anger is not appeased until he gets hold of it. As for us, we live in fear of him as his servants and obey his commands helplessly.

It is said that protecting those who seek refuge is one of the reasons for doing penance.

CHAPTER X

THE PENANCE OF THE GODDESS AND THE FIGHT WITH MAHISHASURA

This *Asura* (demon) is invincible. Having obtained a boon from Siva he is more powerful than *Suras*, *Asuras* and all others. Butted by Mahisha, the King of the Seas cries out 'I give ! I give !' and offers up his jewels. With his horns Mahisha digs the mountains. He sports proudly with his body covered with precious stones. His strength is unequalled. Nobody can oppose him. You will know this yourself in due course when you come to destroy him with your effulgence. You are the power (*sbakti*) of Sambhu in the form of a woman. He should be killed only by you ; for he is one who has obtained a boon from Sambhu. Goddess ! We do not know what is the intention of Sambhu. But you are the Mother of the World. You must save us !

Hearing them cry out in fear in this manner the Goddess was pleased to tell them not to fear. She spoke lovingly : *Devas* ! I who am engaged in penance have a duty to protect those who seek refuge in me. Your enemy will perish in a short time. I shall kill that great *Asura* by a strategy. It is not right to kill one who is guiltless. He who acts contrary to *dbarma*, against those who abide by *dharma*, will die like an insect.

Upon hearing these words the *Devas* bowed to the Daughter of the Mountain, lost

There are those to whom death is as a draught of pure water to the thirsty.

IBN AL' ARIF

their fear and gladly returned the way they came. After the departure of the *Devas* the lotus-eyed Gowri manifested herself as the power of resplendent delusion (*Mobini*), and appointed four noble *Bhairavis* to keep watch on all four sides of Arunagiri. These four celestial damsels, named Dundubhi, Satyavati, Anavami and Sundari, had followed Gowri to serve her when she came away from the Kailasa Mountain. She now issued the following orders to them :

Admit inside only those who have come to worship Arunachala and are tired and hungry and thirsty. Others should not enter. She then appointed strong men to guard the bounds of Arunachala and continued her penance at the Ashrama of Gautama.

While she did penance in this manner there was no drought in the country. The rains fell. The crops grew lush and green. Even the creatures which are mutually hostile forgot their hostility. The ashram became a fit place for all creatures to live fearlessly. Arunagiri was protected by guards to a distance of two *yojanas*¹ all around. Everyone felt safe. There was neither fear nor sickness. Lust and violent passions were unknown. All the *Munis*² were pleased. They praised Gowri and her Ashram as if it were the world of Siva. She continued to practise her austerities day and night, greatly rejoicing in attending to those things which please Siva.

One day the valiant Mahisha entered the forest of Arunachala, which was far from his own country, with the intention to hunt. He and his followers killed and ate many animals. Seeing his warriors roaming about with bows in their hands, the animals fled in fear. Some of them took refuge in the Ashram of the Goddess. The *Asuras* were promptly prevented by the guards from entering the Ashram. When they asked the reason, the guards replied : 'Gowri is doing penance

here. Therefore she is bound to protect those who take shelter within these precincts. This is a place meant for *Munis*. No one shall forcibly enter.' The *Asuras* turned back, considering what they should do. In the guise of birds they then entered the Ashram and, sitting on the branches of the trees in the park, observed the Goddess Gowri well. Afterwards they reported the proceedings back to Mahisha and praised the great beauty of Gowri.

On hearing their words he was stricken with lust. Disguising himself as an old man he was welcomed by the companions of the Goddess. He pretended to be refreshed by their attendance and asked them : Why are you doing penance here ? They said : *Bala* (lit. maiden) has been doing penance here for a long time in order to obtain a husband. But she can never find the man possessing the qualities she requires. It seems that she has decided to marry only a valiant man who can perform miraculous feats.

Upon hearing this Mahisha laughed and said to Gowri : O Maiden ! Performer of Penance ! I seem to have come here only in answer to your prayer. Listen ! I shall describe my glories. I am Mahisha the extremely valiant king of the *Asuras* and adored by the *Suras*. All the three worlds are under my control. I alone possess such matchless valour. O maiden ! I am the embodiment of love. I can give you every pleasure. Make me your husband. I shall acquire and give you the fruit of all the austerities of all beings with the help of the Wish-fulfilling Tree. I can create even Visvakarma (creator of the world) by my austerities. I can create thousands of *kamadbenus* (wish-fulfilling cows) in a moment. Around me are the nine *nidhis* (repositories of precious objects) with the aid of which all desires can be instantly fulfilled.

When the Goddess heard what he said, she remembered the *Devas*. Abandoning her vow of silence she said jestingly : 'I will become the wife of only a valiant man. I have been doing penance for a long time with that object in view. If you are such a man, dis-

¹ About 20 miles.

² Sages.

play your strength. If you fail, admit that you are weak.'

On hearing these words Mahisha became very angry. He roared : 'You are now as good as dead ! Who are you to speak to me thus ?' and sprang towards the Goddess with the object of killing her. At his approach Gowri quickly transformed herself into Durga the fiery and unapproachable goddess. As soon as Mahishasura saw the blazing *Maha Maya* before him, he made himself exceedingly big like the Meru Mountain. He tore off mountain peaks and hurled them at her and rallied around him his vast armies from all quarters, ready to do battle. But all the *Devas* headed by Brahma and carrying many weapons, adored the Goddess Durga looking like the world-consuming fire. Hari and Sadasiva offered to her five arrows each and Brahma four. The *Dikpalas*³ who had overcome *maya* ; the *Devas*, the Mountains and the Seas all offered their respective ornaments, weapons and missiles to the Goddess and praised her splendence with these things. She put on armour and immediately mounted a lion.

Being unable to look upon the all-pervasive effulgence and afraid to face the mighty Goddess, Mahisha ran. Thereupon Gowri thought that the wicked Mahishasura should be killed only by a stratagem : 'Just as hunters prod animals to make them enraged and turn about, even so I shall make him angry by sending some clever messengers and make him return at once to the battlefield. Those who are extremely unrighteous will not listen to the words of *dharmā*.⁴ For, if they do so, their way of living will be adversely affected. On the contrary, if he listens to the words of *dharmā* and becomes peaceful it will be very good. For then he will not violate *dharmā*. Those who do penance do not become angry. Penance should make one free from anger. One should not do anything which is not completely in accordance with *dharmā*. But it is proper that one should become angry with what is not in accordance with *dharmā*. Penance undertaken for the sake of safeguarding *dharmā* is noble.'

Thinking thus, Goddess Gowri sent a monkey-faced *Muni* named Suraguru to

...As the sun does not cease from giving light to the other hemisphere after setting here, so does your intelligence continue to glow even after it has run its course in this life.

YOGA VASISHTHA

Mahisha. She said to him : 'Maharshi Vanaramukha ! Endowed with the power of *maya* which I shall bestow upon you, you shall go to Mahisha and make him return quickly with the following words :

“Do not oppress anyone round about Arunadri as you wickedly intend to do. The valour of wicked persons who do so will be completely destroyed in a moment. The vicissitudes of the Age of Kali, troubles from *Asuras*, and misdeeds have no place there. For it is a holy and auspicious place meant for the devotees of Siva.

'By the merit you have acquired in some former life you now possess valour and good fortune. Let not your demoniac nature make you fall into the fire of Arunachala like a moth. The boon acquired by you by the grace (lit. command) of Siva, and through your penance, will be completely burnt and destroyed like trees in a forest fire. Only those who follow *dharmā* and are devotees of Siva may live there. Those who oppress others will develop all kinds of diseases. You have more power than others and your valour cannot be challenged by anyone. You should not lose it by your thoughtlessness.

