



# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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

Vol. 11, No. I, January 1974

"(In sunlight the lotus blossoms), how then couldst Thou, the Sun of suns, hover before me like a flower bee, saying 'thou art not yet in blossom', Oh Arunachala?"

—The Marital Garland  
of Letters, verse 40.

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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. 11

JANUARY 1974

No. I

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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.

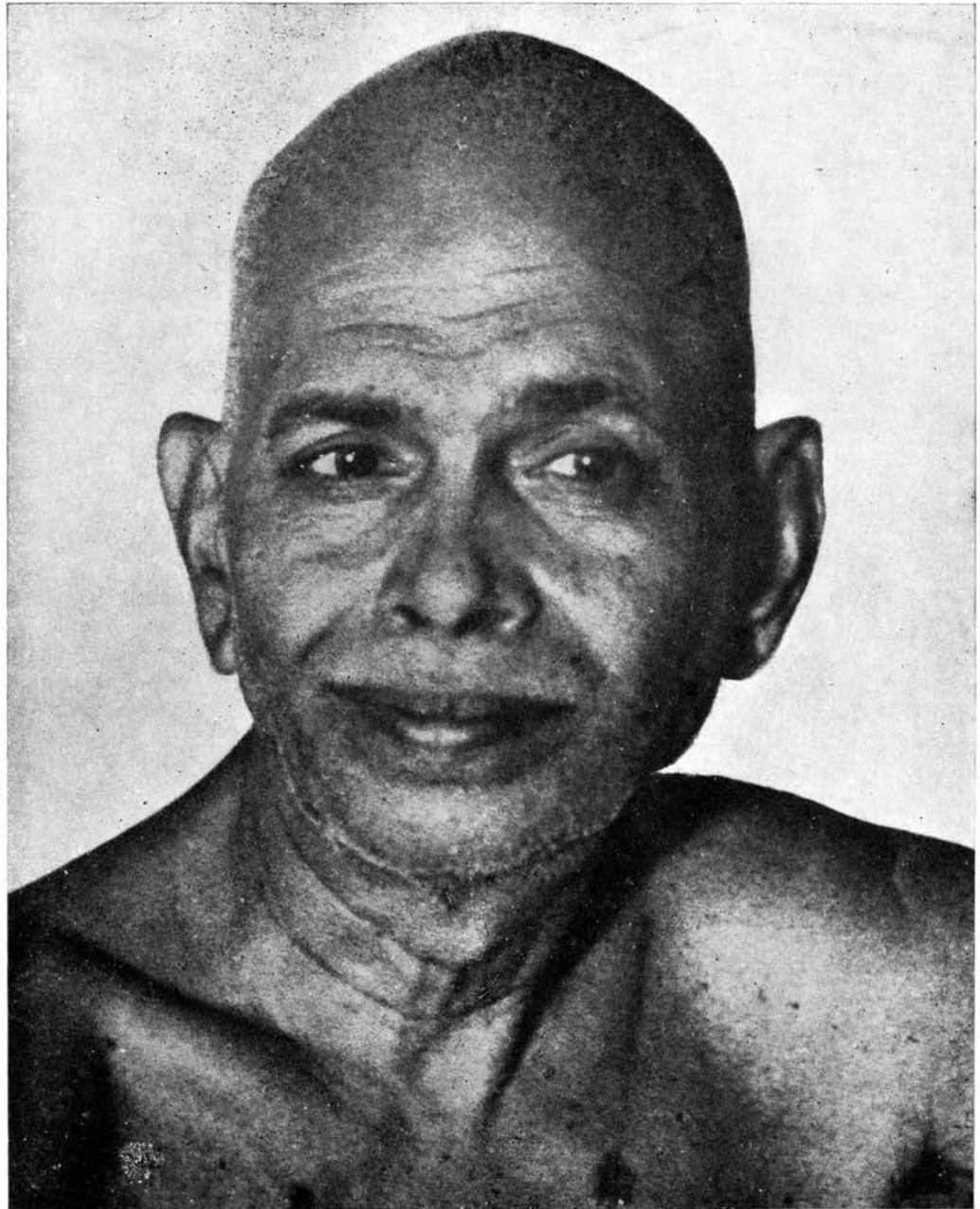
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**THE MOUNTAIN PATH**  
is dedicated to  
**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**



# The Mountain Path

Vol. 11. No. I, January 1974

Editor : LUCIA OSBORNE

Editorial

## ARUNACHALA

*"Arunachala! Thou art the Inner Self who  
dancest in the heart as 'I'. Heart is Thy  
name, O Lord."*

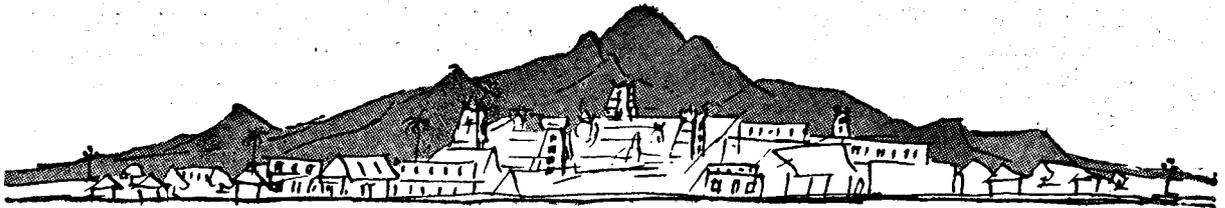
-- Five Stanzas to Sri Arunachala, verse 2.

IN the *puranas* Arunachala is referred to as the oldest hill on earth and is regarded as the heart of the universe. Scientists have also pointed out the eastern ghats of the Deccan plateau as the oldest land. Arunachala has many names : *Arunagiri, Sonagiri, Sudarsanagiri, Annamalai* to mention only a few and is also referred to as the *Tejolingam* -- the *Lingam* of fire -- which is the formless emblem of Siva.

The form of the Hill is said to resemble *Sri Chakra*, the emblem of the Cosmos with its substratum ; and *sbāktas* regard this hill as *Sri Chakra* itself. Bhagavan took an active part in the installation of *Sri Chakra* in the temple dedicated to the Mother.<sup>1</sup>

Devotees of Siva consider this divine mountain as the form of Siva who appeared in the midst of Brahma and Vishnu as a column of fire without beginning or end in order to dispel their ignorance after both failed to realise his Presence with the aid of their physical efforts. This signifies the inability of mind or intellect to go beyond itself. Arunachala is traditionally identified with *Sudarsana* (a form of the *chakra* or discus of Vishnu). In the form of a deity, Sri Sudarsana appears in a fierce aspect, armed with weapons of destruction. When a seeker penetrates beyond the semblance of the

<sup>1</sup> See *The Mountain Path*, article by Krishna Bikshu (April '65, pp. 77, 80).



Drawn by SRI BHAGAVAN

Terrible while struggling to overcome what seems terrible in himself -- namely the dark downward propensities of his own psyche -- Grace reveals itself as Love and Compassion. This, according to Dr. Mees, an authority on symbolism, is the etymology of *Sudarsana* aiming at the destruction of these propensities so as to reveal Love and Beauty.

Many saints and sages have sung and composed songs in praise of Arunachala and its import, and some have attained enlightenment here. Shankara also seems to have visited Arunachala. In one of his compositions he calls this Hill 'Meru' and says, like Bhagavan, that *Siddha Purushas* are found here. Saint Namasivaya lived in one of the caves, which is still called by his name. His disciple has written the well-known *Annamalai Venba*, a hymn in praise of Arunachala.<sup>2</sup> Another well-known Saiva saint, Virupaksha, also lived in a cave higher up on the slope. It is said to be in the shape of OM -- and some devotees have heard there the sound of OM in silent meditation. The saint's tomb is there and the cave bears his name. Bhagavan spent seventeen years in it and later moved up to Skandashram where a trickle of water changed overnight to a perennial stream whose water, like that of the Ganges, does not deteriorate with time. Arunagirinathar, another notable saint, is also celebrated for his songs of praise after he received illumination through the grace of Muruga in the Arunachala temple.

When mention was made one day of the tank adjoining the ashram being called Agastya Thirtam, the Maharshi was asked if that sage ever visited the Hill. Bhagavan remarked: "Yes, of course, everyone must come here eventually," meaning that everyone must eventually return to the Source -- Arunachala.

Sages have said that one can attain salvation by being born in Tiruvarur, by dying in Benares, worshipping in Chidambaram and by merely thinking of Arunachala. "So worship Arunachala of shining golden lustre for mere remembrance of Him ensures Deliverance,"<sup>3</sup> Bhagavan also affirms.

Bhagavan mentioned that the Hill is one of Light. Sometimes one can see manifestations

of lights on the Hill. In the early years, a French devotee, Sujata Sen, once spent the night on the Hill in protest against an order of the management not allowing women devotees to remain in the ashram after dark. This was the most wonderful time for many devotees when Bhagavan used to sit with them for an hour or so in radiant silence. Sujata dwelt on her grievance one-pointedly. Next morning she told me that she was taken inside the Hill and found a whole world in it, which she described. I did not pay much attention to this, dismissing it as a dream or imagination. Strangely enough many years later, in 1970 to be precise, another devotee, Mr. S. N. Tandon, had a similar experience which he described in detail in the April issue of that year. It is reminiscent of Dante's inferno, leading by stages to Light, in which all manifestation disappears in the feeling of pure I-Amness.

Sri Viswanatha Swami, who from his adolescence spent many years with Bhagavan, shares with us the following account: Bhagavan said to him one day in the early twenties: "Innumerable are the visions I have had of this Hill, Arunachala. I have seen beautiful groves of trees and fine places inside it. Once I saw a large tank and a big congregation of rishis and yogis seated on a wide plain around it. Every face was familiar and so were the surroundings. A dais was there and I went up and sat on it with my right hand held up in *Chin-mudra*. It seemed my usual place and my usual pose." *Chin-mudra* is a pose in which the right hand is held up with the thumb and fore-finger joined and the three remaining fingers straight up. It is the pose of Dakshinamurti. It denotes the unity of the individual with Brahman, the transcendental Reality beyond the three gunas.

It is said in the *puranas* that a *Siddha Purusha*,<sup>4</sup> the ancient Teacher in the form of an eternal youth, is present higher up on one

<sup>2</sup> "The Hill which draws to Itself those who are rich in *janatapas* (those who are ever intent on gaining wisdom) is this Arunachala."

— from *Annamalai Vemba*.

<sup>3</sup> *Necklet of Nine Gems*, verse 2.

<sup>4</sup> Please also refer to our April '73 issue, p. 76 for a special article on this subject.

of the slopes seated under an enormous banian tree diffusing His spiritual radiance in silence.

In the early days Bhagavan used to roam a good deal on the Hill. One day he found in a dried up watercourse a banian leaf of such enormous size that it set him wondering what tree could produce such a leaf. Proceeding further he saw from a distance a huge banian tree growing on what looked like sheer rock. Going nearer Bhagavan inadvertently put his foot in a hornet's nest and did not withdraw it till the hornets appeased their anger for being disturbed by badly stinging his leg. Bhagavan did not go near the tree but returned to his abode. Subsequently he firmly discouraged devotees from trying to find the place saying that it was inaccessible and not advisable for them to do so. "It is impossible. I know it!" he told them. "For there shall no man see Me and live" (*Exodus* 33, 20). The finite ego must die before it can behold and merge with Infinity. Once a whole group of devotees, obviously not yet aware of Bhagavan's injunction, set out to locate the place but they found themselves in such distress that all they prayed for was to be able to turn back safely!

Any endeavour to write about Arunachala is like painting the lily - to borrow an apt expression. It is impossible to present it better or clearer than Bhagavan himself has done and in this case there is no distinction. Arunachala in the form of Bhagavan speaks about Himself! Like Bhagavan, the Hill comes to life and can appear to us as the Beloved of our heart in indescribable tenderness. What could be dearer, nearer than one's own Self -- Arunachala?

"O nectar springing up in the heart of devotees.... Haven of my refuge...."

"The One Self, the sole Reality alone exists eternally. When even the ancient teacher, Dakshinamurti revealed it through speechless eloquence, who else could convey it by speech?"

Bhagavan explained that the universe is like a painting on a screen, the screen being

the red Hill, Arunachala. That which rises and sinks is made up of what it rises from. The finality of the universe is Arunachala. Meditating on Arunachala or the Self, there is a vibration 'I'. Tracing the source of 'I', the primal 'I'-I' alone remains over -- and it is inexpressible. The very first *sloka* in the *Marital Garland of Letters* expresses this tersely: "Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, O Arunachala."

Bhagavan, who scarcely ever gave advice to devotees unless asked, wholeheartedly approved and encouraged their going round the Hill as conducive to progress in sadhana and very beneficial. He himself set an example by doing it countless times. Worship is expressed by going round the object of worship in silent remembrance or singing *bhajans* -- and not giving way to stray thoughts. One usually goes barefoot. The most auspicious times are full-moon days, *Sivaratri* (The Night of Siva) and *Kārtikai*, the night when the beacon is lit on top of the Hill.<sup>5</sup> It is said that the pilgrim is accompanied by an invisible host of *Siddhas* and *Rishis*. On festival days, the stream of pilgrims in white and brightly coloured clothes resembles garlands of flowers, strewn around Arunachala, wafting their scent in *bhajans*.

Among the many holy places in India representing different modes of spirituality, Arunachala stands out as the centre of the most direct path, guided by the silent influence of the Guru. It is the centre and the path where physical contact with the Guru is not necessary. The silent teaching acts and speaks direct to the heart. There was something essentially immutable and rocklike in Bhagavan, though he had a thousand faces. He spoke and explained when asked, but his greatest and most inspiring teaching was, like the Hill, like Dakshinamurti, given in silence. Through Bhagavan, the immense potentiality for spiritual regeneration inherent in Arunachala, with which He identified Himself, was brought to life and into focus.

<sup>5</sup> For an account of it see the *Ashram Bulletin* of this issue.

The Benedictory adopted as an auspicious introduction to the *Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala* was rather puzzling as to who actually wrote those words "... the *Paramatman*, who is the same as Arunachala or Ramana." Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer, one of the oldest devotees, who gave up his practice as a lawyer to serve Bhagavan, was consulted and so was Sri Visvanatha Swami. The account of the matter is that one day, when Bhagavan went out of Virupaksha Cave for his usual morning walk, one Amritanathayati put on Bhagavan's seat a piece of paper on which he told in a Malayalam verse of his great longing to know who Bhagavan really was -- "Are you the manifestation of Lord Vishnu, or Siva, or the great grammarian Vararuchi, or the greatest of *yatis* (renunciates) ? . . ." His question was couched in classic form and script. When he returned a little later to the cave, he found Bhagavan already back from his walk. On the reverse of the piece of paper was Bhagavan's reply, also in verse and Malayalam script, rendered with mastery. On reading it, Amritanathayati felt shaken and in all humility fell at Bhagavan's feet "like a tall coconut tree cut even at the base," to use his own words !

The reply was as follows :

"In the lotus-shaped heart of all, beginning with Vishnu, there shines as Absolute Consciousness the *Paramatman* who is the same as Arunachala-Ramana. When the mind melts with love of Him and reaches the inmost recess of the Heart wherein He dwells as the Beloved, the subtle eye of pure intellect opens and He reveals Himself as Pure Consciousness."

"Through the potent Grace of Bhagavan" <sup>6</sup> wrote the founder-editor, "the path of Self-enquiry was brought within the competence of men and women of this age, was indeed fashioned into a new path that can be followed in the conditions of the modern world with no form or ritual . . . This creation of a new path to suit the needs of the age has made Arunachala the spiritual centre of the world. More than ever, now that He has shed His physical body and is one with Arunachala, the Grace and guidance that emanates from Him

## SILENCING

By paul rePS

each evening  
silently  
observe  
any thought  
any feel

so simple  
delight  
very peaceful too

to those who turn to Him and seek His aid is centred outwardly at Arunachala, to which many are drawn, both those who were disciples of Bhagavan in his lifetime and those who have come later."

As in the lifetime of Bhagavan, so also now one can turn and speak to Arunachala Ramana far more effectively than in one's own words, by repeating an appropriate verse chosen from the *Five Hymns to Arunachala* which Bhagavan wrote on behalf of His disciples from whom He was not separate. The individual, being only a mode of Absolute Consciousness, struggles against his finitude to regain his primordial state of absolute freedom through Grace. These verses come from the devotees' own heart :

"Even when the thieves of the five senses break in upon me, art Thou not still in my heart, O Arunachala !"

"On seeking Thy Real Self with courage I lost my moorings. Have mercy on me, Arunachala !"

"Unless Thou extend Thy hand of Grace in mercy, I am lost, O Arunachala !"

"Unlovable I am to look at now, yet ornament me with Thy Grace and then regard me, O Arunachala !"

<sup>6</sup> *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, p. 81.

"Thou hast administered the drug of confusion to me, so must I be confounded ! Shine Thou as Grace, the cure of all confusion, O Arunachala !"

"Lord ! Who art Consciousness Itself reigning over the sublime Sonagiri, forgive the grievous wrongs of this poor self, and by Thy gracious glance benignant as the rain cloud, save me from being lost once more in the dreary waste, or else I cannot ford the grim (stream of universal) manifestation." . . . .

"Lord ! Deign to ease me in my weariness struggling like a deer that is trapped. Lord Arunachala ! What can be Thy will ?"

"O Pure One ! If the five elements, the living beings and every manifest thing is nothing but Thy all-embracing Light, how then can I alone be separate from Thee . . ."

Bhagavan has given many indications of His continued presence. Everpresent, all-pervading, where could He go ? Outwardly manifested and visible as the Hill, He will remain here always guiding as before. Only the body travels -- the Self just IS, Bhagavan used to say. His body travelled and disappeared. He just IS as He always has been and the visible support of Grace is Arunachala. It is a great blessing to be able to come here, to stay here. After many years, every day still seems like a gift. One cannot help feeling the living Presence, radiation and powerful spiritual help accorded to those who seek it, and above all are humble enough to surrender to this influence in faith !

**"Your Buddha nature is like the Jewel sword of the Vajra King. Whoever touches it is killed. Find the subject which casts the shadows. It is the very source of all Buddhas."**

**"Your true nature is like a massive raging fire ; everything within reach loses its' life."**

—Bassui Tokusho

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## *Extracts*

*from*

# *Skanda Purana*

---

(Selected and rendered into Tamil Verses  
by Sri Bhagavan)

---

NANDI, the foremost devotee of Siva, said :

"That is the holy place ! Of all Arunachala is the most sacred ! It is the heart of the world ! Know it to be the secret and sacred Heart-centre of Siva ! In that place He always abides as the glorious Aruna Hill !"