'I too saw the maiden coveted by you. She is truly *abala* (not strong). Still, as she is under the protection of the Lord of Arunachala, she cannot be conquered. If, however, you will not listen to my advice and be guided by the *Agamas* (scriptures) of Siva, and are going to collect your armies and bring them, she will burn up in a moment all the boons which have made you so proud and which

³ Guardians of the quarters, north, south, etc.

⁴ Righteousness.

The living all find death unpleasant, men mourn over it. And yet, what is death, but the unbending of the bow and its return to its case ; what is it, but the emptying of the corporal envelope... That the incorporeal has produced the corporeal, and that the body returns to incorporeity, this idea of the eternal round is known to many people, but only the elect draw the practical consequences from it.

CHUANG-TSE

makes you oppress the world so freely in this manner.

You can see for yourself if you wish. Station all your armed forces in front of the Goddess. She will destroy them in a moment. When you are killed by Her weapons, you and your army may, or may not, attain Liberation. Who knows the commands of the Lord? One is bound to reap the fruit of the deeds prompted by one's inherent tendencies. No one can prevent it.'

'In this manner teach him his own *dharmā* and make him abandon what is not *dharmā*.'" When Kapimukha (Vanaramukha) who was despatched by the Goddess with these instructions, delivered his message to Mahisha, the latter became very angry and approached the Muni with the intention of killing and eating him, but the Muni escaped through the power of *māyā*. The wicked fellow then gathered all his armed forces and prepared for a battle which would terrify the whole world. His forces came from all quarters, as if the four seas had risen high and joined together, and surrounded Arunagiri.

As soon as Gowri saw the *Asura* army, she brought into existence fierce warriors, *Bhuta ganas*,⁵ and beings possessing one foot, one eye, one leg, pendant ears and pendant breasts, hands, feet, abdomen, face, etc. Even at the moment they were created, each of them was saying : 'I shall eat them up ! All this is not enough for me. I shall single-handedly kill this *Asura* and everybody else ! Alone I shall do the entire fighting.' Then the

Goddess blew her conch. As soon as the *Asuras* heard the sound and saw her, many of them who were armed shot a host of arrows from all sides in order to show their valour. But the Goddess stopped them all with her own arrows.

The *Bhutas* and *Vetalas*⁶ created by the Goddess, fought with the lakhs and crores⁷ of chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry of the *Asuras*. The attendant Goddesses, the host of *Dakinis*⁸ in various forms, *Bhutas*, *Pretas*, *Pishachas* and *Rakshasas*,⁹ who were all invincible, crushing and cutting and stabbing, overcame the *Asura* forces and killed them all in a moment. Amidst the dead bodies of the *Asuras* and the hosts of *Bhutas*, who had drunk their blood and eaten their flesh and were dancing in the frenzy of victory, the Goddess stood fully armed, together with the Goddess Dundubhi, Satyavati, Anavami and Sundari.

Chamunda, a terrible *Devi* with fierce tusks, created by the Goddess, clothed in the hides of *Asuras* slain in the battle, ate their flesh, drank their blood and raged on all sides roaring horribly. She had knocked down an *Asura* and was dancing upon his body.

As soon as Mahisha saw her his anger blazed forth like fire. Opening his terrible eyes and ears wide in wrath, he pierced the clouds with the tip of his horns, darted his flame-like tongue hither and thither, butted the earth with his horns which looked like mountain peaks, pawed the earth with his hooves, raining clouds of dust on all sides and roared long and fiercely. He lifted his hairy tail like a stick and striking with it, shattered into bits many of the weapons of the *Amaras* (*Devas*) who became frightened. Then he turned towards the dazzlingly beautiful Bhavani who was mounted on a lion and ran fast towards here only to meet his doom !

(To be continued)

⁵ A horde of spirits.

⁶ A variety of spirits.

⁷ A crore is ten millions.

⁸ A kind of female imp.

⁹ Demons.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE COMMON PHILOSOPHY : By Robert H. Peterson. Pub. : The Philosophical Library, New York. Price : \$ 8.50.

The call for philosophy comes from a deep-rooted desire welling-up within man to know the whole of his being in all its fullness of meaning. A few centuries ago, mankind sought the answer in the medieval church or temple. But the advent of rationalism, with its tool of empirical analysis and study has developed a technological world, which may have brought man to a level of progress hitherto unheard of, but also puts him in danger of being obliterated from the face of the earth. It is in such times of crisis that the call within man to recover himself and express his spiritual reality asserts itself.

This book is not a mere compendium of philosophical positions, but a thorough examination of what they have brought to bear on the question of existence. The author, therefore, examines first the philosophical naturalism as exemplified in Dewey's *Reconstruction in Philosophy* and Nagel's *Logic Without Metaphysics* before coming to the existentialist's answer found in Marcel and Jasper. The highlight of the book is a detailed analysis of Teilhard de Chardin's *magnum opus* "*The Phenomenon of Man*" where he emphasises the method of arriving at a truly philosophical conception of man by a profound understanding of the matter of the universe in its most minute form and in its most subtle detail. By the very nature of the abstruse subjects dealt with and the profundity of its speculations the book seems intended only for the uncommon reader in contradiction to the title.

EXISTENTIALISM AND CREATIVITY : By Mitchell Bedford. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. Price : \$ 12.50.

Quite unlike the above in style and content is Bedford's book, which compares and contrasts the concept of existentialism as developed in the writings of Kierkegaard, Sartre, Buber and Jaspers.

Only these four are selected as the most representative exponents of the subject, while Marcel, Heidegger and Tillich are omitted from the scope of the study. Existentialism, it may be remembered, traces its connections to pre-Socratic thinkers who were concerned with the problem of "Being". It is a creed of decision, commitment and action, whereby man finds true life and reality by the response of his whole being in relation to his life and circumstances here and now, with a rejection of theory and reason.

Bedford examines the educational implications of existentialism by a close scrutiny of Ralph Harper's dissertation on the subject, in the 54th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, entitled *Modern Philosophies and Education*. After analysing the educational theories of the four chosen giants of existentialism, the author collates the material for a broad outline of liberal education.

EDUCATION AS AN EXISTENTIAL POSSIBILITY : By Lesnoff-Caravaglia. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. Price : 7.50 dollars.

As existentialism has its roots on the Continent, it has only touched the periphery of philosophical thought in England. Naturally little mention is made in English literature of its impact on education, especially of the contribution of Italian thought. This gap is ably filled by Gari Lesnoff-Caravaglia by her exposition of the philosophy of Nicolo Abbagnano, the chief exponent of Italian existentialism. The latter has himself contributed an introduction to this valuable book, where he refers to the kaleidoscopic whirl of present day events in which man is caught up as a cipher. Explaining his philosophy in a nutshell, he says that we should take a close look at ourselves and our world and see the difference between the world of reality and that which we project for ourselves and society projects for us. The life situation of the individual is not inevitable if we realise that our lives are a self-created

struggle, full of innumerable choices and possible decisions. Only when we see this can we proceed with some probability of success and accept the attendant responsibilities.

The English-reading public is greatly indebted to the author for her lucid interpretation of the Italian brand of existentialism, as also to her comparison between Abbagnano's exposition and the French and German versions as exemplified in the writings of Sartre and Heidegger.

ARGUS.

THE YOGA OF LIGHT: By Hans-Ulrich Rieker. Pub.: Allen and Unwin, London. Price: £ 2.75.

THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI: By M. R. Desai. Pub.: Desai Publications, Gokhale College, Kolhapur. Price: Rs. 25.

The *Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika* is a standard Sanskrit text on Hatha Yoga. The present book is an English rendering of the German translation and commentary by Rieker. The work in German is not merely an accurate presentation of the ancient Indian text; it contains the cream of the author's experience of yoga-practice in India under several Gurus. He knows what to say and how far to reveal, leaving the rest for direct experience or personal communication by the Teacher. The discourse covers the topics of Asanas, purification of Nadis, Pranayama, Mudras, Bandhas, Flow of Nectar, Samadhi, Nada and the Inner Light. Some of the remarks made by the author in the course of his exposition are interesting.

Speaking of *Chakras*, he notes: "It is characteristic that the tantric Buddhism of Tibet teaches that the yogi has to create the chakras at the relevant places in his body. They are so to speak 'psychic centres' that cannot be practically recognised unless I will it. They are vibration centres which are developed in the course of yoga practice. This alone proves how elusive they are to the surgeon's knife."

On *celibacy*: "Celibacy without transformation of the preserved potential only forces them to find their own outlet, mostly where it is least desired, at the weakest point of the whole organism.... Celibacy of the mind has to precede celibacy of the body."

On *kriyavati*, a special working of the Kundalini Shakti during the Asanas: "The yogi does not perform these asanas in waking consciousness. 'It' performs the asanas in him, while his waking state has yielded completely to a state beyond the bor-

derline of perception. In this state the yogi is capable of superhuman physical achievements. Thus we find in Tibet the *lunggompas* yogis who in a meditative state cover hundreds of miles with great speed. Dizzying precipices and snowstorms cannot hinder their course, much less stop them. Attempts to follow on a galloping horse have always failed. No horse has ever passed this prodigious test."

The last but two of the sutras of the *Pradipika* states: "All Hatha Yoga practices serve only for the attainment of Raja Yoga. He who is accomplished in Raja Yoga overcomes death."

And the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* deal with precisely the same subject. It is usual to read this aphorism with the help of the commentary of Vyasa. But the author of the present edition makes an independent approach to Patanjali and interprets the thoughts on the strength of his own scholarship.

Dr. Desai relates the four *padas* of the Sutras e.g. Samadhi, Sadhana, Vibhuti and Kaivalya to the four Aryan *arthas*, social objectives — Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. He takes up each aphorism in detail, gives word-for-word translation in English, and follows it up with exhaustive notes in which he discusses why he cannot accept the traditional meanings given by commentators. He cites from various texts of authentic importance in support of his conclusions and demands serious consideration. A very satisfying work of conscientious research relating Yoga to Science, psychology to mysticism and Matter to Spirit.

YOGA AND MEDICINE: By Steven Brena. Pub.: The Julian Press Publishers, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. Price: \$ 7.

This book reveals the limitations and harmful effects of Medicine on health and the contribution of yogic science to right living of mind and body. The experienced author explains the basic medical concepts of anatomy, psychology, nutrition, respiration, sex, etc., and describes the way in which medicines work. The sections on hypnosis, tranquillisers and drugs like L.S.D., are particularly well-written. It is shown how these 'aids' depress and narrow the area of consciousness and pull man down from the level of being that is rightfully his.

Yoga, on the other hand, always aims at enlarging and enlarging the consciousness, purifying nerve channels so as to ensure a free and rapid flow of the *pranic* force in the body. It helps nature in building up and maintaining health. The latest findings of clinical thinking come remarkably close

to the ancient concepts and practices of yoga. Says Brena :

"The actual field of convergence between them lies in the recognition that physical laws of matter are binding men only to a certain point; beyond them, man can find inner freedom, using his will-power and proper techniques to select his habits and to gain control of his visceral and emotional functioning."

HARK! HIS FLUTE: By Dilip Kumar Roy.
Pub.: Allies Bookstall, Poona-4. Pp. 204.
Price: Rs. 8.00

Sri Dilip Kumar Roy is a well-known poet and dramatist, both in English and Bengali. The present volume is a selection from the large number of lyrics and songs written by him during the last five decades. The themes are many, religious, spiritual, social, secular. But the most enchanting and natural are those that appeal to the Bhakta, God-lover, in him. Well does he begin :

When thy flute calls, how can I fail
to keep my tryst with thee?

How can the world's darkness make me quail,
When thy Light flowers in me?

The Poet is very sensitive to spiritual truths viz. :

The light of eyes in darkness dies
when earthly suns decrease :

But eyes of light outlaw the night
For theirs is a light that sees.

Among the nearly hundred poems in English, and nearly as many translations from his originals in Bengali included in this collection, there are some devoted to Gods like Shiva, Ganesha, Krishna, some to leaders of humanity like Tagore, Gandhi, Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo; there is one on Bhagavan Maharshi, but it is certainly not his best. A few lines from the poem on Buddha bear citation :

A face of light immobilised with love

.....
A mountain-poise no earthquakes ever can move
A drop merged in the deep beyond recall!

M. P. PANDIT

THE BHAGAVAD GITA: With English translation and explanatory notes. By T. L. Vasvani.
Pub.: Gita Publishing House, Poona. Pp. 148.
Price: Rs. 2.50.

Sri Krishna's life and teachings have been a perennial source of inspiration to T. L. Vasvani, and to share his experiences with his fellowmen he has written many books, viz. : *Krishna the Saviour*; *Krishna's Flute*; *The Ancient Murlī* and so forth. The present work deals with the first nine chapters

of the *Gita* with an English translation for each sloka and explanatory notes wherever necessary. Its publication marks the 90th birthday of the author.

In the ten-page Introduction, the author gives a succinct account of the main aspects of the Lord's teaching. In the Introductory Note which follows he traces the course of events which led to the Kurukshetra War and the occasion which called forth the teaching of Arjuna.

The translation of the slokas is both readable and faithful to the original. The notes explain difficult points with the help of examples drawn from everyday life. Occasionally there are exhortations to the youth of today to build up their inner strength and to work for the well-being of the country in the spirit of selfless service.

The second part dealing with the next nine chapters is awaited with interest, as this book is a valuable addition to *Gita* literature.

Prof. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

KAMBA RAMAYANA — A STUDY: By V. V. S. Aiyar. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 342. Price: Rs. 4.

This is the third printing of a work originally published in 1950 and reprinted in Bhavan's Book University Series in 1965. As Sri K. Santhanam observes in his Foreword, no poet could equal Valmiki in simplicity and solid strength and power to move the mind. What Sri Aiyar has tried to do, through his copious translations and comments, is to bring out the delicate refinements in characterization and felicities of style which have earned for Kamban the title of *Kavichakravarti*. The detailed treatment of the leading characters provides many arresting points of comparison between the ancient and the medieval epics. For instance, Vibhishana becomes in Kamban a *bhakta*, pure and simple, with no trace of worldly ambition; he offers to Kumbhakarna the throne of Lanka if only the latter would choose to join Rama and pursue the path of righteousness. And in the end Kumbhakarna himself meets his death as a *jnani* and a *bhakta* rather than as a gluttonous monster.

While praising Kamban to the skies, Aiyar also illustrates his occasional faults and extravagances, as for example in the Maricha episode. Those who do not know Tamil and wish to have some idea of the noblest poem in that language could well turn to this painstaking work of an ardent patriot and accomplished scholar.

K. S.

THE MIND AND ITS CONTROL : By Swami Budhananda. Pub.: Advaita Ashram, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta-14. Pp. 107. Price: Re. 1.50.

This is a long essay which first appeared serially in *Prabuddha Bharata* and is now published in the form of a book. The subject of mind-control is important to spiritual aspirants who will find in this book the various methods advocated by great spiritual masters like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda and in books like the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Bhagavata*, *Patanjali Yoga Sutras* and *Vivekachudamani*.

PATHWAY TO HAPPINESS : By R. S. Rastogi. Pub.: Akhil Bharatiya Vaishnava Parishad, Bombay. Pp. 99. Price: Re. 1.50.

This is a collection of seven essays, most of them glorifying devotion to Lord Krishna. The author has suggested in one of the essays that the *asuras* (demons) slain by Sri Krishna are allegorical figures standing for the evil qualities in man. The symbolism behind the story of Uttanapada occurring in the *Bhagavatam* is the subject of another essay.