SIVA said :

"Though in fact fiery, the appearance of a hill on this spot is an effect of grace and loving solicitude for the maintenance of the world. Here I always abide as the Great One (*Siddha*). Remember that in the interior of my Heart is transcendental glory with all the enjoyments of the world also.

"That, whose sight suffices to remove all demerits which divide Being into countless worlds and egos, is this glorious Arunachala.

"What cannot be acquired without endless pains -- the true import of the Vedanta -- is easily got by all who can either directly sight this Hill or even mentally think of it from afar.

"I ordain that residence within a radius of three *yojanas*<sup>7</sup> of this Hill shall by itself suffice to burn off all defects . . . ."

DEVI said :

"This is always the abode of pious devotees. Those who do evil to others here will, after suffering ills, be destroyed. Wicked persons will be completely bereft of their power to do evil here. Do not fall into the burning fire of the anger of Lord Arunachala, who has assumed the form of the Hill of Fire."

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<sup>7</sup> one *yojana* is 10 miles.

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Although He taught the direct spiritual path of *vichara*, Bhagavan never discouraged His devotees from using any supports, which prove helpful in the quest. Now that the Master's physical body — the most precious of all physical supports of Grace — has been withdrawn from us, the Hill of Arunachala can be regarded as a powerful mainstay, writes our late founder Editor.

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## PHYSICAL SUPPORTS OF GRACE

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By Arthur Osborne

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IN every religion physical objects serve as a support of Divine Grace. A tooth of the Buddha, a hair of the Prophet, a fragment of the true Cross has been enough to draw pilgrims through the centuries. At the time of the Reformation in Europe the attack was immediately turned upon such physical supports — relics, shrines, rosaries and so forth. The Reformers did not know that they were undermining religion; they were earnest and devout; but what resulted from the iconoclasm of the 17th century was the rationalism, agnosticism and atheism of the 18th and 19th. They made reason the arbiter of faith, rejecting whatever had no rational explanation, and even today there are critics and historians who praise this attitude, not seeming to realize that to subordinate the spiritual to the mental is an inversion of the natural order of things and leads inevitably to the rationalism that denies the Spirit altogether.

Actually it may be possible to give a rational explanation of the physical supports of Grace. It may be that they serve as radiating centres equivalent in a sense to the transmitters of physical radiations, however those who attacked them knew nothing of such possibilities, nor do those who admit such possibilities today understand that spiritual forces stand in no need of their rational explanations but work whether explained or not.

Whether explained in terms of radiation or not, Grace does emanate from a physical support. Is it imagination? If Bhagavan had been asked he might have agreed that it is but only in the sense that the whole world including one's own body, is imagination. It is as real as the mind that questions its reality.

Some, however, have wondered whether it is legitimate to use physical supports of Grace on such a direct and purely spiritual path as that enjoined by Bhagavan. It was with some such doubt that an English devotee who has never yet been able to come to Tiruvannamalai wrote to me asking for some object, such as a small stone, from near the tomb but felt that his request might be inappropriate. It was quite appropriate. Although he taught the purely direct and spiritual path of *vichara*, Bhagavan never discouraged any from observing the rites of their religion or from using any physical supports so long as they were helpful. The path he taught was universal; it included devotion and disinterested activity as well as knowledge. Indeed his devotional hymns to Arunachala are a constant support to the devotees. His very coming there was a recognition of the physical manifestation of Grace, since Arunachala has been through the ages the supreme centre of silent initiation, of Siva manifested as Dakshinamurthy, teaching in silence. No one could be more insistent on

its actual sanctity. He said : "Mount Kailas is the abode of Siva but Arunachala is Siva Himself." He saw the sacred hill as the form assumed by pure Spirit for the support and guidance of men. Now that the physical body of Bhagavan -- the most precious of all physical supports of Grace -- has been withdrawn from us, the Hill emits power and Grace for his devotees even more than before.

When I was asked for some token from the hill I was able, fortunately, to quote the approval of Bhagavan in a similar case. Once when he was walking on the hill he said to Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami who was with him : "Some devotee from a far-off land has asked for a stone to be taken from the most holy part of the hill and sent to him. He thinks that some part of the hill alone is holy ; he does not know that the whole hill is Arunachala ; he does not know that Arunachala Himself is the hill." And picking up a small stone, he added, "I sent him a stone like this."

Bhagavan would sometime give a devotee some object as a vehicle of Grace, but very seldom, as he had normally nothing to give. In his youthful years he would sometimes cut a stick from the hill, fashion it into a staff for walking and give it to somebody. Sometimes also he would touch an object that was shown to him and give it back. When I left for Madras and showed him the lifesize portrait of him that I was taking with me he held it in his hands before giving it back and said : "He is taking Swami with him !"

It may not be inappropriate to end this article with the strange story of how I received a shoe-horn from him. We were sitting outside the hall. Bhagavan was reclining on his usual couch. There was a sudden clatter and we saw that a metal shoe-horn had fallen to the ground near the couch. How it came to fall there no one could say -- there was no breeze and no monkeys or squirrels were playing about. The attendant gave it to Bhagavan who examined it and began demonstrating its use as a spoon. I was sitting in the front row and explained its use as a shoe-horn. Bhagavan who did not like anything to be wasted asked me whether I would like it. And so I received a gift from him who had nothing to give ; from the Divine Giver who had all to give !

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# YOGA VASISHTA

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**In our series of selections made by  
Sri Bhagavan from great works we publish  
in this issue six stanzas from the *Yoga  
Vasishtha*. The numbers in brackets indicate  
the numbers of the chapter and verses in  
the original.**

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1. Holding on to the vision of the Absolute, abandoning all objects of contemplation, abiding in your own Self, and liberated even while alive, play in the world, O Raghava<sup>1</sup> ! (V-18-17)
2. Abandoning all desires inwardly, free from attachments and latent impressions, active outwardly, play in the world, O Raghava ! (V-18-18)
3. Outwardly active but inwardly inactive, outwardly a doer but inwardly a non-doer, play in the world, O Raghava ! (V-18-22)
4. Free from egoism, mind still as in sleep, pure as the sky, unblemished, play in the world, O Raghava ! (V-18-25)
5. Conducting yourself nobly and strictly keeping to worldly conventions but inwardly free and completely detached, play in the world, O Raghava ! (V-18-19)
6. Free from desires inwardly but acting outwardly as if prompted by desires, inwardly composed but outwardly feigning effort, play in the world, O Raghava ! (V-18-21)

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<sup>1</sup> Another name for Sri Rama.

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# PLOTINUS

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By Gerard Casey

---



---

*'I have in search of my Father . . .  
started from here . . .'*

-- Sri Ramana Maharshi

*'The Fatherland to us is there whence we have come and There is the Father'*

-- Plotinus

---



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**Plotinus, the last of the great Greek philosophers, was deeply interested in Eastern thought. His metaphysical doctrine testifies to this, for it envisages man's supreme aim as union with the Divine Source.**

**The aspect of the Eternal expressed as Beauty receives special emphasis. All finite beauties reflect the splendour of the Divine Essence. But warns Plotinus : "Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike and never can the soul have vision of the Divine Beauty unless it itself be beautiful."**

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**P**LOTINUS, the last of the great philosophers in the classical Greek tradition, was born in Egypt in the year 204 A.D. He was about twenty-seven years of age when he conceived a passion for philosophy and before long he discovered, and became a student at the school of Ammonias Saccas at Alexandria. Of Ammonias we know little but it is certain that the man who was accepted as guide and teacher in philosophy by both Origen and Plotinus must have been a proficient in spiritual knowledge in no ordinary degree. Origen was to achieve a masterly synthesis between his Christian faith and Greek philosophy and exerted an enormous influence on the development of Christian theology. Plotinus -- one of the supreme thinkers of the world -- was to be a source of creative power and intellectual insight for the deepest streams of Christian, Islamic and Jewish thought throughout the Middle Ages. And today he remains as one of the most potent factors working towards slow but incalculably deep transmutations of western thought.

What we know of the life of Plotinus we owe to his close friend and disciple Porphyry who left a brief account as an introduction to his edition of the writings of his master known as the *Enneads*. Porphyry tells us that Plotinus became interested in Persian and Indian thought — with which he must have become acquainted in Alexandria. Alexandria was at that time the great intellectual and cultural centre of the Roman Empire and to it came students and thinkers and religious seekers from all over the ancient world to exchange ideas and insights. In the face of all these influences Plotinus was intensely receptive and, as need arose, critical. His interest in eastern thought was such that after eleven years with Ammonias he joined an expedition of the Emperor Gordian to Persia in an attempt to reach India. The expedition however was a failure and after Gordian was killed by his own soldiers in Mesopotamia, Plotinus was forced to return as a fugitive to Antioch. From there at the age of forty he went on to Rome where he spent the rest of his life teaching philosophy to all who sought his wisdom. He died in 270 A.D. in the presence of his friend and physician Eustochius to whom he said shortly before his death. 'I am giving back the Divine in myself to the Divine in the All.'

In some short comments on his personal characteristics Porphyry remarks that Plotinus seemed ashamed of being in the body. 'The body is doomed to fail of its joys and perish.' He would never speak of his ancestry, parentage or birthplace. He would not sit with a painter or sculptor for a portrait as he said he did not wish to leave behind him an image of an image.

He took a close and kindly interest in all who approached him. He became a guardian of many orphan children entrusted to him and fulfilled all the duties of such a trust lovingly and conscientiously. Yet, says Porphyry, he at no time unless in deep sleep relaxed from 'his interior attention, his unbroken concentration . . . his intention towards the Supreme.'

Such was Plotinus the man !

Let us now glance fleetingly at some aspects of his tremendous intellectual vision. He

achieved a synthesis of the metaphysical insights of Plato and Aristotle ethically conditioned by all that was noblest in Stoicism and deepened by his awareness of the spiritual problems stressed by two centuries of the rapidly spreading Christian religion.

For Plotinus the supreme aim of man's spiritual striving is union with 'the One': the timeless source of All — a union which in strict truth already exists yet needs to be consciously realized as existing by man as man. This realisation is achieved by an intuitive intellection on man's part. Such an intellection is possible because the intellectual centre in man is essentially one with the One. However — in order to help the aspirant achieve the necessary spiritual predisposition and intellectual insights effective for realisation Plotinus evolves a metaphysical doctrine as a support to the approach, and in this his doctrine of the Divine is central.

The Divine is, in itself, conceived as a Triad in Unity, The Divine Triad is distinguished intellectually as :

1. The One : the absolute unconditioned ground and source of all. Plotinus on occasion also refers to the One as the Father.
2. The Divine Mind : the first emanation and Intelligible Image of the One.
3. The Divine Soul : the Living Image of the Divine Mind which is the second emanation of the One and which is reflected in the Cosmos.

It must never be forgotten however that these intellectual distinctions are conceived only as practical supports for the finite mind and that the Divine Triad is essentially a Unity.

The Divine gives birth in its infinite creative outflow to the Cosmos as its temporal Image or Shadow. The Cosmos exists in ceaseless contemplation of, and aspiration of return to, its Divine Source : the One. The Cosmos is a living Being reflecting the Divine Triad back to itself in the One. All modes and manifestations of life in the Cosmos share in their degree in the Divine Life. The Soul of Man is in its essence, the Image of the Divine Triad particularised in the space-time life of

man in the Cosmos. By realising this Divine Image within his individual soul it is possible for man to effect return to the unconditioned freedom of the Divine. This possibility man shares with all phases of existence which all participate in the Divine outflow and return. It is man's spiritual task to realise this possibility which, in so far as it involves return to the freedom of the Divine, can only be freely undertaken. All manifestation -- with its attendant conflict of division and suffering -- is conceived as necessitated by the infinite creative outflow of the Divine to the realisation of all possibilities. Yet all suffering is redeemed in that all modes of existence remain centred in the freedom and bliss of their source and return to it. To this absolute source or ground -- the Eternal -- we say 'all returns' though in truth there can be nothing outside it and therefore 'the return' consists only in realising the truth. But how are we to understand this?

In Plotinus' own words 'we must come to some understanding of this perpetuity . . . what then can this be, this something in virtue of which we declare the entire Divine Realm to be Eternal, everlasting?'

'It must be at once something in the nature of a unity and yet a motion compact of diversity . . . considering this multifarious power, we declare it to be Essence or Being in so far as it is in some sense a subject or substratum; where we see life we think of it as movement; where all is unvaried self-identity, we call it repose; we know it as, at once, difference and identity when we recognise all is unity in variety.

'Then we reconstruct; we sum all into a collected unity once more, a sole Life in the Supreme; we concentrate diversity and all the endless productions of act: thus we know a life never varying, not becoming what previously it was not, the thing immutably itself, broken by no interval, and knowing this we know Eternity.

'We know it as a Life changelessly motionless and ever holding the Universal content in actual presence; not this now and now that other, but always all; not existing now in one

## WHEREFROM

By Wei Wu Wei

**If I look from where 'looking' looks  
instead of from where I-me thinks it 'sees';  
then I will apperceive instead of just  
'perceiving'.**

mode and now in another, but a consummation without part or interval. All its content is in immediate concentration as at one point; nothing in it ever knows development, all remains identical within itself knowing nothing of change, forever in a Now since nothing of it has passed away or will come into being, but what it is now, that it is ever . . . Eternity exists therefore as the announcement of the identity of the Divine, of that state-of-being thus and not otherwise -- which characterises what has no futurity but eternally is . . . no ground is left for its existence but that it be what it is . . . the Life -- instantaneously entire, complete, at no point broken into period or part -- which belongs to the Divine by its very existence this is Eternity.'<sup>1</sup>

In Plotinus the aspect of the Eternal apprehended as Beauty receives extraordinary emphasis. All finite beauties participate in the One Supreme Beauty which is their source. This Beauty is uttered as Splendour: an eternal shining-forth of the Divine Essence.

But, warns Plotinus, . . . 'to any vision must be brought an eye adapted to what is to be seen and having some likeness to it. Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike, and never can the soul have vision of the Divine Beauty unless it itself be beautiful . . . the Primal Good and the Primal Beauty have one dwelling place . . . the Fatherland is to us There whence we have come, and There is the Father . . . but what are we to do?

<sup>1</sup> *Enneads*, 3 : 7.

How lies the path? This is not a journey for the feet; feet bring us only from land to land; nor need you think of coach or ship to carry you; all this order of things you must set aside . . . you must close the eyes and call up another vision which is to be waked within you: a vision, the birthright of all, which few turn to use . . .<sup>2</sup>

The thought of Plotinus bears evidence of an infusion of eastern metaphysical doctrines -- probably assimilated through contacts established in his Alexandrian years. This makes it of especial interest and value in our time when the deeper religious minds of both east and west are seeking an understanding that has not been readily attainable in the past. It is fascinating to recall that in India during the lifetime of Plotinus there lived another man of supreme metaphysical insight and power. At that very time Nāgārjuna was initiating the spread of the great Mahayana school of Buddhism in which the *Prajna paramita* doctrines in many respects seem to spring from intuitions essentially at one with those of Plotinus. This is especially noticeable in the use of radical negations when either of these two great minds attempts to articulate in some sense their doctrine of the transcendent Supreme. Nāgārjuna's Void and Plotinus' One are indistinguishable once the necessary allowances for different initiating perspectives and philosophical terms have been made. And for Nāgārjuna, 'all beings, all ways have the Void for their Refuge'. While for Plotinus 'all things return to the One'.

But let us close by meditating on some words of Plotinus himself:

'God is outside of none, present unperceived to all; we break away from Him, or rather from ourselves: what we turn from we cannot reach; astray ourselves we cannot go in search of another; a child distraught will not recognise its father; to find ourselves is to know our source.

'In our present state we must hold through our own centre to the centre of centres . . . The Supreme as containing no otherness is always with us; we are with it when we put otherness away . . . we are always before

## St. John's ASCENT OF THE MOUNTAIN

By Sushila

To come to enjoy it all, have no joy --  
in nothing.

To come to possess it all, have no possession --  
in nothing.

To come to be it all, be not a thing --  
in nothing.

To come to know it all, know not a thing --  
in nothing.

To arrive to that which you do not savour,  
You must go through that which you do not  
savour.

To arrive to that which you do not know,  
You must go through that which you do not  
know.

To arrive to that which you do not possess,  
You must go through that which you do not  
possess.

To arrive to that which you are not,  
You must go through that which you are not.

it: but we do not always look: when we look our Term is attained; this is rest, this is the end of all ill; effectively before Him, we lift a choral song full of God.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Enneads*, 1:6.

<sup>3</sup> *Enneads*, 6:9.

Note:—There are two excellent translations of *The Enneads* into English: one by Stephen MacKenna from which the passages quoted above are taken; the other by A. H. Armstrong for the Loeb Classics Series. Armstrong's text for the last three *Enneads* however, has not yet been published.

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**On completing an extended stay at the Ashram, Charles Reeder, his wife and baby daughter left for home in America. They interrupted their journey to pay a visit to the Dalai Lama at his Indian abode in the far north. Charles made careful note of their conversation, which is reproduced here.**

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“*SUNYATA* does not mean that the ‘I’ does not exist; it means that it does not exist independently. You cannot find it by searching for it. It depends on causes and conditions and does not exist apart from them. The same goes for ‘objective’ reality, such as this table, which has no existence outside its constituents. But if you try to say that ‘I’ does not exist, you make a fool of yourself!”

“*Mahakaruna* -- Great Compassion -- can be developed by always being aware that other beings have the same wish to be happy that you do. They have the same regard for themselves that you have. So you should become capable of putting yourself in their place. You should practise looking at other people as though you were in their position.”

“From one point of view you learn about your weakness and how to overcome them not from the Buddha, nor from your Guru, but from your enemy. Therefore you should have respect for him as your Teacher also. Love that you feel for your children, wife or family, if it does not extend beyond them to even your enemies, is not true love, but attachment.”

“I respect the Chinese because through our contact with them we learned what *real* suffering is, what *real* patience is, and what *real* non-attachment is. When you are able to extend love equally to all beings, then you know you are following the right path.”