CRISIS OF CRISIS : By Sisirkumar Ghose. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 90. Price: Rs. 2.

This is a collection of ten essays which have already appeared in various journals. All of them deal with the moral and spiritual problems of modern man. Although politicians and die-hard scientists continue to ignore such problems, or belittle the dangers threatening humanity, thinking people are aware of the crisis-condition to which humanity has been brought and suggest ways of escaping disaster. How far they can influence the course of things is a moot point. Although the essays in this book cover only familiar ground they contain a number of thought-provoking passages. The author's style could be improved upon.

KARTIKEYA — THE DIVINE CHILD — THE HINDU TESTAMENT OF WISDOM : By Ratna Navaratnam. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 271. Price: Rs. 6.

Although Kartikeya, or Muruga, as he is generally known among the Tamils, is not very well known or worshipped in most parts of India, he is the object of the greatest devotion among Tamils of not only Tamil Nadu but also in other countries like Sri Lanka and Malaysia to which they have

migrated in large numbers in ancient or modern times. He is their darling god just as Sri Krishna is the favourite god of large sections of non-Tamil Hindus. References to Kartikeya are found in the Vedas and old Sanskrit works. There is also a strong tradition and evidence in ancient Tamil scriptures to show that he is a pre-Vedic god worshipped by the ancient inhabitants of the Tamil country.

There are not many good books in English on Kartikeya and therefore devotees of Kartikeya will welcome this paperback edition. It contains a great deal of information collected from various sources, but the presentation of it is far from satisfactory. The book could have been effectively reduced to half its size by the elimination of unnecessary and unimportant details. However, the section dealing with Kadirgamam deserves special mention. The end of the book is illustrated with several photographs.

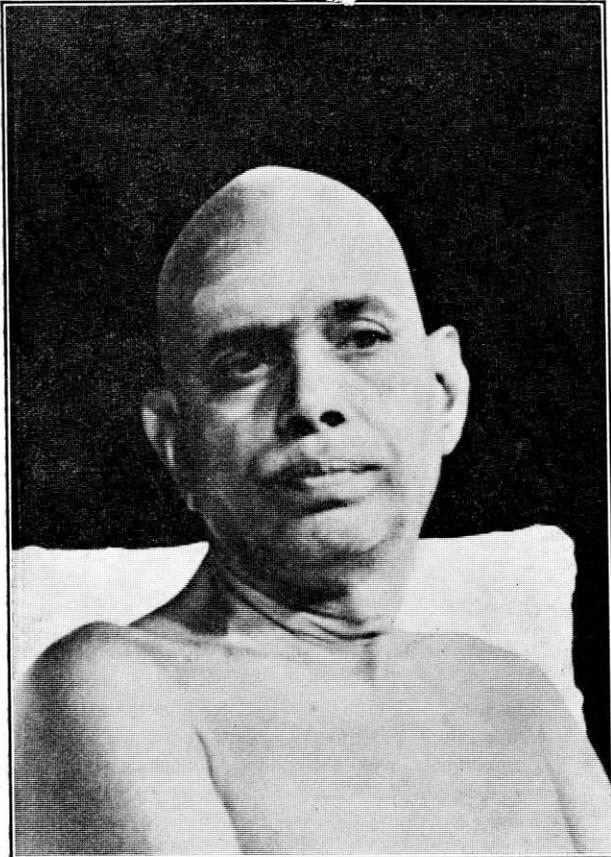
SWAMI MUKTANANDA PARAMAHAMSA : By Amma. Pub.: Shree Gurudev Ashram, Ganeshpuri. Pp. 90. Price: Rs. 5 (for the Library edition, price of the ordinary edition not stated).

This is a short biography of Swami Muktananda, the chief disciple of the late Swami Nityananda of Ganeshpuri and the present Head of Shree Gurudev Ashram, by Amma (Pratibha Trivedi). It describes the early life of the Swami, his extensive wanderings in quest of Truth and the extraordinary experiences which he had after coming into contact with Swami Nityananda. There is a short chapter on the Swami's teachings and an interesting introduction by B. R. Nanda, Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum, Delhi.

M.C.S.

POCKET GANDHI SERIES : 1. God is Truth. 2. Message of Jesus Christ. 3. Why Fear or Mourn Death? 4. Service Before Self. 5. To My Countrymen. 6. On Myself. Edited by Anand T. Hingorani. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Price: Rs. 2 (each).

Mahatma Gandhi's massive writings on innumerable subjects have been analysed and classified in various ways by various admirers. One of the earliest and most successful of such anthologists is Mr. Hingorani. Gandhiji himself has expressed appreciation of Mr. Hingorani's labours in choosing the extracts and arranging them under suitable heads and providing them with attractive printing and get-up.



ASHRAM BULLETIN

Sri Bhagavan's Brahma Nirvana Celebrations

AT ASHRAM

THE Twenty-third *Brahma Nirvana* was duly observed in solemn devotion at the Shrine of Grace of Sri Maharshi on Monday, April 30. A large number of devotees from far and near participated and partook of the munificent Grace of the Master.

The celebrations commenced early in the morning with Tamil *parayana* — chanting of hymns on and by Sri Bhagavan in Tamil — by the old devotees and inmates of the Ashram from 5 to 6-15 a.m. This was followed by milk offering puja at His Shrine and a special *Parayana* from Upanishads with Ekadasa Mahanyasa japa. The Maha abhishekam was accompanied by Vedic chants and completed with *arti*. All the devotees and visitors were treated to lunch. Feeding of the poor was done on a large scale.

At 2 p.m. a group of the members of the *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan*, Madras, who had specially come to take part in the celebrations, rendered a perform-

ance of devotional music with accompaniments led by Sri P. S. Srinivasa Rao. Smt. B. Savithri deserves credit and appreciation for arranging this performance and an atmosphere of devotional fervour marked the occasion.

After the evening pujas and pradosha puja for the day, the celebrations concluded with a bhajan by Brahmarsi Jagadeesa Iyer and party.

AT MADRAS

Members of *Ramana Bhakta Sabha* (Chepauk), Madras, celebrated the *aradhana* of Sri Bhagavan on April 30, at Indra Bhavan, Triplicane, with Sahasranama Archana, Upanishad parayana and chanting of the *Ulladu Narpadu*. *Arthi* was done, followed by bhajan and distribution of prasad.

AT BHADRAK

The Maha Nirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan was observed at Bhadrak on April 30 at the premises

of Sri Mayadhar Pillai, Secretary of the local branch of the Divine Life Society. Nagara Sankirtan and bhajan by Sri Somayajulu and party of *Sri Ramana Mandir*, Khurda, was held at his premises in the morning and again at Sri Lakshminarayan Temple in the evening. Sri Somayajulu and Sri P. V. Rao addressed the gathering on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings.

PRESIDENT'S PILGRIMAGE-cum-TOUR

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President of Sri Ramanasramam, and *Sri L. P. Koppikar*, one of the permanent inmates of the Ashram, left the Ashram on March 18, and after spending a day in Bangalore visited Sringeri on the 20th. Though, regrettably *His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya Swami* was then away on tour, they had a pleasant stay for a day and the next evening, reached Mangalore and were the guests of Advocate, *Sri K. Shashidhar Rao*.



Sri T. N. Venkataraman

In the company of our friend and Sri Bhagavan's devotee, *Major K. S. Abdul Gaffar*, they had *sat sangh* among devotees; then visited Dharmasthala and Udipi and Sri Anandashram (Kanhangad). In the last place, they had *darshan*, though brief, of *Pujya Mataji Sri Krishnabai*. Leaving Mangalore by bus on the 26th morning they reached Poona the next morning and were the guests of *Bhausahab Y. N. Athavale*, an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan. In Poona, they called on *Sri Dilip Kumar Roy* and paid a visit to the sacred Alandi, where Saint Jnaneshwar went into *jiva samadhi* (buried Himself alive) in A.D. 1296 and where His Presence is still felt. Proceeding to Bombay on the 29th, they visited Elephanta Caves. Sri Venkataraman met *Sri Swami Muktananda* of Ganeshpuri and *Sri Swami Satchidananda* of Anandashram, the latter at the residence of *Sri Natverlal Parikh*.

On the second lap of the journey, Sri Venkataraman alone proceeded to Baroda, where he was received by *Sri R. M. Patel*¹ who came specially for this purpose from Ahmedabad. He escorted Sri Venkataraman through the entire tour in Saurashtra and Gujarat. They visited Ahmedabad, Dwaraka, Porbunder and Rajkot. In Dwaraka (of Lord Krishna) and Bet Dwaraka, with the temple of Sri Krishna on an island nearby, Sri Venkataraman had the pleasure of having the company of

Smt. Madhuriben Kara, sister of *Sri Shantikumar Morarji*, connected with Scindia Steam Navigation Company. In Rajkot he met *Sri Popatlal B. Kotak*, Vice-President of Sri Ramana Jayanthi Celebration Committee, Bombay. In Porbunder, where he was the guest of *Sri Mohanlal Solanki*, a devotee of Sri Bhagavan, he visited the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi and paid his respects. During the journey he also visited a small township by name, Virpur, where at the Mandir of Sri Jolaram Baba, thousands of people are fed everyday, entirely from devotees' contributions. He came back to Baroda and stayed with his son there, and returned to the Ashram on April 26, in time for the *Mahasamadhi Day* of Sri Bhagavan, celebrated on April 30.

RENOVATION OF A SHRINE UP THE HILL

Having received directions in his life-reading in a *Nadi* (palm-leaf horoscope) *Sri Adinarayana Reddy* of Allur, Andhra Pradesh, accompanied by *Sri Ranga Reddy*, Retd. Superintendent of Police, got the old shrine of Sri Dandapani (Lord Subramania as a boy) renovated, and on the day of consecration — April 14, 1973 — 108 sadhus were given clothes and were fed, in addition to feeding the poor. The consecration ceremonies were conducted by Sri Ramalinga Gurukkal of the Arunachaleswara Temple. *Sri B. S. Ranganadham*, ex-Trustee of Sri Ramanasramam, *Sri Sai Das*, a permanent inmate of the Ashram and *Sri Anjaneyalu*, contractor, took great pains to make this occasion a success!

UPANAYANAM

On Thursday, June 7, *Sri Subramaniam*, popularly known to us all as '*Appichi*', celebrated the *upanayanam* (sacred thread ceremony) of his two sons, *Chi. Ramana Sundaram* and *Chi. Sriraman*, at Ramana Nagar. Devotees and inmates of the Ashram participated in the function and blessed the *vatus* (boys).

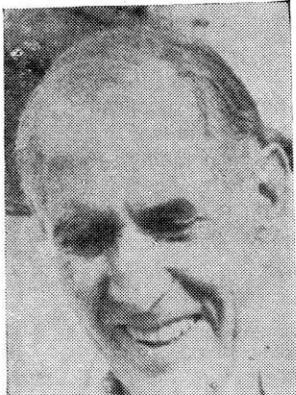
MAHA PUJA TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

Maha Puja — the observance of the *Aradhana* Day of Sri Bhagavan's Mother — at her shrine of Sri Mathrubutheswara at the Ashram, was conducted as usual this year on May 26. Before a large assembly of devotees special *abhishekam* was performed and pujas done at the shrines of Sri Bhagavan and of the Mother. All devotees and ashramites had their midday meal and there was poor-feeding on a larger scale than usual.

¹ See page 113 of our April '73 issue.

ARTHUR OSBORNE'S DAY

Deeply mourned by Sri Bhagavan's devotees and students of Comparative Religion over the world,



Arthur Osborne

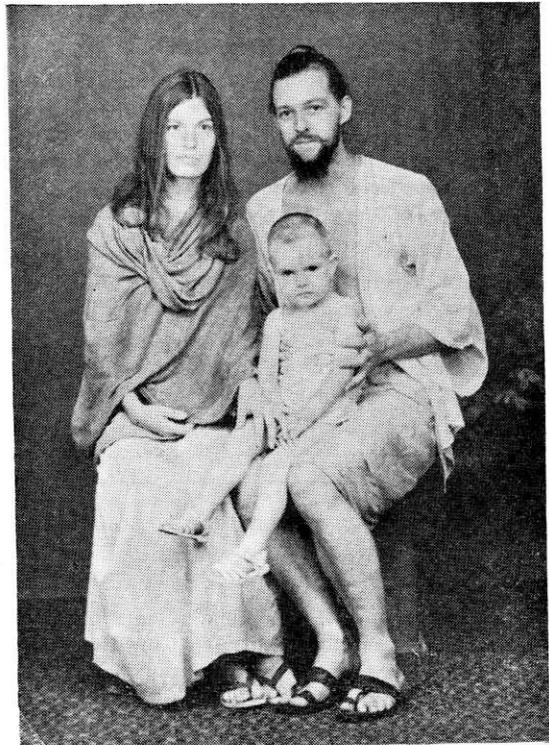
Srimathi Kamakshi, the daughter of the author of the *Talks* gave a moving solo chant. After *arathi*, fruits were distributed. There was a *biksha* arranged at the Ashram on that day, by one of the admirers of Mr. Osborne.

three years ago on May 8, 1970, Arthur Osborne attained the Lord's Lotus Feet. On May 8 this year his memory was honoured and homage rendered to him, in silence and prayers at his Samadhi in Ramana Nagar. The old devotees of Sri Bhagavan and others assembled before his samadhi covered with flowers, paid their homage by chanting devotional h y m n s.

PILGRIMS

Mr. Muz Murray-Gardenchild is the founder of the 'Inner Garden' group of England and director of the Seed-Crystal Trust Charity, who has been travelling as a sadhu on pilgrimage throughout Asia and India for the last two years, seeking the saintly of all faiths. He was born in the heart of England, 'Shakespeare Country' (Warwickshire). Studied at Coventry College of Art and Technology for five years. Acquired local renown as a poet, painter and eccentric. Worked in BBC Television as a designer and scenic artist. Spent seven years wandering the world, in search of a meaning to life. At the age of 24 he experienced a spiritual revelation through Cosmic Consciousness and became consumed with the spiritual quest. On returning to England in 1967, he began to produce a lively magazine for spiritually-minded youth. The universal approach and way of life illustrated by this, created the Inner Garden group of mystically-inclined seekers around whom developed a London Ashram, which comprised a vegetarian restaurant, a handicraft and mystical bookshop and daily lectures and yoga classes, open to all of every persuasion and dedicated to revealing that which is universal on every available 'Path'!

Mr. Muz Murray came to Sri Ramanasramam for the first time in January, 1973, in the expectation



Mr. and Mrs. Murray-Gardenchild with their daughter 'Saffron'.

of being able to find here what he was seeking. He was not disappointed. He experienced Bhagavan's Grace and living Presence which made him return here with wife *Lyn*, and 3-year-old daughter, *Saffron*. While here he very ably assisted in editing *The Mountain Path*, reviewing books, writing articles, etc. It is regrettable that circumstances are forcing him to leave the Ashram.