“It may be difficult at first for you to accept this attitude, but slowly, step by step, by steady effort it can be accomplished. I noticed that in the last two or three years I

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## Audience<sup>1</sup> with The Dalai Lama

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By Charles G. Reeder

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can accept and understand aspects of *Bodhicitta* that I thought I, myself, never would be able to practise. *Bodhicitta* is very similar to *Karuna*. If you want to help others, you should look inside and see how far you are able to do so. Then you will get a determination to progress in order to be able to help them. Finally, only a Buddha can help completely!”

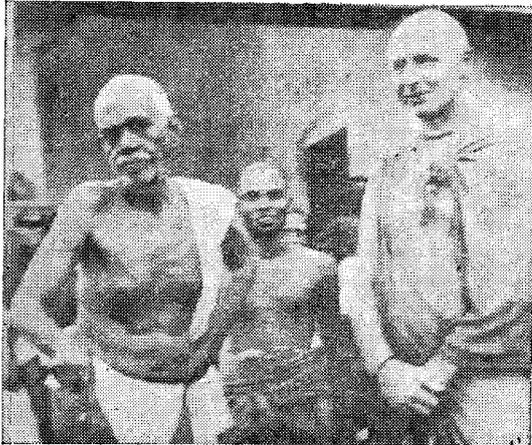
“For a Buddha there are ‘others’ to save. They (Buddhas) have developed their innate Buddha Nature to the utmost, but in the unenlightened beings it is just latent. They are the same in that they both have the Buddha Nature, like you and I are both human beings, but still we are not the same person.”

“You should learn how to practise investigation in meditation, as well as one-pointed concentration. In some practices, like visualising a *mandala*, if the mind tries to investigate anything, you should not let it. But in other ways, you should learn how to practise with investigation and logic in order to deepen your understanding. Just one practice alone without the other will not be enough. Each way should be practised in accordance with what is needed at that time.”

“In order to know what you are up against, and to understand that the ego is not the true reality we have to use enquiry. Fighting against self-centredness is a struggle, a battle that continues day and night. In the day time we can be aware of the situation, but in dreams the ego gets a free reign again and we start all over again the next morning!”

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<sup>1</sup>Notes from talk with H. H. The Dalai Lama at Dharmasala on May 2, 1972.



**An English professor in the *purvasrama*, Sri Krishnaprem was an orthodox devotee of Krishna and as such had no intention of following Self-Enquiry. Yet he had a striking experience of the significance of the question, *Who am I?* when he visited Bhagavan for his blessings.**

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## KRISHNAPREM AND MAHARSHI

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By Marie B. Byles

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**S**RI KRISHNAPREM, formerly Professor Ronald Nixon from Cambridge in England, had taught literature at Varanasi and Lucknow universities before he gave up the life of the world, donned the *gerua* robes and became a *sannyasin*. He took as his guru the saintly woman Yashoda Mai who had been a leader of Indian social life before she became a *sannyasini* and established an ashram at Mirtola, about 18 miles from Almora in the Himalayas. Here Krishnaprem took up his abode, soon performing the Vaishnava rituals in the temple, and, when the Brahmin cook left, doing the cooking also. When Yashoda Mai died in 1945 he was left in charge of the ashram, though he handed over the management to another in 1955, ten years before his own death.

He was an orthodox Vaishnava and worshipper of the Lord Krishna, that is, of the personal aspect of the Supreme, and the last thing that would have entered his head would have been to find his goal through asking the question, 'Who am I?' But he regarded Maharshi as a living shining Light of India and because of this in 1948 he made the long journey from Almora to the south to receive his blessing. The story of his visit is told by his friend, Dilip Kumar Roy, in his book about him. And as I do not seem to remember having read about this visit in *The Mountain Path* others may find it as illuminating as I do.

He entered the room where Maharshi was reclining with devotees before him, and sat down among them to meditate. As soon as he did so, he heard a voice saying over and

over again, 'Who *are* you? Who *are* you? Who *are* you?' He tried to ignore it but eventually he replied silently, 'I am Krishna's servant.' The voice still went on relentlessly. The question changed to, 'Who was Krishna?' He answered, 'Nanda's son,' and formulated various other answers, 'He is an *Avatar*, the One-in-All, the resident in every heart.' The voice continued asking the former question. He became very disturbed, and finally he rose and left the room. He returned, the voice continued as before. Silently he prayed to Radha for guidance, but she shook her head. Then the answer was revealed, but how we are not told!

In the morning he again sat down with the other devotees. Maharshi gave him a lightning glance and smiled at him. He closed his eyes; then on a sudden impulse he found himself silently asking Maharshi his own question, 'Who are *you*?' Something made him open his eyes. Maharshi's couch was empty; there was no Maharshi on it. He closed his eyes again but in a moment opened them. Maharshi was reclining in his usual place and he gave a fleeting smile and meaningful glance, after which he looked away.

Maharshi did not ask Krishnaprem to cease from worshipping the Lord Krishna and surrendering all to Him. He never did this; there are different ways for different temperaments. Some will perhaps be more direct than others; but in the end all will find the same answer, and that vacant couch gives the answer better than all.

And this is what I was taught when invisible cords drew me to the Maha Bodhi Meditation Centre near Mandalay in Burma. I was told there that many are the ways of learning *Vipassana* or insight meditation, but that all end up with the experience of *phyit pyet* (come-go or ceaseless change) or the end of 'I' and 'mine' and 'me' -- you are not the worrying thoughts that disturb you; you are not the mind, you are not the body. What are you then? -- *Phyit Pyet*.

Whatever is your way or my way it is always helpful to understand and appreciate the ways of others, as for example that of Krishnaprem, who found that ultimately all faded away and there was only KRISHNA!

## THE TREE OF LIFE

By Lama Anagarika Govinda

The life-tree's roots  
Grow from the night of death,  
Embracing the dark realms  
With golden nets.

The life-juice of the stars  
Is rising in its trunk,  
Transforming steadily  
The powers of the dark.

Innumerable suns  
Bloom in the life-tree's twigs,  
Surrounded by their planets  
As by swarming bees.

The heavens of the gods  
Are in the life-tree's crown,  
But in the course of time  
Even their pleasures Cease.

And one by one they fall  
From their bright realm  
And drop like falling stars  
Into the earth's dark womb,

To be reborn as men  
And learn through pain and strife,  
That from the night of death  
Is born the greater life.

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# WHOSE AM I?

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By M. M. V.

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**For devotees of Sri Bhagavan following the path of *jnana*, the question *Who am I?* is the key to their endeavours. Yet *bhaktas* also have an appropriate question symbolising their attitude of devotion to Sri Ramana — ‘Whose am I?’ The two questions represent the thin distinction between two approaches — one in which the ego is burnt up and the other in which the ego melts away.**

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**A**LTHOUGH Bhagavan himself was a *Jnana Avatara* who attained realisation through a sudden experience of the true ‘I’, and blazed the trail of Self-enquiry — *Who Am I?* . . . he was nevertheless also a perfect *bhakta*, even as he was a perfect *jnani*. His *Five Hymns to Arunachala* — representing the ‘Father’ who drew him into Himself while he was a boy of sixteen — is a masterpiece of devotion. To those devotionally inclined he taught the path of self-surrender.

In the precious booklet *Who Am I?* he says: “The indefinable power of the Lord ordains, moves and controls everything that happens . . . Knowing full well that the train carries all the weight, why indeed should we, the passengers travelling in it, carry the small individual articles of luggage on our laps to our great discomfort, instead of putting them aside and sitting at perfect ease?”

Many other saints and mystics have taught and practised devotion, viz., Chaitanya, Nanak, Mira, Rabiya, Namadev, Ramakrishna and others, not to mention ancient texts like the *Bhagavatam*, etc.

Just as one on the path of Self-enquiry (*vichara*) intensively investigates ‘Who am I?’, so one on the path of Devotion must be equally at pains to enquire ‘Whose am I?’ That is to say, a devotee must not rest until he has firmly established his relationship with his *Ishta*, Master or Lord, as his very own. When he has done that, the Master or Lord

will do the rest, resolving the mystery of the thin distinction between the two approaches -- one in which the ego burns off and the other in which the ego melts away. It is well authenticated that 'I am Thine' can happily proceed to 'I and Thou are One.'

To one engaged upon establishing such a relationship and developing unshakable faith in it, the pronouncements of Bhagavan on surrender and Grace will be of invaluable help, as are his teachings to those on the path of Self-enquiry. Here are a few of them :

"Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is the love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation."<sup>1</sup>

"Surrender to Him and abide by His will . . . if you ask Him to do as *you* please, it is not surrender but command to Him. You cannot have Him obey you and yet think that you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. Leave everything entirely to Him. His is the burden ; you have no longer any cares. All your cares are His. Such is surrender. This is *bhakti*."<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the Guru's Grace, he said :

"Realization is the result of the Guru's Grace more than the teachings, lectures, meditation, etc. They are only secondary aids, whereas the former is the primary and the essential cause."<sup>3</sup>

"Liberation is not anywhere outside of you. It is only within. If a man is anxious for Deliverance, the Guru within pulls him in and the Guru without pushes him into the Self."<sup>4</sup>

For those who have accepted Bhagavan Himself as their Master or Lord, the following verses of Sri Muruganar are commended :

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

## KEEP US AWARE

By M. P. Jain

Keep us aware in sun and shade  
Amidst all the stresses of life  
That there is subtly veiled Thy grace  
Behind life's every strife

Life is an interlude between two acts  
Of the drama soul has to play  
Keep us aware of the fact  
That all hard strokes pave the way

"To devotees who lay themselves  
An outright offering at His Feet  
Himself he yields in ample measure  
With all attendant Grace  
Ending every conflict  
Of false desires and fears."<sup>5</sup>

And to those whom Bhagavan Himself has accepted as true devotees he says :

"God and the *Guru* (Master) are not really different : they are identical. He that has earned the Grace of the *Guru* shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger's jaws will never be allowed to escape."<sup>6</sup>

"Defeated and frustrated, do not reel  
Beneath Fate's blows.  
Turn your eyes, your thoughts  
Towards those sovereign Feet  
Which can transmute a devotee  
Into Siva radiant."

*Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya*

<sup>1</sup> *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Vol. III, p. 569

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 681.

<sup>5</sup> *Pictorial Souvenir*, pp. i-ii.

<sup>6</sup> *Who Am I?*, p. 20.

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*The Revelations of Divine Love* were received by Mother Julian of Norwich in the year 1373 in England while she was gravely ill. It is appropriate then that even today — 600 years later — many find in her precious writings great solace in time of sorrow and affliction. The essence of their power to comfort those in despair is contained in the saying, ...“ all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.”

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**T**HERE are very little historical data about the woman known as Mother Julian of Norwich. It is probable that her birth date occurred about 1342 and that her life span exceeded seventy years of age, ending in the year 1416.

Mother Julian lived in a cell near the Benedictines at Carrow near an Augustinian Friary, where she was a recluse for many years. When she fell gravely ill in 1373 she was attended by her mother and some friends. It was during this illness that revelations of divine truth were received by her and later written down. She was thirty and a half years old when Grace descended upon her in the form of divine revelations.

Living apart from the world Mother Julian asked three petitions of God. That the Passion of Our Lord be deeply embedded in her mind ; that she should be afflicted with physical illness ; that she receive three wounds, that of contrition, mercy and yearning toward her Beloved.

Her petitions were accorded her. Her physical frame was so stricken by an unknown malady that she was given up for lost. She was given the last rites by her parish priest who also placed a crucifix before her bidding her contemplate her Saviour as she lay ill so that it would be a comfort to her.

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## JULIAN OF NORWICH AND DIVINE LOVE

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By Gladys Dehm<sup>1</sup>

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Fixing her gaze ardently on the crucifix Julian of Norwich received sixteen revelations which followed one another rapidly. The integrity and sincerity of the author of these revelations were never in doubt and after close examination and deliberation they were considered genuine and therefore worthy of dissemination among the public.

Two versions were written by Mother Julian, one soon after the showings, the other twenty years later ; the latter was a longer one.

The manner of the revelations was three-fold. They were shown 'by bodily vision', by word taking form in her understanding, and by 'ghostly vision.'

In Mother Julian's writings God is All-powerful, All-knowing, All-loving. Man also is a trinity wherein are mingled truth, wisdom, love. Above all, God is Love and all things in heaven and earth exist in Love. In her last chapter Mother Julian explains : 'I realized fully that before God created us He loved us ; this love never decreased nor ever will. In this Love has all His works been fashioned and all things have been for our good in this Love ; and in this Love our life is eternal. In our being created we had a beginning, but the Love with which we were fashioned has been

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<sup>1</sup> formerly Gladys de Meuter.

in Him without a beginning ; in this Love we have our beginning.'

The problem of sin preoccupied Mother Julian but when she questioned her divine Master she was told that 'all will be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.'

Sin then is negative, being the absence of good. Sinners suffer the consequences of their actions but God transmutes the evil and weak deeds into beauty and incorruptibility -- the ugly is rendered divinely lovely, the base, uplifted and transformed.

So rooted is Mother Julian in the truth of divine love that she records : 'There is no anger in God.'

Although the recipient of revelations, Mother Julian laid no claims to sanctity, remaining humbly aware of the necessity to rise to loftier heights in spiritual attainment. She stressed the importance of prayer, devoting three chapters to it. All prayer, she tells us, has its roots in God, whether they be requests, words, implorings or intentions. Prayer serves one object alone and that is to be united to God. She further tells us that prayer always receives a response whether it be a delayed one or answered in an altered manner.

Suffering, so Mother Julian is given to understand, need not be the results of sin but may be instead a trial of the Christian's fidelity. The Passion of Our Lord is the triumph of suffering, which is Love over evil, which is sin.

Julian of Norwich wrote with optimistic fervour about the divine love in which all things have their existence. The revelations she received contain rare gems ; throughout her writings the golden thread of Love is never lost but warms the heart and rejoices the soul. Wherever the spirit is faint these writings will revive and restore confidence in divine Providence and an All-merciful Compassion.

#### *Revelations of Divine Love*

'These showings were accorded an unlettered and simple creature on the eighth of May 1373. Some time before she had requested

three gifts from God ; to obtain deeper knowledge of His Passion ; to undergo physical suffering while still a woman of thirty years ; to receive as gift from God three wounds.'

'Mid-way through my thirty-first year I was sent an illness by God which caused me to be prostrated for three days and nights.'

'... Spiritually God allowed me to see how He loves us. He clothes us in His love, gathers us to Him and embraces us ; this so tender love surrounds us entirely, never to abandon us. I beheld that He is everything that is good... to sum up everything in existence is indebted to the love of God.'

'... the purpose of this revelation was to instruct our soul the wisdom of holding on to God's goodness. And so was brought to mind our customary habit of praying ; how because of inexperience and ignorance in the ways of love so much time is spent by us on petition. I saw that it is more pleasing to God and worthy of Him that through His kindness we should pray fully confident, and cling to Him by His grace with true understanding and unalterable love, than carry on petitioning as our souls are wont to do. For however great the number of our petitions they still fall short of wholly being worthy of Him. For in His kindness is included all one can desire, without any exception.'

'... Surely there can be no greater felicity -- at least as I behold it -- than that God, the highest, mightiest, noblest and most worthy of all, should also be the lowliest, most humble, friendliest and most considerate. In very truth this wonderful happiness will be ours when we behold Him. It is His will that we should seek Him and trust Him, rejoice and take delight in Him, while He renders us stronger and consoles us until the time comes when we will realize it all in truth.'

'... But this wonderful comradeship cannot be known by living man unless it be by special dispensation of Our Lord, or accorded him by the inward, flowing grace of the Holy Spirit.'

'... It is on faith, hope, love that our life has foundation. The revelation, given by anyone whom God chooses to receive it, teaches this clearly.'

'... The fact that I have received this revelation does not denote that I am good. Only in so far as I love God the more so am I good : if your love for God is greater than mine so are you that much better than I am. I am not essaying to teach the wise that which they already know ; rather I am trying to explain to the uninformed, for their greater comfort and peace. We all have need of comfort. It was certainly not revealed to me because I am loved more by God than are those other lowly souls in grace, for I am quite certain many there are who have never received any showing or vision other than the teachings of Holy Church, and who yet love God more than I do.'

'... God is within man and God is within everything.'

'... Nothing takes place by hazard or chance but all happens through the foreknowledge and wisdom of God. If it appears to be hazard or chance to us then this is because we lack true vision and are near-sighted. Those things which God's foresight beheld before creation, and which He so correctly and in worthy manner constantly allows to happen in their proper time, come upon us suddenly and cause us surprise. And through our own lack of true vision and foresight we name them hazards and luck. But they are not so to our Divine Lord.'

'... To my great happiness He showed me all this as though He were telling me, "Behold: I am God. I abide in all. Everything is done by Me ! Never do I cease upholding My creation and I never will. Everything is being guided by Me towards the end which I have ordained for it from the beginning, through the same power wisdom and love with which I created it." How then can anything go wrong ?'

'... As I understand it there is no anger in God... I saw our Lord expose the hollowness of the Devil's helplessness ; and it is God's will that we do likewise.'

'... Suffering is transitory for those who are to know salvation, and will ultimately leave them completely. It is therefore not the

will of God that we should be sorrowful and grieve over our present afflictions, but He wills rather that we discard them at once, and entrust ourselves to His eternal joy.'

'... but I did not behold sin. It is my belief that it possesses no substance or true existence. It becomes known to one solely through the pain it causes. As I understand it, this pain is of short duration. By it we are purged in order that we learn to know ourselves and in order that we ask for mercy. Against all this is the Passion of our Lord which comforts us - for this is His holy will. Because of His merciful love for all those who are to attain salvation, our kind Lord gives us comfort at once and sweetly, as though He were saying : "It is the truth that sin lies at the base of all this suffering ; but all is going to be well ; it is all going to be well ; everything is going to be well." These words were uttered in tender manner, without a hint of blame either to myself or to any of those who are to know salvation... I beheld in these words one of the wonderfully deep secrets of God - a secret which will be made plain in heaven.'

Mother Julian, blessed by these divine revelations, also received intimation of the dark forces. The Fiend was not absent and tested that strong, God-loving soul with tenacity and the dire weapon of despair, but the soul with which he grappled was too firmly rooted in blessed soil and Grace intervened to restore serenity and peace.

This gentle heart, so trusting and optimistic, wrote down the revelations made known to her in humble obedience, seeking to share with others the abundant and copious graces bestowed upon a lover of God.

Her message of light and beauty, redolent with the bountiful goodness of God uplifts and heals those souls who are afflicted by spiritual aridity or what may appear to be a withdrawal of Grace.

Whenever ignorance spreads a mantle of gloom and dread on the world, the Divine Voice must be hearkened to : 'All will be well.'

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# THE MASTER OF THE FIELD

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By **Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav**

*Translated by Zalman M. Schachter*

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Each one has a word, is a word  
the Master of the Field sees it,  
mends it, completes it,  
fulfills it, and Speech is corrected  
it truly *speaks*  
a word, a world,  
an entire universe.

A word is a bloom  
a flower, a blossom, a rose.  
He who prays, walks  
in a garden of words  
picking flowers, one by one  
From flowers a bouquet,  
from bouquets a wreath,  
a garland he weaves.  
From letters a word  
from words a phrase  
from phrases a prayer  
a garland of Splendor.

Yet each letter refuses  
to part from the uttering soul  
supplicating  
"entreat me not to leave thee"  
-while the ear waits for the word  
to love it, caress and kiss it-  
And the word, the phrase  
suppliant that they may continue  
to cleave to the soul  
in love and in union  
admitting the need of the soul  
to go on, to pick  
other flowers  
"forget me not  
blaze of my spark  
in the display of fireworks"  
each letter, word and phrase  
begs.

But there is pressure to utter  
other words to make a prayer  
to express.....

The Master welds them all  
together  
as once they were one in the soul  
the whole prayer still is one  
with the soul expressed and spoken,  
in unuttered ineffability.

The last word of the prayer  
the first word and that which  
connects them  
One.

Never must the Master of the Field  
let go of the first word  
or the last word  
even after  
it is spoken.

This oneness  
of Moshiach's times  
the Master of the Field  
achieves now.

Others affirm One  
twofold  
"True Judge" - in pain  
"Boon's Source" - in joy  
on THAT DAY  
boon's source for both  
(is there another?)

Blessed is the man  
who being farsighted now  
cannot discern what other  
now.

For truly today  
there is no other  
and all is boon,  
boon to, rejoice  
boon to turn to joy  
If one has not lost  
his MIND.

The Master of the Field is  
altogether MIND  
which sees, adjusts  
prunes and supports  
trees, plants  
to bloom.

In the END  
they all dance  
the Machol -  
forgiveness dance -  
of yielding to Him.  
Bo'az the Master of the  
Field of Bliss  
claps his hands  
with the strength  
of his Being  
in rhythm,  
Singing a new song to the Lord.

## IN-SIGHT

By **Saniel Bonder**

You are light  
for all the world

-- *Jesus Christ*

To go looking  
for God  
while ignoring  
Being and  
Consciousness  
is like looking  
for darkness  
while carrying  
a lamp

-- *Ramana Maharshi*

One day,  
driving down the street,  
some one was struck  
by this insight :

The sun is  
that light  
by which trees,  
road, car, wheel, hands  
are made perceptible  
from without.

But I am  
that light  
by which all these --  
including sunlight  
and its absence --  
are made perceptible  
from within !

All the time  
and everywhere I am,  
without even trying  
to be, I AM !

-- *Saniel Bonder*

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Contrasting views of the road to holiness in the Christian monastic tradition are offered here in a study of two sublime spiritual treatises. However else they may differ, both authors share a deep spirit of uncompromising dedication to God, which is firmly expressed in their writings.

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## THE CHRISTIAN ROAD TO HOLINESS

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By Philip Pegler

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THE necessity of utter dedication to the Divine in religious life is the main theme of two Christian treatises briefly considered in this article in illustration of the deep value such books continue to have in modern times – despite prevailing belief to the contrary.

One is entitled *A Book of Spiritual Instruction*,<sup>1</sup> written by a sixteenth century Belgian Benedictine monk, Ludovicus Blossius; and the other is called *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*<sup>2</sup> by Jean-Pierre de Caussade, a French Jesuit writing some 180 years later. Although composed during different periods, both are spiritual classics of a high order and have great affinity in offering complementary viewpoints of the traditional Christian monastic attitude to religious life.

*L'Abandon* as de Caussade's masterpiece is called in the French original, represents a passive approach to spirituality where the soul abandons itself totally in self-surrender to the mysterious action of divine providence. This contrasts with a more active way expressed by Blossius in his work named *Instituto Spirituality* in the original Latin. Here the emphasis is on stern diligence and self-denial as a means to holiness. The roads appear different, but the destination is one and the same – that is perfection in union with God.

\* \* \* \*

As in our own day many are sceptical of religious matters, so it seems this was the case in 1550 at the time of Blossius. He certainly had no illusions about the majority of mankind and their likely reaction to spiritual writings of the purest kind. In a letter dedicating his new book to a friend, this uncompromising abbot writes: "Proud men and sensual men, who perceive not and do not understand these things that are of the Spirit of God, condemn these most holy books and say that revelations of this sort are only the dreams of women . . . For nearly all are devoted to curiosity and the pleasure of the senses . . . on this account they turn themselves away with a certain despair from what they may read or hear of a perfect life, persuading themselves that it is utterly impossible that they could ever attain to it." Yet he adds that God in his loving kindness is "ever most ready to help any one of us and to bring us to that perfection – if only we do what we can."

Curiously enough this final assurance is strongly echoed by de Caussade. In one of his discourses on prayer, written in about 1730, he declares: "Yes indeed, if we could only

<sup>1</sup> Published by Burns & Oates, Orchard Books, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> First published by Burns & Oates, 1933; issued in Fontana Paperback, 1971.

allow this divine hand to act, we should reach the most eminent perfection. All would reach it – for it is offered to all.”

Revealing the simple secret of this total belonging to God, de Caussade says that there is no other way but to make use of everything God gives you. “The present moment is always the ambassador who declares the order of God. . . Everything is a means and an instrument of holiness ; everything without any exception. The ‘one thing necessary’ is always to be found by the soul in the present moment.”

At the start of “L’Abandon”, this warmly understanding Jesuit superior opens with a word of comfort. Evidently he is mindful also of the first point Blossius expresses in his letter. “All you who aim at perfection and are tempted to discouragement by what you read in the lives of the saints and by what is prescribed in certain books of piety. . . it is for your consolation that God wills me to write this.” In his earnest and eloquent way, Père de Caussade proceeds to outline the wonderfully simple path to God – that of love and adoration.

“Look at your life,” he says. “What is it made up of ? Of innumerable unimportant actions. It is just with these very things, so trifling in themselves, that God is pleased to be satisfied. . . .”

“Here is all that a man has to do on his side, here is what active fidelity consists in. If man fulfils his part, God will do the rest. Grace will take full control of him, and the wonders that it will work in him surpass all man’s understanding. . . .”

“The passive part of holiness is even more easy, for it consists merely in accepting what most frequently cannot be avoided and in suffering with love – that is to say with resignation and sweetness – what is too often endured with weariness and discontent.”

The rest of the book contains such beautifully clear advice, which transmits something of the author’s deep wisdom to all who truly wish to find God. He uses penetrating imagery to show how all may learn to read the mysterious book of life. “What a beautiful history ! What a fine book the Holy Spirit

is writing now . . . But how to read this book, the characters of which are unknown, vast in number, upside down and blotted with ink ?”

It is enough for de Caussade that he has absolute trust in the will of God by whose decree everything is significant. Abiding in such faith, the eternal mystery may stand revealed to him. Then what seemed so complicated “will entrance and charm me eternally by its beauty, by the order, reason, wisdom and incomprehensible wonders that I shall find in it.”

\* \* \* \*

The natural man in us ever seeks to avoid pain and bitterly resents any suffering which life brings. Yet suffering rightly met with an attitude of acceptance purifies and strengthens one beyond measure. Both de Caussade and Blossius, experienced in the ways of prayer, well realised this fact and stressed it in their writings.

“It is only by mortifications of all sorts, by trials and deprivations of all kinds that we can be established in pure love,” writes de Caussade. “The life of faith is nothing else but a continual pursuit of God through everything that disguises, misrepresents and so to speak destroys and annihilates him.”

Blossius is just as definite on the question of suffering. Like his Jesuit counterpart a fervent admirer of St. John of the Cross, he is encouraging but uncompromising about the need for absolute detachment from all earthly things. Accordingly he quotes a verse from the Old Testament showing the true attitude to be adopted by a devotee of God – “Although He should kill me, yet will I trust in Him.”<sup>1</sup> Blossius adds that such a servant of God “should be ready, if so God willed, to live in sorrow and affliction of spirit, even till the last day of judgement. For the truth is that nothing more useful can happen to a man than to suffer tribulation, whether from without or within.” To illustrate the point he draws an analogy from nature. “We find that wheat does not bring forth an abundant harvest unless it has borne the sharpness of winter.” Yet another analogy tells us that

<sup>1</sup> Job, ch. 13, v. 15.

"the burning heat of these afflictions prepares the soul as fire prepares wax to take the form desired by the artist." Blossius sums the subject up with a grim air of finality. He says that when God has determined to transform a soul in a sublime manner and to adorn it with the highest gifts "He no longer washes it with gentle touch but plunges it entirely into a deep sea of bitterness."

A *Book of Spiritual Instruction* ranks with *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence* in inspired richness of language. However as its title suggests, it is more formally structured as a spiritual text-book, leading the aspirant step by arduous step through all the pitfalls of religious life to the glorious consummation of divine union.

"As a wanderer that can find no rest and a poor famished beggar without food, so is man until he perfectly embraces with the arms of charity Him, the immensity of whose dignity makes it impossible not to desire Him." Thus in the first chapter concerning aspiration, one is lured to read on -- to bravely venture further along the hard path to perfection to a state of detachment where one may "willingly bid adieu to all created things." Then a man needs no exterior comfort for "he is inwardly joined to Him, who is the torrent and ocean of inestimable delights." Finally, approaching mystical union, the soul "sinks down into the abyss of divine love," whereupon . . . "Burnt up with the fire of divine love and entirely liquefied, the soul passes into God." Now the contemplative is united with God "even as gold and brass are welded into one mass of metal."

In a section beautifully subtitled "Deep calleth to Deep", Blossius concludes his sublime treatise with last words of wise counsel.

"We ought not therefore to cease from prayer until we are found worthy to drink of the waters of this fountain. For if we can taste but one little drop of it, we shall no longer thirst for vain things and failing creatures but for God alone -- for the love of God alone.

. . . "Blessed is he who, even after many years of continual labour and constant digging, at last deserves to find the spring of living waters in the secret centre of his soul.

### ABU HAFS AL-HADDAD AND THE MAGICIAN

As a young man, Abu Hafs al-Haddad fell in love with a serving maid so desperately that he could find no peace. He went to a magician in the suburbs of Nishapur for some device to procure his goal. The magician promised to do so on condition that Abu Hafs would not pray for forty days nor do any good deed, nor mention God's Name nor form any good intention during that time.

Abu Hafs conducted himself accordingly for forty days. Then the magician composed a talisman but without success.

"Without doubt some good has come into being through you", said the magician. "Otherwise I am certain that this object would have been achieved".

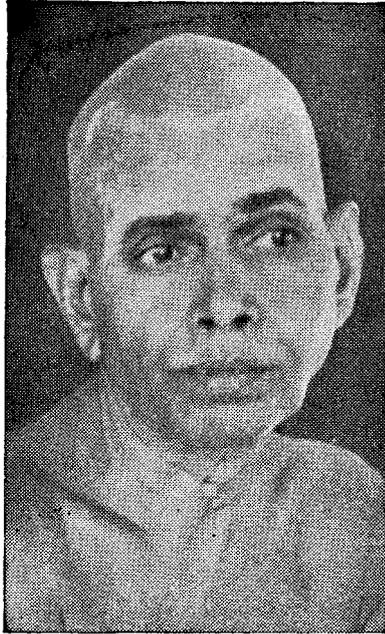
"I have done nothing," Abu Hafs assured him. "The only thing I can think of is that as I came here I kicked a stone out of the way so that no one might trip over it".

"Do not vex God, whose command you gainsay for forty days and who of His generosity suffered not to go to waste even the little trouble you took," said the magician.

These words kindled a fire within Abu Hafs' heart which completely changed his attitude to life and he became a great devotee and saint.

*Episodes from the Tadhkirat-al-Auliyn*  
by FARID-AL-DIN-ATTAR

. . . "May God, the uncreated abyss deign to call to Himself our spirit, the created abyss and to unite it to Himself in order that our soul, absorbed into the most deep sea of the Godhead, may happily lose itself in the Spirit of God."




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## How Bhagavan Came to Me

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By M. P. Chatrath

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**I** WAS at Amritsar in 1951. I did not believe in God and had no interest whatever in religions or spiritual matters. I used to believe that religiosity in man was mere weakness, shallowness, an expression of his helplessness and hypocrisy. I did not think that one's past karma had any meaning. The very sight of a *sadhu*, *sannyasi* or a *fakir* was hateful to me. I was a complete atheist and took great delight in communist literature. How I got saved from this gross atheism has been the greatest mystery of my life. In fact Sri Bhagavan saved me! It was just a dream, a wonderful dream which is still very fresh, very vivid and very clear in my mind and has completely changed my outlook and reconditioned me. I still cherish it greatly.

I got this dream during the night of December 31, 1951. I went to bed as usual thinking about the new year ahead. In the early hours of the morning I had that extraordinary dream which now I attribute to the Grace of Sri Bhagavan. It was certainly His Grace which worked and rescued me from my gross and dire ignorance though I have never visited the Ashram and have never sat before him face to face. I honestly and sincerely confirm it through my varied experiences and pray that His Grace be always with me and His devotees (I and my wife are waiting for His call to pay a visit to the Ashram).

In my dream I found myself climbing on foot a mountain. It was a zig zag tarmac road which I was traversing. I saw that the scenery all round was very pleasant and inspiring. When I reached the top of the mountain I found that this mountain was like a little wonder island surrounded by a mighty, calm, glittering ocean. Not a leaf was stirring. Suddenly there appeared 'myself' standing (my whole physical body standing at the highest point of the peak). I could see my face radiating. The sun was shining. I also saw beautiful rays of light being reflected for miles together where the waters and sky joined. It really fascinated me. I turned my face to the other side, there also I saw the same sun rising and its light reflected in that very direction. I tried another direction and witnessed the same scene. In fact the sun was shining in all directions and on all sides. I

**Whether or not the results of meditation are obtained is of no importance. The essential is to arrive at stability ; it is the most precious thing that one can gain. In any case one must trust with confidence in the Divinity and await His grace without impatience. The same rule applies equally to *Japa* ; *japa* pronounced even once is a benefit, whether one is aware of it or not.**

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

found myself extremely elevated and thrilled. Next moment I woke up and was greatly astonished at my dream. The dream was over but what it left in me is still with me.

Next morning as it was a holiday, I did not go to work. After breakfast I lay down on my bed thinking about this beautiful dream. I remember that I was not sleeping though my eyes were closed. Exactly at this time (may be 10 a.m. or 11 a.m.) I heard one rifle shot being fired. Confused I ran downstairs to find out what had happened. I enquired from three or four persons about the shot. They just laughed at me. I quietly returned to my room and lay comfortably on my bed thinking about the shot and the dream. When I closed my eyes, I saw some smoke rising in my head which made me very curious. I started observing this smoke and when it got cleared, I saw a small circle of light through which it was disappearing. In that circle I saw a radiant face of an old man, looking and smiling at me. Now I understand that it was the spiritual awakening. I was given the path, the glorious path to realisation. It was after ten years from this incident that I realised that it was Sri Bhagavan Ramana giving me initiation ! He gave me a new birth, the most cherished second birth full of awakening and awareness which has changed my whole being.

It is a most unfortunate thing that nobody in India when I was living in India told me anything about the Maharshi. When I came here (Nairobi) in 1961, I happened to read Paul Brunton's *Search in Secret India* and

came to know about the Maharshi. The influence of this book was so great that I started looking for more and more literature. When I saw Sri Bhagavan's photograph in one of Arthur Osborne's books, immediately I found the answer to my doubt, the clue to the great mysterious dream, my relationship with Sri Bhagavan, His initiation through that rifle shot, etc. I attribute everything that happened to Him. Now I always feel His living presence everywhere. His guidance is wonderful. More and more I incline towards Him.

Later in 1964 one night after dinner I was sitting cross-legged on my bed. I do not remember if I was meditating. Suddenly I realised something more wonderful and enchanting. Lo, my physical body disappeared and I found that Sri Bhagavan was sitting in my place. There was no Mohinder. There was perfect identification though I did not understand the meaning of the word identification. This identification with Sri Bhagavan has been a unique experience, the best of all my experiences I have had. Since then I have tried very hard to have this experience again but have not been successful though I am assured by Him that all is well.

Surely I find myself now always engulfed and surrounded by His living presence. I have no wish or desire to know about the real 'I' or false 'I' though I fully understand its significance, its meaning and His teachings. I also now understand the real meaning of knowledge, *karma*, devotion and real *tapas*. I do not claim that I have achieved something. I only wish to be a humble devotee, always busy imbibing Sri Bhagavan's manna. His living presence is all that I long for. And this according to me is the answer to everything !

The *maha mantra* that I picked up from *The Mountain Path*<sup>1</sup> is *Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya*<sup>2</sup> and I feel that I have received Sri Bhagavan's acceptance for my recitation. O, my Bhagavan ! grant me wisdom to surrender everything at Your Lotus Feet, because everything belongs only to you !

<sup>1</sup> July, 1971, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> meaning, *Obeisance to Bhagavan Sri Ramana*.

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**In real sacrifice a priest does not merely approach the altar of God, but he *becomes* the altar of God. This means that life itself is the true altar of sacrifice on which one offers up worship so as to serve others as a bridge to the divine.**

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**I** WILL go to the altar of God, to God, the joy of my youth", till recently thus ran the opening prayer at the beginning of the Mass, the Memorial Supper of the Lord Jesus. In the revised version of the Mass this formula is not said, but the action of "going to the altar of God" remains. That action, whether the words connoting it are said or not said, is for the priest not just *an* event in his life, but is the whole of his life, though the first utterance of the words and the first performance of the action that they refer to, was and is, to a newly appointed Catholic priest, standing amidst a Christian assembly with the altar in front of him, indeed an event memorable in his life.

"I will go to the altar of God" -- what do these words mean? To answer this, we must ask a further question: what is this "altar of God"? Originally these words occur in *Psalms 42* of the volume of the *Old Testament*. Their meaning, however, can only be discovered in the life-context and action-context from within which they are spoken. The action-context is that of ritual-sacrifice which is performed on the stone or wooden elevation, called *altar*. Literally an *altar* is a high place or an elevation. It is this literal reality of an elevation, a mountain or a high place which becomes the symbol of a reality distinct from itself. The reality thus symbo-

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## THE ALTAR OF GOD

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By I. Jesudasan, S.J.