* * *

Prof. G. V. Kulkarni of Kolhapur, who is well-known to our readers as an enthusiastic contributor to our journal, came to the Ashram in May, along with a co-seeker, *Dr. S. V. Parachure* of Tasgaon (Maharashtra), spent a week. On his return home he writes :

"Sri Ramanasramam was our main destination on our long pilgrimage to the South and there we bathed in the sunshine of Divine Blessings at the sacred foot of Arunachala in the magnetic Presence of our Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Our longing was over and our plans were successful beyond expectations. The Peace and the Bliss, the informal unique atmosphere surcharged with divine love is simply unforgettable. It will ever

An Announcement

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

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

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

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

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

Managing Editor,
THE MOUNTAIN PATH.

April 1, 1973.

rest in our memory, nay, it shall be with us for ever !”

* * *

Yogeswara Sri Lakshmana and a large party of devotees (forty), who accompanied him, visited the Ashram on May 14, and stayed for four days. They evinced deep interest and took part in the normal routines worship and meditation at Sri Bhagavan's shrine of Grace, at Mother's shrine and in the Old Meditation Hall. They went round the Hill and also visited the places up the Hill hallowed by the stay of Sri Bhagavan, like Skandashram, Virupaksha Cave, etc. In a communication sent to us after their return home they had expressed their gratitude to the President and members of the Ashram for having extended all facilities for their stay at the Ashram.

* * *

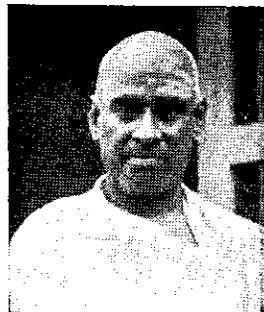
Among the many devotees of Sri Bhagavan who visited and stayed at the abode of our Master (Sri Ramanasramam) during this quarter, special mention may be made of the following :

- PATRICIA FREITAS, *Hawaii*.
REBALA LAKSHMINARASA REDDI, *Nellore*.
K. V. RAMANAN, *Baikunthpur*.
Br. B. R. NATHAN, Holy Cross Seminary, *Poona*.
Sri HANSA (Johannus de Reede) and Sri GANGA (Albohair Jacques), *Elba, Italy*.
S. R. JOSHI, Dt. Judge, *Dharwar*.
Brahmachari DEVA CHAITANYA, Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, *London*.
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S. RAMASWAMI and family, *Calcutta*.
T. RAMAKRISHNA, *Madras*.
SIRKAZHI GOVINDARAJAN (famous musician), *Madras*.
Smt. & Sri A. R. NATARAJAN and family, *New Delhi*.

OBITUARY

Devotees of Sri Bhagavan, particularly the frequent visitors to Sri Ramanasramam, will be sorry to hear of the passing away of SRI PICHU IYER on May 4, 1973, at the age of 86, after a short illness. They will miss a friendly smiling face !



Sri Pichu Iyer

Sri Bhagavan's only sister, who was Pichu Iyer's wife, predeceased him twenty years ago. They were the foster parents of Sri T. N. Venkataraman, the Ashram President, when he was orphaned as a child on the death of his mother. Sri Pichu Iyer took active part in consolidating the establishment of the present Ashram in its infant stage and was taking an active part in all big functions at the Ashram.

May he rest in Peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan !

* * *

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY New Additions

- Sexual Energy and Yoga* : By Elizabeth Haich. Pub. : Allen & Unwin, London, U.K. (£ 3.50).
Yoga and Medicine : By Steven Brena. Pub. : Julian Press, New York. (\$ 7.00).
The Three Fountainheads of Indian Philosophy : By N. V. Joshi. Pub. : Somaiya Publication, Bombay. (Rs. 25).

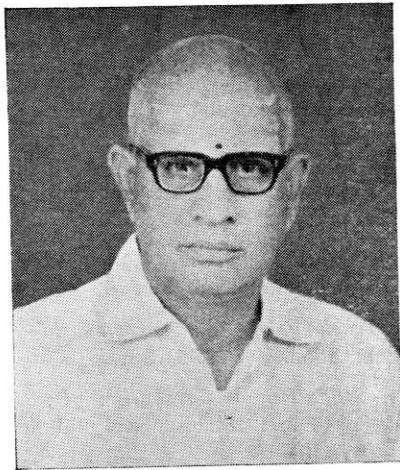
- God Realization : Sadhana and Effect* : Academy of Comparative Religion & Philosophy, Belgaum. (Rs. 7).
- Samyukta Nikaya* : By Bhikku Nanananda. Pub. : Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. (Price not quoted).
- The Philosophy of Attakavagga* : By P. O. Premasiri. Pub. : Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy Sri Lanka. (Price not quoted).
- The Buddhist Doctrine of Nibbana* : By P. Vjiranana. Pub. : Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. (Price not quoted).
- Philosophical Aspect of Buddhism* : By Piyadassi Thera. Pub. : Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. (Price not quoted).
- Buddha Dhamma for Students* : By Buddha Dasa Bhikku. Pub. : Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. (Price not quoted).
- No Religion* : By Buddha Dasa Bhikku. Pub. : Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. (Price not quoted).
- Two Kinds of Languages* : By Buddha Dasa Bhikku. Pub. : Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka. (Price not quoted).
- Saint Yogaswami and the Testament of Truth* : By Ratna Navaratnam.
- Entering the Path of Enlightenment* : (Tr.) Marion L. Maties. Pub. : Allen and Unwin, London. (£ 4.50).
- The Wheel of Death* : By Philip Kapleau. Pub. : Allen & Unwin, London. (£ 2.50).
- Tao te Ching* : (Tr.) Ch'ies Ta-Kao. Pub. : Allen & Unwin, London. (£ 0.75).
- Ramdas Speaks* (Vol. V) : Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. (Rs. 4).
- Toe-hold on Zen* : By Jeffrey Swamin. Pub. : Allen & Unwin, London.
- The Meditation Way* : By Vimala Thakkar. Pub. : Vimal Prakashan Trust, Ahmedabad. (Rs. 2).
- The Christian and His Bible* : By Douglas Johnson. Pub. : Inter Varsity Fellowship, London. (2 sh.).
- The Buddhist Teaching of Totality* : By Gauna C. C. Chang. Pub. : Allen & Unwin, London. (£ 3.95).
- Pathway to Happiness and Other Essays* : By R. S. Rustogi. Pub. : Balkrishna Book Co., Lucknow. (Rs. 1.50).
- Crisis of Crisis* : By Sisirkumar Ghose. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. (Rs. 2).

The heart is a sanctuary at the Centre of which there is a little space, wherein the Great Spirit (*Wakantanka*) dwells..... He sees all things. If the heart is not pure *Wakantanka* cannot be seen, and if you should die in this ignorance, your soul shall not return immediately to *Wakantanka* but it must be purified by wandering about in the world.....The man who is thus pure contains the Universe within his heart.