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lised by the high place on elevated plane is a high point in life, or a heightened consciousness of the meaning of life, which is real worship and real (not ritual or symbolic) sacrifice. This heightened consciousness of the purpose of life arises only when that purpose is actually *real-ized*. In real sacrifice, not merely does one "go to the altar of God," but one *becomes the altar of God!*

Every religious community has its ritual sacrifice and the symbolic altar or the place of *puja*. It is the ideal of real sacrifice or an ideal case of real sacrifice that is celebrated in ritual and symbol in order that the commemoration or contemplation of it may tone-up the actual life to its ideal of sacrificial living. The Christian community's ritual-sacrifice is the memorial of Jesus' own real sacrifice. Jesus too performed ritual sacrifice. His last supper was his ritual sacrifice. It is within that ritual context that the words he pronounced over bread and the cup of wine take their meaning: "This is my body which is given for you; this, my blood which is poured out for you." The difference between Jesus' ritual sacrifice and ours is that in his case there was no gap between ritual-sacrifice and real-sacrifice. In other words, we fall short of the meaning and purpose of life, while he did not; he was the perfect worshipper of God, who worshipped God in spirit and in truth,

he was the perfect priest (priest is worshipper) while our worship so often remains confined to the ritual, its purpose and truth not being realised.

It is of this effort to become the real altars of God that the contemplative memorial of Jesus' real sacrifice becomes the Christian community's pedagogy. It is a contemplation which is pragmatic, oriented to action, to change society, to build up the community by changing oneself, by becoming a better or perfected community man ; perfected, that is, in real sacrifice. A life lived for others, given to others, is the real sacrifice offered to God.

Life then is to be the altar of God. The *Satapata Brahmana* inculcates the same when it says of the symbolic altar, "Let it measure a fathom . . . that namely, is the size of man" (1, 2, 5, 14). And it goes on to explain, "The sacrifice is man . . . in being spread out, it is made of exactly the same extent as man", (1,3,5,1). That is to say, all life must be an altar of sacrifice, the meeting, or at-one-ment with God. Only then is life said to have reached its full stature and maturity and to have real-ized its meaning and purpose of salvation. A life without it is un-fulfilled, incomplete and immature. Thus the thrust and meaning of both altar and sacrifice is one of making community-men, of making prophets and martyrs ; for, they are the men of God, altars of God, the perfected community, men who meet God, and in whom God meets Himself. As geared to the building up of community, which is real worship, the impact of ritual worship, or sacred (i.e. symbolic) action is, paradoxically enough, one of secularisation ! Perhaps a disconcerting revelation to ritualistic pietists and the haters of religion alike.

Only he who has become the altar of God, or the place of meeting with God in himself is able to be an altar of God, or place of meeting with God for others. Being perfected into a community man, he becomes the community-builder, the very memory of whom builds up the community. Such a person was Jesus and such the Christians strive to become, and to make of one another — other Christs, community men, men of God, that is, altars of God at the sacrificial height of love.

## Why the *Japa-Mala* has 108 Beads?

The significance of worshipping God with 108 Names and the 108 beads or *rudrakshas* of the *Japa-mala* (rosary) has the following explanation :

The immanent Brahman manifested in time (*saguna*) is represented as 12 suns. In the *Paramatma Iswara Tatwa* the 12 months of the year are represented by the 12 *Adityas*, the sons of Aditi. Thus the sun has a particular name each month of the year.

The *nirguna* Brahman (without attributes) is represented by the number 9, the multiples of which add up always to 9. This is represented numerically below :

$$\begin{aligned} 9 \times 1 &= 9 \\ 9 \times 2 &= 18 \quad (1+8 = 9) \\ 9 \times 3 &= 27 \quad (2+7 = 9) \\ 9 \times 10 &= 90 \quad (9+0 = 9) \\ 9 \times 11 &= 99 \quad (9+9 = 18 ; 1+8 = 9) \\ 9 \times 12 &= 108 \quad (1+8 = 9) \\ &\text{and so on} \end{aligned}$$

The number 9 symbolises the attributeless, never-changing, constant Reality of the Supreme Brahman. All that exists is nothing but Brahman unmanifest and manifest. The multiple of  $9 \times 12$  is 108, which added up reduces itself again to 9 ! In Sanskrit the number 9 is *nava* which means ever-fresh. It is the same *nava* which appears in the word *Pranava*, denoting OM.

presence

what is truly here and now has nothing to do with place and hour  
 float this leaf upon the breeze      drown its life in sea-ing stream      with no wave no weight presence flows from nowhere comes to nowhere goes  
 ceaseless sourceless flow      all circumstances times all scenes retreat into the realm of dreams      its structure crushed by but a word never spoken nor ever heard  
 airless wind      airless leafless noiseless blow      for what is truly here and now has nothing to do with place and hour      timeless now  
 silent sound that hears nothing      presence      never changed nor elsewhere lived      ceaseless sourceless flow      waterless waveless undertow      airless leafless noiseless blow      for what is truly here and now has nothing to do with place and hour      timeless now  
 sourceless spring      its substance now as presence is it never changed nor elsewhere lived      ceaseless sourceless flow      waterless waveless undertow      airless leafless noiseless blow      for what is truly here and now has nothing to do with place and hour      timeless now

- Daniel Bandler

# ARUNACHALA'S

## TRUE SHAPE

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From every angle Arunachala presents a different aspect. But the Siva Linga, representing the hill, symbolises its true shape — that of the formless including all forms.

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By Aquarius

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**A**RUNACHALA is Ramana. Every true devotee of Sri Bhagavan comes to feel this to be true. But Arunachala is an insentient Hill while Sri Ramana was a sentient human being. How could they be the same, we think, except perhaps in a metaphysical sense? But are we quite sure what Arunachala is like even in the physical sense?

I approach Arunachala generally by bus from the east as I come to Tiruvannamalai from Madras. Arunachala becomes visible from about ten miles away. At first it is only a vague cloud-like shape but as I come nearer it becomes clearer. It assumes the form of an irregular cone somewhat longish at the base with a curved spur on its northern side. But this shape lasts only until I come to the temple of Arunachaleswara. It changes gradually when I proceed to the Ashram and finally when I reach the Ashram it assumes the beautiful shape which is familiar to all devotees of Sri Bhagavan. It reminds me of Mount Kailas as it looks in the familiar photographs of that sacred mountain. Others have also noticed this resemblance.

I have seen Arunachala not only from these two angles but also from numerous other angles too. While going round the Hill on the holy circuit it looks different from each spot. Names like the 'five-faced Arunachala' and the 'four-faced Arunachala' have been given to those aspects in which it appears to possess five peaks or four peaks. When one comes to the northern side the appearance

changes completely. It becomes more rugged and massive. Arunachala has many faces and many shapes. From every angle it presents a different aspect, reminding us of the ever changing flux of creation — the motionless dance of Arunachala-Siva whose unity penetrates all diversity!

Every true devotee of Siva believes that Arunachala, the Hill, is Siva Himself; or, a huge Siva Linga in the form of the Hill. The *puranas* elaborate this. That is why one walks round it barefoot reverently all the eight miles of the way. Siva linga is simply an emblem of Siva, in its manifest form as the Hill and the linga of fire without beginning or end, as mentioned in the well-known story of its first appearance, symbolises its unmanifest transcendence. Thus Siva is *rupa* (with form) and *arupa* (without form). He has many forms and at the same time can reveal Himself as formless.

“When I approach regarding Thee as having form, Thou standest as a Hill on earth. If (with the mind the seeker) looks for Thy (essential) form as formless, he is like one who travels the earth to see the (ever-present) ether. To dwell without thought upon Thy (boundless) nature is to lose one's (separate) identity like a doll of sugar when it comes in contact with the ocean (of nectar; and) when I come to realize who I am, what else is this identity of mine (but Thee), O Thou Who standest as the towering Aruna Hill?”

— Arunachala Ashtakam, verse 3.

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# Vedanta and Scientific Humanism

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**The essay shows how the Vedantic Rishis of ancient India used rational scientific methods to arrive at the sublime conclusions of the Upanishads. Instead of confining science to material investigation, those courageous scientist-philosophers experimented and found the Truth in the depths of their own being.**

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*By* **Brahmachari Haridas**

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**S**CIENCE and technology are respectively interested in the basic laws that govern the various natural phenomena and the practical utilization of these laws for the betterment of man's material needs in life. These disciplines study 'facts' and their interrelatedness. Knowledge of 'facts' gives man the ability to manipulate and control the forces of nature to suit his needs. Men use their knowledge of 'facts' to pursue what they consider as valuable and worthy of pursuit. There has been a good deal of agreement about man's knowledge of 'facts' while it seems that there have always been differences of opinion about what 'values' are worthy of pursuit.

If scientific methodology has provided us with so much knowledge about the mysterious cosmos around us within a short span, (compared to the total human history) of three hundred years, can it not help us in acquiring some measure of unanimity in our metaphysical questions about values, God, soul, etc.? The main theme of this essay will be to show that the Vedantic philosophers of ancient India did make use of such a methodology to arrive at their conclusions expressed in the Upanishads.

*God and the Secular World*

In the modern world when man with the help of science and technology seems to have become self-sufficient in taking care of him-

## The Cat-Guru

By Farid al Din Attar

Abu Phosain al-Nuri was a mystic and poet. A friend came to see him and found him seated in meditation, not a hair of his body moving.

"From whom did you learn such excellent meditation?" the friend asked.

"From a cat crouching over a mouse-hole," he replied. "He was much stiller than I am".

from *The Tadhkirat-al-Auliya*

self or rather his needs most of the intellectuals feel that the concept of a God who is the Creator-cum-caretaker of this world is redundant and meaningless. They feel that God is no more necessary as an explanatory principle, since the old habit of apologetic theologians to bring in the notion of God to account for the 'gaps' in scientific knowledge is a futile attempt because all these so called 'gaps' are being filled by the ever increasing scientific knowledge acquired through painstaking research, so the god-concept is being squeezed out as it were and it has no *locus standi* in the modern intellectual's conceptual horizon. 'God is dead' said Nietzsche, the nineteenth century German philosopher and some modern Christian philosophers and most scientists agree with him. Hence this age has been called the age of scientific humanism which believes in man only, his rational powers and future possibilities of evolution. Man has evolved out of the inert material molecules found in nature to become a self-conscious being. The main task of humanity is to explore further evolutionary possibilities, so say the prophets of scientific humanism. The ancient but ever new Vedanta Philosophy, the source of which are the Upanishads, has no quarrel with such a view point. Vedanta considers the disillusionment of the

modern Truth seeker with the concepts of a 'God of the clouds' and the 'God of the gaps' as a sign of psychological maturity.

*Divine as the 'Beyond Within'*

For centuries the ancient rishis of India through all the Upanishadic teachings have been proclaiming that God or Brahman is not an individualised being among other beings in the universe. These philosopher-scientists of India have been emphasizing that God is pure Consciousness to be discovered within the depths of man's own being. Thus the *Kena Upanishad* declares "Know that to be Brahman which the mind cannot conceive but because of which the mind is capable of conception, not what you have been worshipping objectively". The Divine is thus indicated as the very ground or basis of man's being and consciousness, an ever existing actuality which is a 'Beyond within'. It is beyond the ordinary sensate and conception-bound state of consciousness experienced ordinarily. It is a realm realizable, so say the rishis, if man is available for the discipline of a subjective inwards journey, an exploration and adventure into the very source of his true state of being.

From the observational data of a precisely functioning, orderly, harmonious and beautiful universe around them these ancient scientist-philosophers of India were rationally led to postulate a supreme Intelligence as the creator-cum-sustainer of this wonderful spontaneous order and rhythm in the cosmos. When the ancient rishis wanted to experimentally verify the actuality of this factor, they found that in the whole realm of Nature it is in man that a spark of creative-intelligence is manifest to the maximum. Some of the enquirers of Truth postulated that by coming to know what is the source of this creativity, intelligence and consciousness in man it is possible to know something about that Infinite intelligence called God. The result was an experimental attempt to plumb the depths of human consciousness by some rare adventurous souls who had the courage to experiment with themselves; many of them after years of strenuous effort came to the same conclusion, confirmed repeatedly by all major Upanishads, viz., that

the Divine or God which men were postulating as a Being beyond the world is the very Essence of man's own personality. These are called *maha vakyas* of the Vedanta -- the profound statements which declare the identity of man's essential being with that Supreme Intelligence-Consciousness. 'That thou art' 'This atman is Brahman', etc. The true state of man they discovered to be pure happiness and Bliss (ananda) that all men unconsciously pursue in all their endeavours. Thus the pursuit of God or Divine was considered a very practical venture and research for the ultimate value -- worthy of spending one's whole life time. These were the conclusions of experiments conducted and verified to be true by rishis or sages down the centuries up to this present age in the spiritual history of the world.

God-consciousness or Self-realisation is thus indicated as the future evolutionary possibility of the ordinary mortal man who feels very intensely his sense of finitude. To know God is to know one-self, the spiritual depths of one's own being. Man need only transcend his finite, suffocating ego-consciousness to find his true being in the Divine. The challenge of a personal experiment within as it were the laboratory of one's own personality with the help of a guide (the guru) who has himself found the Truth by experience, is the challenge thrown by Vedanta to the science -- fascinated modern intellectuals. No doubt this self-enquiry requires a tremendous amount of courage, dedication and detachment plus a spirit of adventure. But the unbroken tradition of Vedantic philosopher-scientists assures success provided the experimenting aspirant satisfies the necessary preliminary ethical and psychological qualifications. Those who have been successful in the discovery of this Divine Consciousness in the Beyond within become truly integrated and self-actualised people in the sense of the modern humanistic psychologist, Abraham Maslow. Altruism universal love, absence of conflict, goodwill, etc., become their essential traits. Julian Huxley defined progress in evolution as consisting of independence of the environment and control over it. Those who have discovered their Divine identity are untouched by the vicissitudes of life and become absolutely free of all condi-

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## ONLY BECAUSE

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*By Wei Wu Wei*

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**Only because I AM silence, can sound  
be heard.**

**Only because I AM absence, can presence  
be perceived.**

**Only because I AM no 'thing' can objects  
appear.**

tioning. They are at peace with themselves and with the world around them. They become a source of joy, inspiration and peace. Vedanta calls such supermen *Jivan Muktas* or 'Living free'.

This state of freedom is pointed out as the highest and ultimate value to be pursued by man. Ordinary sense-bound human consciousness can be transcended. The Biblical exhortations: 'Be ye Perfect as the Father in Heaven is Perfect' or 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within You' all confirm these tremendous possibilities in man as envisaged by the Upanishadic rishis. This brings into operation the awareness of an underlying harmony transcending the superficial differences and discords experienced at the level of ordinary human social relations, and a benevolent influence on the world as we find from the lives of Buddha, Christ, Shankara, Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi. Their consciousness has become universalised.

This state of consciousness which Vedanta says every man can attain by proper methods of ethical, psychological and spiritual techniques no doubt goes beyond the wildest hopes of humanism as conceived by most of the modern philosophers. It is an attainment of the greatest magnitude the only aim truly worthy of pursuit for a man to free himself from his finitude.

## *Sankaracharya's*

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# MANISHA PANCHAKAM

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### (FIVE VERSES ON THE GURU)

The story goes that when Sankaracharya was walking along the streets of Benares one day he saw a *chandala* (a person belonging to a low community of outcastes) coming towards him. Not wishing to be polluted by the proximity of the *chandala* the Acharya called out, 'Go away, go away'. The *chandala*, however, stood his ground. In fact he was Lord Siva come in disguise to test the Acharya's spiritual maturity and to teach him that *Advaita* (the doctrine of non-duality) is not merely a matter of intellectual understanding but has to be put into practice in everyday life. He said : 'O Distinguished Ascetic ! Is it this body built up by food that you wish to keep at a distance from that body which is also built up by food, or do you wish to separate Pure Awareness which is present here from the same Awareness present there ? Is it not a delusion to think that there are distinctions like brahmin and *svapacha*<sup>1</sup> in our innermost essence which is like a waveless ocean of spontaneous bliss ? Is there any difference in the Sun reflected in the water of the holy Ganges and that which is reflected in a stagnant pool in a street of *chandalas* ? Again, is there any difference between the space enclosed in a vessel made of gold and that enclosed in a pot made of clay ?' On hearing these words the Acharya realised his mistake. He composed five verses on the spot to show that there are no distinctions in the pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss that is Brahman. Siva then revealed Himself to him and blessed him.

These five verses are known as the *Manisha Panchakam* as each of them ends with the words *manisha mama*, meaning 'my opinion' or 'what I think'. The following is a free rendering of them :—

## THE TEXT

1. 'I am truly Pure Awareness which clearly manifests itself in the states of waking, dreaming and sleeping, which is the cognizer of the universe and is immanent in all bodies from that of Brahma (the four-faced god) to that of an ant. I am not an object of perception (like the body).' One who has this firm conviction is, in my opinion, a true Guru, whether he is a brahmin or a *chandala*.

2. 'I am Brahman. This entire universe is merely a play of Consciousness. It is simply imagined by me on account of nescience caused by the three modalities (*gunas*)'. One who has this firm conviction about the Supreme Being which is pure and eternal bliss is, in my opinion, a Guru, whether he is a brahmin or a *chandala*.

3. The entire universe is constantly changing<sup>2</sup>. One who has heard this from the Guru's lips will sincerely and ceaselessly think about Brahman with a tranquil mind. He will burn up the sins committed by him in the past and those that may be committed in the future in the fire of Self Knowledge, and will let his body experience the consequences of his acts which have come to fruition in this life. This is my opinion.

4. Pure awareness is experienced inwardly as 'I' by all beings, celestial, human and inferior. The body, the sense organs and the mind which are inert by nature become sentient (as it were) by Its effulgence (i.e. intelligence). The Yogi who always contemplates with a tranquil mind this effulgence which, like the Sun, is hidden by the (very) objects which it illumines, is, in my opinion, the true Guru.

5. The bliss enjoyed by Indra and other celestial beings is but an infinitesimal portion of the Ocean of Bliss (which is Brahman). The sage experiences the latter in his extremely tranquil mind. He whose mind is dissolved in that eternal Ocean of Bliss is verily Brahman, not merely a knower of Brahman. Such a person is rare and is adored by Indra, the lord of the *devas*. This is my opinion.

<sup>1</sup> another name for *chandala*, literally, one who cooks dog's flesh.

<sup>2</sup> *lit.* perishing.



## The Spell of Bhagavan

By M. S. Nagarajan

From the day Sri Muruganar first met Sri Bhagavan, all his poems have belonged to one or other of three categories : songs in praise of Bhagavan, the teachings of Bhagavan and accounts of his own inner experiences of Bhagavan's grace.

The last stanza of the very last poem that Sri Muruganar composed is very significant and runs as follows :

*Since by a glance the King of grace,  
The Master of boundless bliss, has  
raised me*

*To the true, the wonderful heaven  
Of absolute being, the pure awareness,  
Beyond concepts like bondage and  
release,*

*A radiant fount of blissful peace  
Keeps welling up within.*

This was composed on May 28, exactly three months before his release from the body on August 28, 1973.

The charming but profound story of Buddha's Law among the birds was originally written by an unknown lama from Tibet. Extracts from Edward Conze's English translation are given here together with a brief summary of the tale.

## LIFE IS FULL OF SUFFERING

Once upon a time the birds of the Himalayas gathered to hear a discourse on the teachings of the Buddha by their wise king, the Cuckoo. The discourse was held on a holy mountain called Pleasant Jewel on the border between India and Tibet.

After meditating for seven days on the exhortations of Avalokitesvara, the great Bodhisattva of Mercy in the guise of the Cuckoo<sup>1</sup>, one by one the birds stood up and spoke.

Among them was the lark. Weary at heart from her countless rebirths, she wept and said : skyid skyur skyid skyur which means the pleasures turn sour, the pleasures turn sour.

“When they dwell in a state of woe, the pleasures of beings turn sour . . . .

Seeing others enjoy one's gains, the pleasures of storing up wealth turn sour.

Seeing the crops destroyed by weeds and hail, the pleasures of tilling the earth turn sour.

Seeing aged parents turned from house and home, the pleasures of raising children turn sour.

Since, when the time has come, one must depart without it, the pleasures of love for the body turn sour.

Since, when the time comes, one must depart alone, the pleasures of love of friends turn sour.

Seeing the corpses laid in the burial ground, the pleasures of pride in this bodily citadel turn sour. . . .”

And she continued :

“Since these pleasures all turn sour, what use are all these things ?

What use this homely existence, -- a source of suffering ?

What use these families rent by strife, yet even in unhappiness not parting ?

What use are sons, when their upbringing is so profitless ?

What use are friends when they are not sincere in our defence ?

What use possessions when one knows not how to use them ?

What use these fortresses, -- without defence against the Lord of Death ?

What use these chieftains who spread misery and death ?

What use in this unrighteous world to eat and thus maintain the body ?

What use religious talk to those who have learnt little and can understand still less ?

What use concern for others' good when one is full of selfish interest ?

What use these moral rules with no attempt to follow them ?

What use, therefore, these many things, -- useless indeed are they !”

<sup>1</sup> According to legend. It is further said to be the spiritual principle within the Dalai Lama.

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# A Critic of Shankara's Advaita

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**The origin of India's Vedantic philosophy can be traced back several thousand years, yet it is still dynamically embraced by millions of people, says the author. He proceeds to clarify the meaning of Shankara's doctrine of non-dualism.**

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**By R. L. Campbell**

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**T**HE perennial mystery of man's relationship to a higher power or powers has always been a baffling and painful problem to mankind. Over the ages many probable speculations and sincere philosophical formulations, in a diversity of cultures the world over, have been created by the inquisitive and restless probing of mankind.

In India several mature and balanced philosophical systems called Vedanta reflect answers to man's perennial mystery. The present systems have antecedents which can be traced back several thousand years yet they are still dynamically embraced by millions of people.

Vedanta philosophy means supreme wisdom or the knowers of ultimate reality. The conceptual framework supporting the entire system states that man's being, the atman, and the absolute, Brahman, are one and the same essence. The inexplicable mystery of how this non-Aristotelian-logical relationship can exist is explained by the entire Vedantic system which maintains that the answers lie above the logical and verbal understanding of man. The ultimate grasp of reality, the system insists, is a mystical and existential merging of the atman and Brahman.

This is a non-dual reality which rests on the monistic principle of existence itself, since Brahman, the absolute, is *sat, chit, ananda* — existence, knowledge and bliss. But while the conceptual framework is a philosophical one, the existential awareness of the ultimate goal

is methodologically a religious and mystical one.

Nirguna Brahman is ultimate reality. It is one without a second, timeless, without beginning or end, and exists beyond the time space cause and effect continuum. It has no qualities, nor internal distinctions and is determinate and without attributes. "The absolute is eternally perfect in itself and does not depend for its perfection in any way on the creatures of the world . . . To Shankara, ultimate reality is a unity beyond all differences."<sup>1</sup> It is ". . . a supralogical undifferentiated unity, the world of plurality being entirely relative to *avidya* or the logical way of thinking."<sup>2</sup>

"Shankara's Brahman is *sat-cit-ananda*, i.e. the units of absolute existence, absolute consciousness, absolute bliss. It is not the units of an integrated whole having certain parts, elements or attributes. Brahman is not that which has or possesses absolute bliss. Nor is Brahman pure existence plus pure consciousness plus pure bliss. Brahman is pure existence which is pure consciousness and pure consciousness which is pure bliss."<sup>3</sup> Thus ". . . for Shankara the real is changeless, unalterable, so full of being that it always is and forever maintains itself in rest and repose. It has no lack, no need, and so knows no change or strife."<sup>4</sup>

Nirguna Brahman, Iswara or Saguna Brahman and the atman as categories of existence are interwoven into a pattern of complexity which are inexplicably tied together. Sankara's unqualified non-dualism states this fact emphatically. Reality is one. There is no division, no parts, no real separation between Iswara and Brahman, Brahman and the atman. Ultimately there is no differentiation between the self or atman and the absolute or Brahman, as also there is no separation between Iswara and Brahman.

Shankara reconciles these concepts by stating that Brahman is the ultimate reality and Iswara is a phenomenal manifestation of that reality. Iswara is Brahman from the standpoint of human ignorance.

### BE THE ACTOR

"Why should your occupation or duties in life interfere with your spiritual effort? For instance, there is a difference between your activities at home and in the office. In your office activities you are detached and so long as you do your duty you do not care what happens or whether it results in gain or loss to the employer. But your duties at home are performed with attachment and you are all the time anxious as to whether they will bring advantage or disadvantage to you and your family. But it is possible to perform all the activities of life with detachment and regard only the Self as real. It is wrong to suppose that if one is fixed in the Self one's duties in life will not be properly performed. It is like an actor. He dresses and acts and even feels the part he is playing, but he knows really that he is not that character but some one else in real life. In the same way, why should the body-consciousness or the feeling 'I-am-the-body' disturb you, once you know for certain that you are not the body but the Self? Nothing that the body does should shake you from abidance in the Self. Such abidance will never interfere with the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has, any more than the actor's being aware of his real status in life interferes with his acting a part on the stage".

— *Day By Day with Bhagavan*, p. 264.

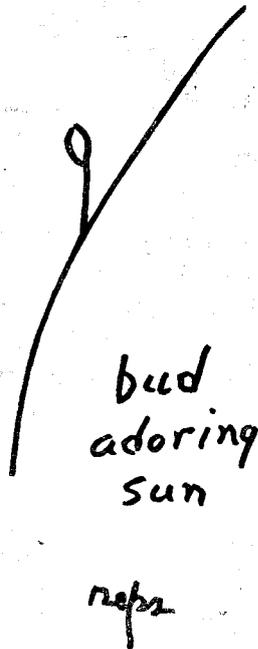
When this ignorance is dissipated in the mystical, transcendental union of the atman and Brahman, only Brahman remains as the ultimate unqualified non-dual reality.

<sup>1</sup> Haridas Chaudhuri, *The Philosophy of Integralism* Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Calcutta, 1954, pp. 106-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1923-27, p. 532.




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## Gazing at Amazing Bud....

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By Roland Hunt

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Roland Hunt passed away in October 1973,  
shortly after writing these two striking poems  
in a letter to *paul rePS*.

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O little bud -- adoring sun,  
open this lonely-hearted one!  
O make your hidden hands to play  
that I too may unfold this day.

O little bud, direct in choice,  
please let me hear your silent voice.  
open my ears to wondrous sound  
to make my heart to leap and bound.

O little bud with hidden scent  
unique quintessant innocence . . .  
O quicken me, thy fragrance lent  
to clarify *my* life's intent

*Says Bud :*

Sun's love-force works in bud and flower,  
portrayals of most wondrous power ;  
a Bud abides within *thy* heart,  
so welcome Sun, to quick its start.

There is one work beyond all art,  
to express what thou truly art !

## How Telling

Could I tell my name tomorrow ?  
many thousand names I've been . . .  
Which one would best suit to borrow  
telling what my Now does mean ?

JOP belongs to time-loosed heart,  
it thinks not when the 'I' did start ;  
if I could tell my name tomorrow  
would time be gone and all past sorrow ?

Sorrow, sense of guilt, remorse  
exist alone in reversed thought ;  
to dim the present-opened course  
deny the Gifts the Now has brought.

If melting heart could fade all sorrow  
I'd have no name at all tomorrow.

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Selected by Jean Clause

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# ORENDA

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The Red Indian culture in North America was evidently based on profound wisdom and unspoilt affinity with Nature. Spiritual intuition of these Redskins stemmed from faith in "the great Spirit-Voice" and expressed itself in knowledge of yogic principles. This much is clear from the description here of the *orenda*.

'*Orenda*' is an anglicised word from the original term '*iorenda*' used by the Huron tribes belonging to the Iroquois Indians. The Hurons were so called by early Canadian settlers because they lived on the shores of Lake Huron — one of the five Great Lakes.

This extract, translated from French, is taken from Paul Coze's book *The Thunderbird* — (landscapes and magic of the Redskins)

1. *The Orenda*: it is a force, a magical power inherent in every living being, denoting its quality or activity.
2. The *orenda* is immaterial, mortal, occult, impersonal — mysterious in its action. It is limited in its power (not omnipotent), localised (not omnipresent) — always immanent in a being or object.
3. The *orenda* can be transferred, attracted, acquired, developed or suppressed. *Orendas* can vary in their intensity creating a scale which gives certain beings a strength others do not have. This applies equally to certain animals and phenomena of Nature and to some celestial beings.
4. Each being, each thing is sacred.
5. Each being, each thing is alive.
6. Each being, each thing contains a measure of power.
7. All living beings are composed of the body, the *orenda* and the soul.
8. The soul, the spiritual part, is immortal, sensitive, emotional, intelligent.
9. The *orenda* is the link between spirit and matter; it is mortal, — like a fluid or subtle vibration.
10. The *orenda* is "the eye of the soul". It perceives and learns.
11. The soul is conception, will, reason, memory.
12. The soul knows joys, sorrows, fears.
13. The *orenda* is premonition, intuition, perception, understanding.
14. Sensation and perception of the *orenda* precede knowledge and reasoning — the domain of the soul.
15. The sane, normal being is a harmony of body, *orenda* and soul.
16. The strong being is a focus for each of these forces.
17. The body perishes first and disintegrates. The *orenda*, little by little detaches itself, remains and then dissolves in its turn. The soul leaves the body and returns to a special realm.
18. In its normal state, the *orenda* is located around the body, chiefly about or above the head; in moments of attention as well as in all normal movements, it is projected forward.
19. Deep worship is silent.
20. Silence is perfect balance of the three parts of the being.
21. Silence is the great Mystery.
22. Sacred silence is the great Spirit-Voice.
23. Silence is the very foundation of character.

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# AN UNTRANSLATED TEXT

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By **Kenneth Kramer**

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what begins as "prayer-to" or "meditation-upon" the Absolute becomes absolute prayer or absolute meditation according to the original nature of this text :

-- i am the music and the silence  
of my own re-curring self-discovery --

*true prayer*, according to Thomas Merton, who lived a life of contemplative prayer, is a "meditative unity, a deep personal integration in an attentive, watchful listening of 'the heart'." this is not, as Merton sometimes suggests, "properly monastic," for the same reason that mystical immediateness cannot be, as Merton sometimes suggests, aligned with ethnic types. the mystic experience and the path are one, being indivisible.

-- synergetic harmony, nickname for the Absolute, is nonseparate individuality --

and *true meditation* is con/centration : being wholly gathered together at the centre, one's own centre, where there is effort & grace and simul/temporally effort & effortlessness. in zen literature it is said that the way is to actualise this paradox :

-- you cannot become SUCHNESS  
yourself ;  
no one else can teach you  
SUCHNESS --

or as the seeker of "the truth to be realized NOW" once asked a modern zen master : "if i follow a path, i cannot *get-there* for it will be my 'i' still ; yet if i do nothing i cannot *get-there* ; what should i do?" to

which the man who eliminates no/thing rejoined : "let That be yur way !"

-- there are plenty of paths & ways ;  
there is one self/negating method --

therefore yu SEE, what begins as prayer or meditation *to* or *upon* (a dualistically self/divided ritual, usually performed within *a priori* prescriptions and rules, usually based on unexperienced assumptions and riddled with the penumbra of doubt) ends in consistent self/fulfilling-Self/actualised, rooted, living. then there are no longer guidelines except general principles extracted from what yu are always already doing with the 100% being of all personal modalities.

-- investigation ends with the  
investigator ;  
the investigator has no known  
name --

to put IT another WAY, as the April 1973 *The Mountain Path* suggests more than once, the radical linguistic meaning of "absolute" is "to loosen, to detach" which can be compared to the meaning of Buddha's *vimutta*, "to release, to detach".

-- one who is AWAKE is one who  
releases (separating) "self"-sensa-  
tions --

the "absolute" is *approached*, therefore, only by one who does not understand, from within, self/transcending experience of the multiparticular ultimate.

-- two masters sit face : to : face  
there is only one awakening ! --

if one is still "heading to the goal of freedom" one is still un-absolute for, by linguistic understanding alone, there can be no separateness within an absolutely understood experience. to still be walking on a path is to be still caught apart from the absolute. it matters little how ; it only matters THAT.

-- according to the monkey-man guru :  
to understand krishna is to  
understand christ --

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Father Merton points out that true emptiness is that which transcends all things and yet is immanent in all. The character of this emptiness is love — and herein lies the whole mystery of contemplative prayer.

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# The Mystery of Contemplation

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By Father Thomas Merton

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**T**HE whole mystery of simple contemplative prayer is a mystery of divine love, of personal vocation and of free gift. This — and this alone — makes it true 'emptiness' in which there is nothing left of ourselves....

In the contemplative life it is neither desire nor the refusal of desire that counts, but only that 'desire' which is a form of 'emptiness', that is to say which acquiesces in the unknown and peacefully advances where it does not see the way. All the paradoxes about the contemplative way are reduced to this one: being without desire means being led by a desire so great that it is incomprehensible. It is too huge to be completely felt. It is a blind desire, which seems like a desire for 'nothing' only because nothing can content it. And because it is able to rest in no-thing, then it rests — relatively speaking — in emptiness. But not in emptiness as such; emptiness for its own sake. Actually there is no such entity as pure emptiness, and the merely negative emptiness of the false contemplative is a 'thing' not a 'nothing'. The 'thing' that

it is, is simply the darkness of self, from which all other beings are deliberately and of set purpose excluded.

But true emptiness is that which transcends all things, and yet is immanent in all. For what seems to be emptiness in this case is pure being. Or at least a philosopher might so describe it. But to the contemplative it is other than that. It is not this, nor that. Whatever you say of it, it is other than what you say. The character of emptiness, at least for a Christian contemplative, is pure love, pure freedom. Love that is free of everything, not determined by any thing or held down by any special relationship. It is love for love's sake. It is a sharing, through the Holy Spirit, in the infinite charity of God. And so when Jesus told his disciples to love, he told them to love as universally as the Father who sends his rain alike on the just and the unjust. "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect". This purity, freedom and indeterminateness is the very essence of Christianity. It is to this above all that monastic prayer inspires.

**B**HAGAVAN Sri Ramana is personally present here. To demand the proof of it is like wanting proof that the sun is shining overhead. His presence is known or 'seen' by those with 'eyes' to see. For others even a positive proof would be useless. If a few phenomenal incidents are cited to prove His Personal Presence here, the logical mind may well dismiss them all as too fantastic or mere imagination. A man of faith could accept the facts on hearing them but would that instill conviction of Sri Ramana's presence as a Living Reality?

For those who come to visit Sri Ramanasramam I would like to offer my advice. Please do not come like a tourist merely with an idea that you are going to sight-see an *Asbram*, the name of one of the greatest *Rishis* of modern times and then go through the ritual of offering prayers and *Pooja* at various shrines, receiving *prasadam* and *vibhuti* and going back satisfied that you have 'done' another holy place. Of course, visiting holy places does have great effect, but that in itself is not enough. It may be enough for the uninitiated, but seekers of the Truth require a sense of Holy Presence, such as can be experienced at Sri Ramanasramam.

It is a fact that Bhagavan IS HERE. Towards the end of his bodily manifestation He said: "They say that I am going, but where can I go? I am here."

Once when someone wrote a booklet criticising Sri Ramanasramam, Sri Bhagavan remarked that the author had done a great service to the cause of Truth. When asked for an explanation, He said that this book would keep away the insincere and superficial people and only the sincere Truth-Seekers would continue to come. In the same way the Maharshi Himself has done a great service to the cause of Truth by withdrawing Himself from the physical plane. He has made Himself unavailable to the worldly eye, while to the seeker with spiritual sight His living Presence is very much here.

*Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya !*




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## Bhagavan Sri Ramana is Personally Present Here

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*By Sri Swatantra*

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**Sri Bhagavan is very much Alive ! His continued Presence at Sri Ramanasramam is sure to be felt by sincere seekers of Truth, stresses the author of this article.**

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# Garland of Guru's Sayings

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SRI MURUGANAR

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351.<sup>1</sup>

Scanning the troublesome Phantom called  
the ego  
We discover that it is a word  
Importing nothing. If import it has,  
Then like the real rope beneath the snake  
The true Self is its sole substratum.

352.

When ego sinks one gains the bliss  
Of heaven, one's own eternal home.  
When ego goes, there is no loss  
Of Being. Hence be not afraid.

353.

Those who as food for Siva pour their minds  
Into the raging sacrificial fire  
Of true awareness and dare worship  
And merge in Siva's form, attain  
His own auspicious formlessness.

354.