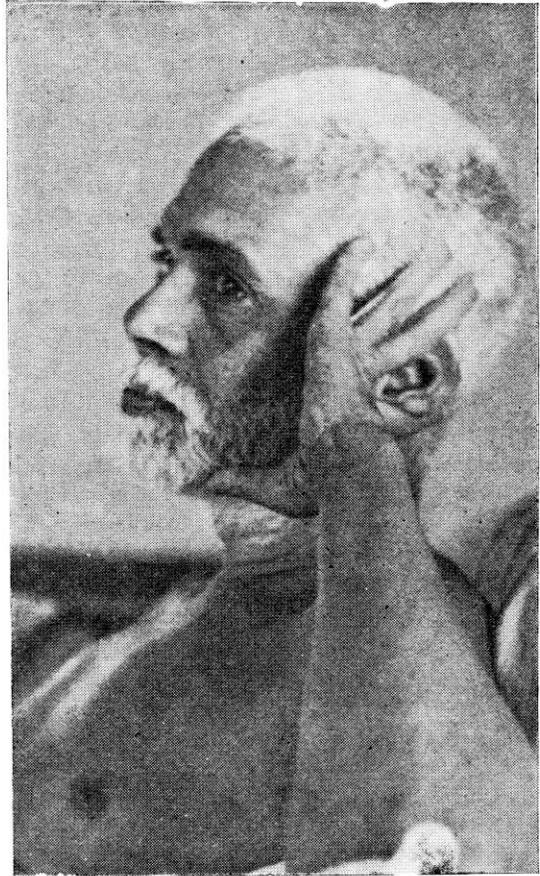
BLACK ELK

- Buddhist Meditation* : By Edward Conze. Pub. : Allen & Unwin, London. (£ 0.75).
- Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* : By M. R. Desai. Pub. : Prin. Desai Publication Trust, Kolhapur. (Rs. 25).
- Yoga of Light* :
- Hark! The Flute* : By Dilip Kumar Roy. Pub. : Hari Krishna Mandir, Poona-16. (Rs. 8).
- Spiritual Teaching of Ramana Maharshi* : Shambala Publication. (\$ 1.95).
- Education as Existential Possibility* : By Gario L. Caravaglia. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 7.50).
- Common Philosophy* : By F. H. Peterson. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 8.50).
- Kartikeya: the Divine Child* : By Ratna Navaratna. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. (Rs. 6).
- Initiation Into Yoga* : By Sri Krishna Prem. Manisha Granthalaya. (Rs. 1.50).
- Yoga of Kathopanishad* : By Sri Krishna Prem. Watkins, London (25 sh.).
- Eternal Bliss and Its Realisation* : By Amul Pada Chatterjee. Pub. : Keshavlal Mehta, Calcutta. (Re. 1).
- Existentialism and Creativity* : By Mitchel Bedford. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 12.50).
- Dictionary of American Philosophy* : By St. Elma Nauman. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 10.00).
- The Heart of Rigveda* : By M. R. Gopalacharya. Pub. : Somaiya Publication, Bombay.

INTRODUCING...



Sri M. S. Nagarajan



Sri M. S. Nagarajan, a staunch devotee of Bhagavan, comes from Mambattu, a village in the Polur Taluk of the North Arcot District of the state of Tamil Nadu. Even as a young boy he used to accompany his parents when they came to Tiruvannamalai for the yearly *Deepam* festival, at which time and on similar occasions, his father, who was a devotee of Bhagavan, used to take him to the Ashram. Thus he came to know Bhagavan in his childhood. When he was ten years old, his friend, who was a nephew of Echammal, spoke to him about the greatness of Bhagavan. He and this friend used to practise *dhyana* and yogic *asanas* (sitting postures) every day in the early morning. In the evening they meditated on Bhagavan. Sri Nagarajan used to have frequent visions of Bhagavan and Lord Murugan in his dreams. At about this time Ranga Rao, an old devotee of Bhagavan, now no more, had set up an ashram at Polur n Indra Ashram, to which other devotees of Bhagavan used to go and talk about Bhagavan and other spiritual matters.

In 1930, when Sri Nagarajan was 15 years old Ranga Rao brought him to Sri Ramanansramam. Here he was allotted the work of doing *puja*, and helping in the bookstall etc. But what he valued most was the privilege of cutting up vegetables and grinding the pulses and coconut gratings for chutney in the kitchen with Bhagavan. But most of the time he was in the Hall attending to some minor work or other. He had thus the opportunity of listening to the replies which Bhagavan gave to the questions put to Him by visitors and devotees. As a result of this he became a firm believer in the path of Self-Enquiry taught by Bhagavan.

At the end of six months Sri Nagarajan went home but soon returned and stayed on for four years. Jobs were offered to him but he was not interested in them since the acceptance of a job would mean parting from Bhagavan. But one day a letter came from his mother informing him that a job had been found for him. This letter came to the hands of Bhagavan along with the Ashram post. After reading it Bhagavan said: "Look here, a job has been found for you. Go and accept it

immediately." Tears came into the eyes of Sri Nagarajan at the thought of parting from Bhagavan. But Bhagavan said again: "You can go on Wednesday and join duty on Thursday." Unwillingly he left the Ashram. Thereafter he came to the Ashram as often as he could get leave.

While Sri Nagarajan was employed at Sattur from 1955 to 1958 he organised a Ramana *Mandali* where Bhagavan's songs like *The Marital Garland of Letters* were sung and devotees meditated every day. Talks were given periodically at this *Mandali*. Bhagavan's *Jayanti* and *Aradhana* were also celebrated in a fitting manner. Sri Nagarajan also established a school named Sri Ramana Vidya Mandiram Elementary School at Sattur in memory of Bhagavan.

After holding several important posts in the firm of Burmah Shell, Sri Nagarajan has now retired. Since then he lived for some time in Tambaram near Madras and is now living as an inmate of Sri Ramanasramam, rendering service as in the days of old!

FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

GURU POORNIMA	Sunday	15-7-1973
KRISHNA JAYANTHI	Tuesday	21-8-1973
VINAYAKA CHATURTHI	Friday	31-8-1973
NAVARATHRI (Commences on)	Thursday	27-9-1973
SARASWATHI POOJA	Friday	5-10-1973
VIJAYADASAMI	Saturday	6-10-1973
DEEPAVALI	Thursday	25-10-1973
SKANDASASHTI	Thursday	1-11-1973
DEEPAM	Saturday	8-12-1973
SRI BHAGAVAN'S JAYANTHI	Wednesday	9-1-1974
PONGAL	Monday	14-1-1974
CHINNASWAMY ARADHANA	Wednesday	6-2-1974
MAHASIVARATHRI	Wednesday	20-2-1974
SRI VIDYA HAVAN	Friday	15-3-1974
TELUGU NEW YEAR'S DAY (Yugadi)	Sunday	24-3-1974
TAMIL NEW YEAR'S DAY	Sunday	14-4-1974

WHO AM I?¹

By R. Narayana Iyer

“WHO AM I?” written by Maharshi is a short compendium of Advaita philosophy and the rationale behind the kaleidoscopic panorama of the universe that we see and experience in so many ways through our sense faculties. The various answers given to the doubts and queries of an earnest devotee have been collected and codified into a cogent whole making it appear as a brief treatise on philosophy based on the scriptures. The answers given were borne out of authentic personal experience. Even as Prince Siddharta in the prime of his youth, with all the paraphernalia of pleasure and pomp for a life of luxury and ease, felt perturbed and sorrow-stricken at the sight of miseries in the world, fled to the forest, renouncing everything, and found by himself the way to happiness through continuous meditation and introspection (self-enquiry), Bhagavan Sri Ramana left his home, his kith and kin, and plunged into a life of solitude at Holy Arunachala after having solved the mystery of life in his seventeenth year. His is an inner experience of thorough and complete identification with the Eternal from the depths of which we found him speaking to us, appearing like us as an ordinary human being with tastes and qualities like us. While speaking or writing about the Maharshi, we have to bear in mind this fundamental difference that, though he behaved like one among us, he had his roots in the depths of deep Realisation. How can we comprehend that State? No! Our mind is always prone to clutch at things, comprehend them and label them as in a druggist’s store ‘Liquor Aromatic’, ‘Terra-Cholera Ethelene’, and so forth. But our scriptures say: ‘God, God-

hood, Self-Realisation, Jnana and Jnani, are beyond mental comprehension — *Vaachaam agocharam.* Yet, we want to know them! Sri Bhagavan has said in the *Forty Verses* :

“To those who have not realised the Self, as well as to those who have, the word ‘I’ refers to the body, but with this difference, that for those who have not realised, the ‘I’ is confined to the body whereas for those who have realised the Self within the body the ‘I’ shines as the limitless Self.” — verse 17.

We find in the eternal scheme of things an unfathomable and mysterious link between the Real and the unreal. Like the hunter taking a tame deer to decoy and catch wild ones, once perhaps in hundreds of years, a personage, seeming like us in every way, appears in this unreal world and shows us the way to Reality.