Don't ask in fear and doubt,  
"What will happen if I give up completely  
This separate self?"  
Whoso lets go the bough he clings to  
Lands on solid earth. You are bound  
To reach the real Self.

355.

In sleep in which the world is not  
And in the experience of true Being  
As awareness where one sees  
The ego's falseness, one must find  
The changeless substance of the Self.

356.

Total absence of the 'I' -- thought is  
The truth supreme of the one real Self.  
Because this 'I' -- thought does not rise in  
sleep  
Does anyone ever cease to be in sleep?

357.

Come, think of it, the egoless state  
Is one's true Being as flawless, bright  
Awareness. Do I cease to be  
In the egoless state? Search and find  
The truth in sleep, the Knowledge of the  
void.

358.

The egoless state is Being as Awareness,  
The stillness sweet of Sivahood,  
Freedom from birth and death belauded  
As *Brahma-nirvana* and *Kaivalya* too.

359.

The separate ego being completely dead,  
The indivisible Self as Being -- Awareness  
Springs and shines forth. No sham 'I' this,  
No filthy canker-worm born in  
The flower only to blight it.

360.

Natural, unbroken, ever present,  
All *maya* gone, so great of heart  
Is the pure I of *muktas* seen  
In deeds without a trace of doership.

361.

Those whose ego body-bound is dead  
And who thus live a life of full awareness  
Rejoice in Self and free from care abide  
In Peace that knows no ripple of desire.

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<sup>1</sup>Please note the change in the numbering of verses. Verse No. 246 was published as the last one in our October, '73 issue. Instead of starting with No. 247 in this issue we put 351, so as to coincide with the numbering in the Tamil original — *Guruvachaka Kovai* — recently published by Sri Ramanasramam.

# SANATSUJATIYA<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

*Note : Several stanzas in this chapter are cryptic as well as allegorical, reminding one of the Vedic hymns. The meaning is not always explicit.*

### 1. Sanatsujata :

That which is immaculate, a great radiant effulgence, supremely glorious, is meditated upon by the devas and makes the sun shine. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord (*Bhagavan*)<sup>2</sup>.

2. Brahman (the Creator) emerges out of that Immaculate Being and flourishes<sup>3</sup> by its power. That Immaculate Being shines in the midst of other shining ones. It is not illumined by anything but is self-luminous. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

3. From the Whole emerges the whole. Therefore it is said that what comes out of the Whole is the whole. The whole is taken away from the Whole. Still the Whole remains whole. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

4. Like space and sky and ripples in the Ganga everything, moving and unmoving rises from Brahman and merges in It. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

5. (The subtle form of) water emerged first from Brahman. From it arose this body composed of (the five elements). Within the space in the middle of it<sup>4</sup> dwell the two shining ones<sup>5</sup>. Facing each other and enclosing all the directions of space these two support the earth and heaven. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

6. Horses carry to heaven the bright, divine and immortal being seated on the chariot of the Immutable Being whose deeds

do not perish. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

7. There is nothing<sup>6</sup> which can be compared to It. None can see it with the eyes. Those who realise it with the mind, the intellect and the heart become immortal. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

8. The moving assemblages of twelve<sup>7</sup> drink the honey under the protection of the shining one and, repeatedly hankering after it, wander about in terrible places. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

9. The bee drinks in the course of half a month, the honey gathered (during the previous half month). The Lord bestows upon all beings the sacrificial offerings<sup>8</sup> due to them. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

10. The fledglings resort to the peepul tree with leaves of gold. There they grow into birds and fly about as they like. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

11. The outgoing vital air (*prana*) absorbs the ingoing air (*apana*). The Moon absorbs the upcoming air. The Sun absorbs the Moon. The Supreme Being absorbs the Sun. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

12. The swan does not, while flying, raise one leg out of the water. If it were to keep it raised always there will be neither death nor immortality. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

<sup>1</sup>Continued from the last issue.

<sup>2</sup>This last sentence is found at the end of almost all the stanzas of this chapter like a refrain.

<sup>3</sup>lit. grows.

<sup>4</sup>the body.

<sup>5</sup>the individual self and the Supreme Self.

<sup>6</sup>lit. no form (*rupam*).

<sup>7</sup>our bodies composed of the five organs of knowledge, the five organs of action, the mind and the intellect.

<sup>8</sup>the fruit of their action.

13. The indwelling person, small as a thumb, always wanders about (in *samsara*) on account of his association with the subtle body (*linga*). Ignorant persons do not perceive that shining and adorable primal being who pervades everything. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

14. Just as serpents, after killing men with their poison, hide themselves in caves, so also the sense organs, after beguiling foolish persons with pleasures, delude them and keep them (perpetually) in *samsara*. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

15. A foolish person does not realise the Self in himself and therefore flounders about in the well of *samsara*. He who ignores the Self and enjoys sense pleasures is truly an ass. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

16. This (the Self) is seen to exist in those who possess the spiritual qualifications as well as those who do not. It is the same in the state of Liberation and the other state (i.e., the state of bondage). Yet only those who are one with it enjoy Supreme Bliss. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

17. One who knows (Brahman) gains both the worlds. Even if such a person does not perform the fire-ceremony (*agnibotra*) he gets the benefit of it. Do not treat the knowledge of Brahman as unimportant. The wise attain that State which is called Absolute Awareness. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

18. The great Self described above, the Person (*Purusba*), swallows the fire. He who knows that person does not lose<sup>9</sup> his Self. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

19. Therefore one should always inhere in the Self. There is no death for such a person, so where is the question of immortality? Truth and untruth alike depend upon the one Reality. The origin of truth and untruth is one and the same. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

20. The indwelling person who is as small as a thumb and abides in the heart is

not perceived. He is unborn but moves about tirelessly, day and night. When one knows Him one becomes an enlightened Seer.

21.-22. *Vayu* (the air) emerges from It and merges in It. *Agni* and *Soma* rise from It. Also *Prana*. That is the basis (of all), that is Immortality and the worlds. That is Brahman. That is Glory. All beings rise from It and merge in It.

23. The Bright Being supports the two shining ones<sup>10</sup>, the earth and heaven, the directions of space and the world. The quarters and rivers flow from It. The great oceans are controlled by It.

24. Even if one possessed thousands of wings and flew as fast as the mind one cannot come to the end of that Primal Being. Yogis clearly perceive Him, the Eternal Lord.

25. It cannot be perceived (by all). Those who are extremely pure in mind perceive It. The wise man who is free (from likes and dislikes) perceives It clearly. Those who know It become immortal.

26. He who sees himself in all beings and is one with them everywhere, why should he grieve?

27. Just as one has no use for a reservoir when there is a big flood everywhere, so also a Brahmin who knows Brahman (Reality) has nothing to gain from others.

28. I am your father and mother and am likewise your son. I am the Self of all that exists or has ceased to exist.

29. O Bharata! I am the old grandfather as well as the father and the son. You are all in me. But you do not belong to me, nor do I belong to you.

30. The Self is my abode. It is also my origin. I penetrate everything through and through. I never grow old. I am the support (of all). I am unborn but am nevertheless active day and night. He who knows me becomes an enlightened seer.

31. I am tinier than the tiniest, the pure mind dwelling in all beings and the father of all -- the wise realise me in the lotus (i.e., the heart).

<sup>9</sup> lit. his self does not perish.

<sup>10</sup> the Lord and the individual.

(Concluded)

# GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

## ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

### CHAPTER XII

### THE GODDESS JOINS SIVA

Brahma continued :

WHEN Gautama, venerated by munis, spoke in this manner Gauri lost her apprehension on account of having killed a devotee of Siva. A sweet voice was then heard from the sky. It said : "Daughter of the mountain ! You need not go anywhere else to expiate your sin. Split open a rock with your sword. All the nine *tirthas* namely, the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Sindhu, the Godavari, the Saraswati, the Narmada, the Kaveri, the Sonanadi and the Sonanadam, will appear in that cleft. Bathe in them uttering the sin-destroying *mantra* in the month of *Āsvija*<sup>1</sup> in the asterism (constellation) of *Jeyshtā*<sup>2</sup>. You must bathe bearing the *linga* in this holy water brought about by the sword, and at the end of the month instal on the bank of that holy *tirtha* (pond) the sin-destroying *linga* in your hand consecrating it for the welfare of the world.

"If anyone bathes in that *tirtha* and worships that *linga* he will undoubtedly be free from the three kinds of misery. This is an immutable *linga* which destroys the sins of all the three worlds. Instal it with devotion on the bank of the *tirtha* for the welfare of the world in the asterism of *Uttara Āsbada*<sup>3</sup>,

celebrate a festival for ten days with the Devikas named Anumati, Bala, Sinivali, Guha and Yatri, take the final bath (*avabhrta snāna*) in the asterism (constellation) of *Krittika*<sup>4</sup> and worship in the evening Sonachala in the prescribed manner. I shall then reveal to you my own effulgent form. You must do this purely for the welfare of the world."

Goddess Gauri thereupon proceeded to do what the Maharshi and the voice from the sky had asked her to do. She cleft the rocky surface of the earth with her sword invoking the power of her austerities. The nine *tirthas* immediately gushed out of the cleft. After obtaining the permission of the munis the Goddess, bearing the *linga*, meditated and bathed in that *tirtha*. When the Goddess stepped into the water which was crystal clear it immediately became blue on account of her splendour. She remained at that place for thirty days. But her mind was agitated on account of her separation from Sambhu. She caused by her powers lotuses resembling her eyes and *utpala* flowers resembling her smile

<sup>1</sup> October-November.

<sup>2</sup> Antares.

<sup>3</sup> Sagittarii.

<sup>4</sup> Pleiades.

to bloom in that *tirtha*. The world was blessed by her presence there. All people obtained their desires and were contented.

At the end of one month the Goddess celebrated a festival. She propitiated the Lord of Arunadri with all the prescribed offerings and pouring of water (*arghya*) on the evening of the asterism of *Krittika*<sup>4</sup> in the month of *Kārtika*<sup>5</sup>. The mother of the world then prayed : "Visvarupa ! God in the form of Sonachala ! Effulgent one ! Linga in the form of a hill ! Remover of all sins ! Obeisance to Thee. Thy glory could not be realised even by Brahma and Vishnu as Thou art truly fire. But Thou became cool for the welfare of the world. Transformed into the world-consuming fire again at the proper time thou wilt burn up everything.

"O best of hills ! Lord of Arunadri ! Repository of all beautiful forms ! Thy form is wonderful. Thou alone knowest it. It is worshipped only by devas. Lord ! Thou art said to be the origin of everything. Thou art the great Lord. Thy form is divine. Thy effulgence is beyond thought, words and perception. Today I see clearly that which was formerly seen by Brahma and meditated upon by Vishnu, and which made them pure. Reveal graciously Thy divine effulgence which is capable of destroying all evils."

When the Goddess stood praying thus, Siva of Arunadri manifested himself as effulgence blazing in all directions. He appeared as a supreme effulgence resembling the rising of crores of suns, or a crore of full moons or world-consuming fires. The *Munis* (Sages) and the Goddess prostrated before it with extreme veneration. While the Goddess stood overcome with joy the Lord of Arunadri rose out of that effulgence in the form of a golden person with a bluish throat and said : "I am glad that you stayed at the places specified by me and did penance. You have now directly realised my radiant form. Being the mother of the world you protect the world for various reasons. You do penance on earth ! What more do you require ? Beloved one ! Your doubt (fear) has vanished the moment you saw my splendour !

"This Mahisha was a wicked fellow. He swallowed a devotee of Siva who worshipped a *linga*. The devotee's *linga* got stuck in his throat. Although it was inside his throat it was of no use. He had listened to the advice of an unbeliever and had therefore no faith in me. But in course of time he was born as a *muni*. He then worshipped me and meditated upon me and thereby became a chief of *ganas*. Although he was a devotee of mine in his previous life he has now been killed by you. However, as he had worn my *linga* for a long time, he attained liberation. Devotees who seek liberation should never show disbelief in the *lingas* of Siva or offend the devotees of Siva. If a *linga* is worn wantonly without proper initiation it will not only be useless but will also, like the *Vajrayudha* (Indra's special, powerful weapon) bring about the death of the wearer.

"You have not incurred any sin by this act. Moreover, as you have looked at Sonachala, you have expiated all your sins. Your eyes have become blessed. You engaged a foster mother to suckle your son. And, instead of being with him, you were here as Unnamulai (mother of the unsuckled breasts) on the asterism of *Krittika* for the protection of your devotees. You shall therefore in expiation of it (as a reward for it) be famous as *Apitakuchambika*<sup>6</sup>. After completing this worship (*puja*) for the welfare of the devotees you shall meditate upon me."

When Siva spoke these sweet words, Ambika bowed low to him and prayed : "Deva of Devas ! Kindly show every year on this *Krittika* day of the full moon that divine form which was graciously revealed by Thee on the auspicious day on which my austerities were concluded and which was seen by Devas and me, so that all may be safe against adversity." Mahadeva said : "So be it", and disappeared into Arunagiri !

The Goddess then went round the hill along with her companions. As she did so Arunachala shone like an emerald with the lustre of which her sacred body was enveloped.

<sup>5</sup> November-December.

<sup>6</sup> Sanskrit word for *Unnamalai* (the unsuckled breast),

As she walked slowly, the lustre of her lotus feet made the earth look as if it had been strewn with lotus petals. Her radiant looks were like blossoms of blue lotuses scattered by worshippers all round Sonadri. When Goddess Gauri circumambulated the self-effulgent Sonadri, the wives of Indra and the protectors of the worlds, adored her. *Matruganas* (mothers) pleased her by offering sandal paste, flowers and ornaments. She was surrounded by divine maidens bearing the white umbrella, *chamaras*, musical instruments, betel leaves, etc.

Goddess Gauri who was devoutly walking round (the Hill) as if she was walking round the fire lit after a marriage with the object of attaining union with Siva, was joined at each step by newly arrived devas despatched by Sambhu. The daughter of the ice-clad mountain (Himalaya) was surrounded by Brahma and Sarasvati (his consort), Vishnu and Lakshmi (his consort) and the protectors of the quarters accompanied by their *saktis*. She put to shame even Indra, king of the devas. It looked as if she was making the hill of fire cool or displaying by her austerities the grace of dwelling near a *tirtha*. Constantly remembering Mahadeva she gave spiritual instruction to the divine Rishis. The sports of her childhood seemed to mingle with the austerities of her youth. She thought that the burning sensation which she felt on account of her separation from Siva was equally felt by Him. She stepped into the water and stood there as if to allay that burning sensation.

It looked as if it was her object to reveal to the world the glory of the *tirtha* in the rock in which all the *tirthas* had mingled. It also looked as if she wanted relief from the arduous penance which she had performed in the midst of the five fires to get rid of her suffering and attaining the object of her desires. She stood there as if it was her object to wash in pure water the *linga* drenched by the blood of Mahisha.

A beautiful city named Aruna was built by Visvakarma with the object of pleasing Apitakucha Nāyaki and the Lord of Sonadri. Noble women lived in its mansions. They sat

beneath high canopies singing. *Siddhas*<sup>7</sup> *charanas*<sup>7</sup> *ganbarvas*<sup>7</sup> and *vidyadharas*<sup>7</sup> gathered in the city. This city had eight gates and eight-wheeled chariots and streets suitable for them. It was served by the eight protectors of the quarters. The eight images (*murtis*) in it were worshipped by *siddhas* possessing the eight *siddhis*. It was famous for the devotees who worshipped the Lord according to the eight aspects of Siva (*ashtānga bhakti*), and yogis practising the eight-limbed yoga (*ashtānga yoga*), inhabitants belonging to the four castes and sub-castes, and beautiful groves. The sound of the conch, the *dundubhi*<sup>8</sup>, the *bherika*<sup>8</sup>, the *mridanga*<sup>8</sup> and *maddala*<sup>8</sup>, the veena, the cymbals, was heard as also the chanting of Vedas by Maharshis devoted to Siva.

Vishnu stood in front of Vrishadhwaya adoring him who shone day and night as if it were an assembly of the world of the Devas with the lustre of blazing jewels of the nine kinds and appearing as if the nine planets had risen together. Indra came there with hosts of Devas. Fragrant flowers rained down from the world of the devas on all sides. A breeze cooled by the heavenly Ganga (Akasa Ganga) blew diffusing everywhere a sweet fragrance. The quarters shook with the echoes caused by the bellowing *Hum* of the exceedingly dignified Nandi whose horns were adorned with ornaments of gold. The spring and other seasons offered their flowers. Various *ganas*, *siddhas*, *parama rishis*, devas and others came eagerly to see (the city) and strew kumkum, camphor and scented powders all mixed together. The devas sounded the *mridanga*, the *maddala*, the cymbals and other musical instruments. Auspicious musical sounds filled the earth. While the deva maidens danced, and Tumburu sang, Siva, the rider of the bull and an ocean of compassion, surrounded by munis and hosts of devas, lifted the shy and bashful Goddess Gauri up to Him. He accepted the sandal paste and flowers offered by the devas, put on a garland and sat in the company of Uma. He told the Goddess to ask for a boon.

(To be continued)

<sup>7</sup> semi-divine beings.

<sup>8</sup> different kinds of drums.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**SRI SANKARA'S VIVEKACHUDAMANI :** With English translation of the commentary of Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati of Sringeri. Translator : P. Sankaranarayanan. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 536+xxi. Price : Rs. 23.

Vivekachudamani is one of the major *Prakaranas* of Sri Sankara. As its name implies it contains the quintessence of vedantic wisdom. In its 581 stanzas it covers the entire ground of Advaita Vedanta. All the chief doctrines of the system, such as the concept of the attributeless Absolute, the concept of Maya, the notion that *Iswara*, *prapancha* and *jiva* are only appearances of Nirguna Brahman, the notion of the five sheaths, three bodies and three states of the jiva, the nature of the final intuition and *Jivanmukhta* are all set forth in much detail. It is in the form of a dialogue between an earnest disciple and a realised Preceptor. The entire work constitutes the answers given by the Guru to the seven questions addressed by the *sishya*.

In spite of the elaborate answers given by the teacher, readers feel that a great deal more is meant than what is actually said. To bring out these hidden implications, further elucidation was felt to be necessary in the form of a standard commentary. This long-felt desideratum was supplied by Sri

Chandrasekhara Bharati, the late Pontiff of the Sarada Peetam, Sringeri. No better person could have been thought of for the purpose. The commentary is not only very lucid but also dignified. It compares very well with the commentaries of the Great Master himself on the Upanishads.