Such a one was the Maharshi. So end we all our woes and worries, our squabbles and differences, our trifling problems of the moment and follow the path shown to us by the Maharshi and enter the Kingdom of Heaven, remembering for a moment the glaring fact affirmed by the obvious truth that “in a microscopic corner of one infinitesimal speck of dust floating in the black abyss of infinity inconsiderable atoms of human life hurry and fume and fret and are broken and triumphant in the trivial affairs of their instant in eternity. Lives begin and lives end but the primordial accident of life goes on”.

Accident? Is there one? To whom?

¹ From *Ramana Pictorial Souvenir*, pp. 20-21.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STATEMENTS AND ELUCIDATIONS

I

In *Values* April 1973 it is reported that Nataraja Guru disagreed as not scientific with Ramana Maharshi's statement that the Self was situated on the right side of the heart. Does he take it only in a physiological sense? I shall be grateful for your comments and clarification of this matter.

A. P.,
Bangalore.

Bhagavan did not mean the physical organ at the left side of the chest but the spiritual heart at the right to which the biblical text from ECCLESIASTES refers: 'The wise man's heart is at the right hand and the fool's heart is at the left.' It is the centre of spiritual awareness. With practice one may feel a sort of vibration which ends up by spreading into infinity. Actually the heart is spaceless but a place is indicated as a focussing point to start with till it becomes all-pervasive. Ancient texts confirm this experience.

EDITOR

II

May I bring to your notice a statement I came across in Vol II No. 4 March 73 of *Shri Gurudev Ashram Newsletter*, Ganeshpuri, in which the Swami relates that yogis lament death and that "Ramana Maharshi used often to say 'I am dying, I am dying'."

As a long time devotee of Bhagavan I find this statement unthinkable in the light of His teachings and I am wondering if the respected Swami is familiar with them or what was the source of this peculiarly incongruous remark. To my understanding and from His own testimony Ramana Maharshi emerged from His experience of death and what survives it as a self-realised man whose absolute Knowledge was permanent. What He used to say often is that there neither is birth nor death. That

it pertains only to the body with which people identify the selves in ignorance. That this illusion must go to realise our deathless, eternal state.

I cannot find even one reference to the above statement ('I am dying, I am dying') in any of the books written by Him or by the devotees who over the years faithfully recorded His daily sayings. Is there any evidence to support the Swami's assertion? Such an assertion one does not make lightly. I would be grateful for clarification on this point.

A. R. MARCH,
Trivandrum.

The editorial of this issue clarifies the position.

EDITOR

BHAGAVAN'S INSTRUMENT

So long as Mr. Osborne was with us he taught me the meaning of life and the purpose of one's coming into this world in the light of Bhagavan's teachings. With much care and patience he explained in his letters written to me, all that there was to learn from Bhagavan's method. He was no armchair philosopher; he lived Bhagavan's teaching. A dozen of his letters personally written to me (unpublished in the journal) are my only source of spiritual inspiration and tremendously encouraging. Many of my friends have been equally encouraged and impressed by reading them. Surely Bhagavan worked through him!

K. K.,
Calcutta.

Why not share with us the contents of these letters, or at least some of them, without infringing on their privacy, if any? After Bhagavan's MAHANIRVANA all sorts of reminiscences and anecdotes come to light and are greatly cherished.

EDITOR

KARMA AND FREEWILL

Kindly refer to your reply on page 53 of the January 73 issue, to a straight question by Mr. Jaya Raman from Madurai... There must be some connection between our previous karmas... How far the present is affected by previous actions, and to what extent *sanchita karma* goes to accumulate the whole as a portion of the karma left behind, is yet to be explained. The question is why a man should change to another phase — I purposely avoid the word 'death' — without finishing the previous karmas. Do you think that fate, as you say, has been prepared by oneself and is goading the present actions? The strength of the will to do may be much diminished in that case. I think we do require clarification in this respect. Thanks in anticipation.

J. L.,
Kashmir.

WE MAKE DESTINY

There is nothing like destiny other than the effect of our previous efforts. Our previous efforts are called... Our achievements are determined by our efforts... Our previous and present efforts, in case they are in contrary directions, are like two rams fighting against each other... Whether they are the past or the present efforts, it is the stronger ones that determine our destiny. The more powerful of the two always overthrows the other... In either case it is man's own effort that determines his destiny by virtue of its strength... Man determines his own destiny by his own thought. He can make also those things happen which were not destined to happen. The soul of man is powerful enough. Only those things happen in this world which it creates by its own free effort and not others... One should, therefore, overcome one's unfavourable destiny (the effect of one's past efforts) by greater effort in the present, gnashing his teeth... There is nothing in the world which cannot be achieved by men by right sort of effort.

— from *Yoga Vasistha*

On the relative plane there is a connection between our previous karmas and the present one taking effect, or in the making. Our thoughts and actions form, so to speak, grooves on the mind (VASANAS) which in their turn influence the pattern of our behaviour. Here it is where our free will comes into play. A cow tied to a tree with a rope can still go left or right within the length of the rope. Man has the freedom to strive spiritually to dispel the illusion of identifying himself with the body and then he will not be affected by whatever actions take place according to destiny, as he will not feel that he is 'the doer.' only a witness or an instrument of a higher power. This is in fact non-action in action — WEI WU WEI. Changing to another phase may be conducive to hasten the karmic clearing process.

EDITOR

REBIRTH AND EGO

I came across a statement that whoever takes birth will be naturally endowed with an ego. On the other hand there are messiahs, avatars, Sri Krishna in the *Gita* says in the chapter on *Inana-Yoga*: 'Though I am unborn, of imperishable nature and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet ruling over my own nature I am born by my own Maya.' Can one reconcile these two viewpoints?

ROBERT,
Bombay.

Shankaracharya comments on this SLOKA that Sri Krishna appears to be born and embodied through His own Maya but not in reality, unlike others who are still bound by their egos. If a seed is destroyed can it sprout again? Vasistha expresses the same view using the term 'appearance' conforming to prevailing customs like, for instance, having a guru at the appropriate time serves as an example to others.

EDITOR.

SADHANA AND THOUGHTS

I was drawn to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi through the writings of the late Sri Arthur Osborne. I have been pursuing my *sadhana* on the prescribed lines one year but I find that during meditation more thoughts than ever seem to rise up to disturb me; so I am very disheartened and feel miserable that I do not make any progress. What to do? Kindly give some advise.

S. A.,
Toronto.

By the Grace of Bhagavan I started reading *The Mountain Path* and other spiritual literature of Sri Ramanasramam only recently.

I am a householder trying to follow the path leading to Self-realisation. Though I try to detach my mind and engage it in His *Nama Japa* it jumps up and starts wandering like a monkey.

Looking at Bhagavan's photo helps and I feel more at peace. In spite of these blessings at times I feel a sort of uneasiness or drowsiness or restless with too many thoughts or the mind loses all track. Please guide....

DR. K. V.,
Kashmir.

During sadhana one may become tired and drowsy but that need not dishearten a SADHAKA. It is a natural defence of the ego. Sadhana is a series of ups and downs particularly in the beginning stages, like waves. When we try to concentrate in meditation more errant thoughts than ever seem to rise. This can be very frustrating. However the fact is that distracting thoughts are never increased by meditation, explains Chang Chen-chi in his PRACTICE OF ZEN. Meditation only makes one more aware of them. Ordinarily the thought-flux keeps on flowing practically unnoticed. So becoming aware of errant thoughts is a sign of progress. The impression-seeds which constitute the basic framework of the human mind are brought into play (HSIEN HSING) and having come to the surface can be eradicated through meditation or Self-enquiry. With practice the mind becomes quiet.

EDITOR

Sri Ramanasramam

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