But this commentary remained a closed book to most readers of *Vivekachudamani* who did not possess sufficient knowledge of Sanskrit to read and make out its import. The need of a translation, specially in English, was felt and this want has been very ably met by Sri P. Sankaranarayanan who has rendered both the original work and the commentary into English. The translation is not only faithful to the original and true to the genius of the tongue into which it is rendered but exhibits also much reverential devotion. Technical details relating to Sastra and Vyakarana are explained in the foot-notes. In a closely reasoned introduction, the translator has given a most urgent and succinct exposition of the entire teaching of the poem. There is also a topical analysis of the stanzas contained in the poem. There are two appendices and an addendum giving fuller information about some of the points alluded to in the commentary. For purposes of easy reference the *slokas* are arranged in alphabetical order towards the close of the book

and the pages in which they occur are noted against them.

It is a mighty undertaking and the translator has done it with outstanding success.

The printing and get up of the book leave little to be desired. But the price is somewhat too high for the general run of readers whose means are limited.

We whole-heartedly commend the publication to all lovers of Hindu culture in general and to lovers of Advaita Vedanta in particular.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

CLASSICS IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY FROM MO-TZU TO MAO TSE TUNG : Edited by Wade Baskin, Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 737. Price : \$ 20.00.

Believing that recent developments in China are best understood when viewed from a historical perspective, the editor of this work has tried to present in one volume a conspectus of the brilliant and many sided development of Chinese philosophy. The arrangement of the material is chronological and interlinking developments are brought out in the introductions to the successive philosophers.

The compendium starts with extracts from the legendary Confucius who tried to reform society by educating people in what he thought to be the right traditions. Divorced from religion, the Tao was to him a way of conduct leading to universal happiness. Wisdom was to know man, virtue to love man.

After Confucius comes another legendary figure, Lao Tse, with his message of simplicity and purity. For him Tao is spontaneous, beyond good and evil. Probably no one except Confucius has exerted a more far-reaching influence on Chinese minds than Lao Tse. For more than two thousand years, the influence of these two philosophers dominated the intellectual and political life of the Chinese people.

Although Gautama Buddha was not a Chinese philosopher, full thirty pages have been devoted to him in the volume, because he was the founder of a religion which profoundly influenced Chinese thinkers. The Chinese made Buddhism a system embracing both Taoist and Confucian elements.

At the other end of the volume we find, among other luminaries, the names of Sun Yat-sen and Mao Tse-Tung, the propagators of Chinese Nationalism and Communism. The former stresses the unity of knowledge and action and the latter stresses the inseparability of theory and practice, of knowing and doing.

This volume has garnered and set out the wisdom of 48 Chinese philosophers and enables the English-knowing reader to get a clear and connected idea of the most important documents in the cultural heritage of China, the cradle of one of the oldest civilizations and a country where one fourth of mankind claim to have established human equality while preserving their own cultural ethos.

C. D. GADRE

THE WHEEL OF LIFE : By John Blofeld. Pub. : Shambala Publications, Berkeley, U.S.A. Pp. 291. Price : £ 3.95.

Anything that John Blofeld writes is instructive, whether it is on Zen or on Vajrayana or on Tibetan Tantrism. The present work, his spiritual autobiography, is interesting to a high degree. Written in chaste style it narrates his attraction to the Buddha from his very childhood, his love for China, long periods of stay and study through life in that country, his contacts with genuine spiritual people — both in high positions and in modest circumstances —, his own charming foibles and (to the reader) his endearing qualities of heart and mind.

In a graphic description of his experience during the first Initiation he had from a Lama, he writes : "At the touch of those hands, a shock of frightening strength shot through my body racing down from head to throat and onwards through heart and solar plexus to the base of my spine, and simultaneously shooting out along my arms and legs, penetrating as far as my fingers and toes. My body must have shaken visibly with its violence. The room swam before me and a darkness, shot with fire, rushed upon me. When after what seemed to have been a long time, I recovered something like normal consciousness, I was very much surprised to find myself still kneeling in the same place and with the Rimpoche's hands only just in the act of rising from my head. I suppose that the 'long time' had occupied no more than a few seconds."

Among the many items of the author's interest was the famous *Elixir of Youth*. He was intrigued when a Taoist told him it was not anything to drink. Once he was a witness to a miraculous 'saving' of a Taoist when he jumped down from a high cliff to save his daughter. It was then he was told that "practice is in running and jumping and *balanced harmony* of movement form one of the main ingredients in what the vulgar suppose to be the famous elixir of youth."

Blofeld shared the common notion that Beauty was taboo in an ascetic discipline like the Buddhist. Imagine his surprise when he was told by another



The writing is terse and the terminology is special. But those who are interested in the subject will find this book stimulating.

M. P. PANDIT

**THE BUDDHIST WAY OF LIFE :** By Christmas Humphreys. Pub. : Unwin Books, London. Pp. 223. Price : £0.85.

Founder of the British Buddhist Society and a profound scholar of Buddhist thought, Christmas Humphreys has to his credit more than a dozen books which have popularised the profound philosophy of the Exalted One in the West ; and the present one under review was planned several years ago and seeing the light now is a welcome addition to the world of thought. As his interest is in world Buddhism, as distinct from any of its various schools, he believes that only in a combination of all schools can the full grandeur of Buddhist thought be founded.

Buddhism, as has often been emphasised, is not a set of codes or tenets, but a way of life being from beginning to end a matter of experience. It need not be afraid of any new systems of psychology, for the intricate and profound analysis of consciousness to be found in the *Abhidhamma* has yet to be rivalled by any modern modes of thought. Such an eternal way of life, needing no change, has been ably explained by the author ; a path, which is no track, but a temperate way of living avoiding the extremes of self-indulgence and asceticism, leading to an awareness of an immovable centre, unshaken by tempest without or doubt within. Such books as Christmas Humphreys' must naturally have a strong appeal in East or West, where there is an urgent need for a moral philosophy or way of life.

**THE MIRACLE OF DESCENT :** By Rohit Mehta.

Distributors : Sabda, Sri Aurobindo Books Distribution Agency, Pondicherry. Price : Rs. 7.

Based on the talks given by the author recently in Ahmedabad, this book is a good introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, and therefore will be welcomed by all those who have neither the time nor inclination to study the five volumes on the subject under the heads : *The Synthesis of Yoga* and the *Letters on Yoga*. Quite unlike other systems of Yoga, the Aurobindonian discipline :

"does not proceed through any set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, mantras and others, but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards or upwards, by a self-opening to an Influence, to the Divine Power above us and its workings. . . ."

Rohit Mehta has in a succinct manner explained the study of the philosophy and the psychology of Integral Yoga in this book. He has discussed at some length in ten chapters the several issues arising out of the Aurobindonian system and contrasted it against the various other types of Yoga popular in this country, dealing particularly with certain inadequacies inherent in the practice of those systems. What marks the Integral system distinctly is the special emphasis laid on Involution as against Evolution, for herein lies the mystery of Mutation. The whole concept of *Avatara-hood* is indicative of this principle of Descent or Involution giving thus a new impetus and a new direction to the stream of evolution.

The chapters discussing the implications of the four categories of the Mind expounded by Sri Aurobindo — Physical, Higher, Illumined and Intuitive — and the significance of the depth psychology of the ancient seers of the Upanishads in terms of the four states of consciousness — *jagrat*, *swapna*, *sushupti* and *turiya* — will be of special interest to the lay reader.

**ADORATION OF THE DIVINE MOTHER :** by

M. P. Pandit. Pub. : Ganesh & Co. Pvt. Ltd., Madras-17. Pp. 103. Price : Rs. 6.

That the destiny of the soul is a divine perfection and liberation to be achieved by going beyond the mind into the integral light of the immeasurable Godhead who is beyond all Dharmas and by self-surrender to the Divine is the core and summation of the Aurobindonian philosophy : and this forms the theme of the selection of poems of Vasishtha Ganapati Muni offered here to the public by M. P. Pandit. Grateful to the fact that it was by the grace of the Divine Mother that he got his Perfect Guru in Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in 1907, the Muni composed a poem of thousand verses in Sanskrit in praise of the Devi entitled *Uma-sahasram*. How the poem was completed by the special grace and divine inspiration of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is beautifully told in the preface by Sri Pandit. The verses have been explained by the Muni's disciple, the late Sri Kapali Sastri in his commentary, *Prabha*. Out of the 1,000 verses set in 40 chapters of 25 verses each, Sri Pandit has offered to us a fine selection of 103 verses alphabetically arranged under several subject heads along with their commentary, of which the following may serve as a fine sampler (29. 21) :

"*Self-surrender* to the Divine. The Vedas, the Tantras, the various philosophies may each speak of different truths. But the truth com-

mon to all is the efficacy of complete surrender to the Divine which is the crown of devotion. Such a surrender does not merely effect a release from the rounds of birth and death; it also ensures full enjoyment here and beyond. Unreserved self-giving wins both liberation and fulfilment."

ARGUS

**CAN ONE BE SCIENTIFIC AND SPIRITUAL ? :**

By Swami Budhananda. Pub. : Advaita Ashrama, 5, Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta-14. Pp. 114. Price : Rs. 2.

This is a rather longish essay which first appeared in three issues of *The Vedanta Kesari* in 1966 and is now published in the form of a small book. In the course of this valuable study Swami Budhananda analyses and examines the viewpoints of both science and religion, especially from the standpoints of those who do not believe in a synthesis of the two. Like the old problem of fate or free-will the problem of science or religion can be completely solved only by rising above the two to the standpoint of the Absolute. But it is not a question of science or religion, but one of science and religion as the Swamiji has shown with the help of numerous extracts from the writings of great scientists like Einstein and Bose and eminent men of religion, like Swami Vivekananda. There is no doubt that both science and religion should find a place in the life of an integrated person. The statement "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind" attributed to Einstein ought, in the author's opinion, to be read as "Science without religion is blind and religion without science is lame", since it is religion which gives us vision and science gives only power (p. 31). There is an interesting imaginary conversation between a scientist and a religious person which brings out the arguments likely to be advanced by 'surface scientists' (pp. 61, 70).

The value of the book, however, lies in the numerous quotations from the writings of great scientists and men of religion found in the body of the book as well as the notes appended to it. The book deserves to be read by all thinking people who have not only their own spiritual salvation but also the welfare of humanity at heart.

**THE HEART OF THE RIBHU GITA :** Edited by Franklin Jones. Pub. : The Dawn Horse Press, Los Angeles, U.S.A. Pp. 31. Price : \$ 1.95 in U.S.

Franklin Jones otherwise known as Bubba Free John, the founder of the Dawn Horse Communion, Los Angeles, has published in the form of a small

**THIS**

By L. P. Yandell

No problems —  
Just ' me ' .  
No ' me ' —  
Just ' This ' .  
Ah — This !

and handy book the English version of the 26th Chapter of the *Ribhu Gita* and six other verses selected from the same work by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi along with a legend relating to Ribhu and Nidagha which appeared in the January and April, 1972 issues of *The Mountain Path*. While doing so he has replaced terms like Brahman, Atman, Maya, Yogi, Vedas, Samsara and Dhyana by their English equivalents for the benefit of Western readers. A short introduction and a number of illustrations enhance the value of the book. Some of the illustrations are, however, too fanciful. Sage Ribhu may perhaps be depicted as a fat and shaven headed man with a *tilak* mark upon his forehead but it is difficult to imagine a Nidagha with a pig-tail and a *tilak* mark which make him look like a teenage girl!

M. C. S.

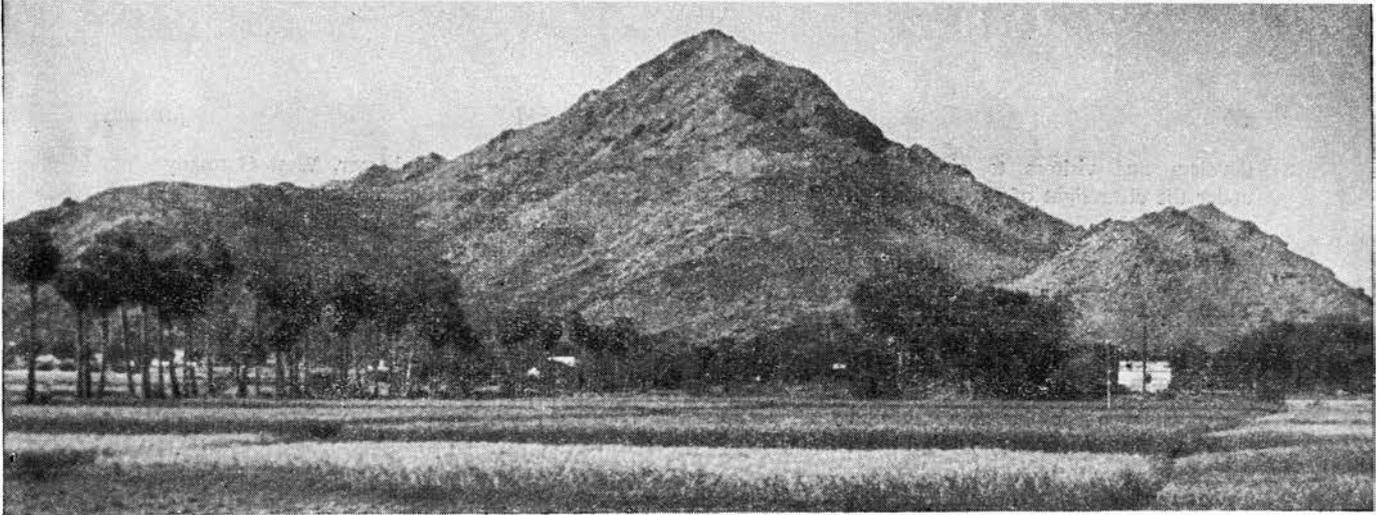
**SRI NARASIMHASWAMIJI — APOSTLE OF SRI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI :** By Swami Saipadananda. Pub. : All-India Sai Samaj, Madras-4. Pp. 63. Price : Rs. 3.

A concise rendering of the life and spiritual quest of Sri Narasimhaswamiji has been presented by his friend and admirer, Swamiji Saipadananda.

The author outlines the Swamiji's tireless work in producing exhaustive biographies of both Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. His book about Bhagavan entitled *Self-Realization* is now in its seventh edition. Later he became the first President of the All-India Sai Samaj, founded in Madras to spread the gospel of the Shirdi saint.

This little book, enriched by numerous photographs, including some taken in the vicinity of Sri Ramanasramam, is informative and makes interesting reading.

P. G. PEGLER



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# ASHRAM BULLETIN

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## *The Hill of the Holy Beacon: The Deepam Festival*

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Once again pilgrims thronged to Holy Arunachala from far and wide to attend the important *Deepam* Festival (November 29 to December 8). This year the crowds were bigger than usual, encouraged by exceptionally fair weather. In fact it is felt to have been the best attended *Deepam* for over a decade.

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The massive processions around the temple of Arunachaleswara and the ceremonial lighting of the beacon on top of the Hill as a grand finale to the ten-day celebrations expressed the profound devotion of the people.

From the path leading (from the Ashram) to Skandashram one had a magnificent view of the huge camp and cattle fair and the vast assembly at the foot of the Hill reminiscent of bygone days!

As is the custom on the afternoon of *Karthigai*, devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana solemnly gathered outside the *Ramana Auditorium Hall*, where also a beacon was lit at the very moment of sighting

the first glimmer of fire on the summit, as in the days of Sri Bhagavan. Listening to the vibrant chanting of the *Marital Garland of Letters* by the the senior-most devotees of Sri Bhagavan which followed, one sensed the deep bond of fellowship, which unites followers of the Master — despite apparent outward differences. Like a huge family they were gathered around Sri Bhagavan's portrait placed on a chair used by Him, as in the days when He Himself used to be present on the spot watching the Hill attentively.

All day from early morning a steady stream of pilgrims had been garlanding the Hill on *pradakshina*. After dinner it was the turn of Ashram

devotees and visitors to circumambulate the Hill under the clear light of the moon — in silent introspection or chanting *bhajans* joyfully.

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

Sri Frederika, the Queen Mother of Greece  
Princess Irene of Greece  
Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, University of Madras  
Mrs. & Mr. McGavey, U.S.A.  
K. Ramaswami and family, Bangalore  
Periasamy Gounder and family, Pollachi  
Mrs. Sushila Parthasarathy, Madras  
Mrs. P. M. Koppikar, Madras  
Mrs. & Mr. K. B. S. Reddy, Bangalore  
V. Dwarakanath Reddy, Chittoor  
Lakshmiah, Pakala  
Dr. Vaidhyanathan and family, Turaiyur  
P. Subba Rao and family, Khammam  
Smt. & Sri P. S. Eswaran, Madras  
Dr. W. Radhakrishnayya, Pakala  
Somayya, Bangalore  
B. R. Nanjundiah and family, Bangalore

Mrs. & Mr. Hibschenberger, West Germany  
Dr. M. B. Bhaskaran, Pondicherry  
Smt. & Sri A. Ananthkrishnan, Bangalore  
Smt. & Sri Satyanarayana Tandon, Kanpur  
Mr. Johannus De Reede, Italy  
Mr. Jacques Albohair, Italy  
S. Sunderrajan and family, Madras.

The significance of *Deepam* is well known. It find its origin in Lord Siva's manifestation as a column of light (*jyothi*) to reveal the folly of Brahma and Vishnu (representing 'intellect' and 'ego') who disputed with one another as to who was the greater. Thus the sacred fire symbolises the victory of Light over the darkness of delusion.

The meaning of sighting the beacon lit on top of the Hill has been explained by Sri Bhagavan in the following verse :

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

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## The Source

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The following piece, clearly expressing the profound import of the *Deepam* Festival in relation to Arunachala, has been contributed by a scholarly senior devotee,  
SRI VISWANATHA SWAMI.

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*Arunachala is the transcendental Light of Consciousness beyond the reach of intellect. And so it is impossible to approach it unless one gives up the sense of separate individuality. It is apprehended when one searches for one's own source with complete self-surrender.*

*That which is the Source of the limited 'I', the ego, is the centre of the entire universe — and that is Arunachala. The syllables A, RU and NA denote Existence, Consciousness and Bliss Absolute and ACHALA signifies its all-pervasiveness. On approaching Arunachala, all obstacles to Self-knowledge disappear together with their root, the ego.*

*There are the ideas behind the statement (in ARUNACHALA MAHATMYA) that Arunachala is the centre of the universe and the DARSHAN of the beacon on its top is SIVA-DARSHANA, Vision of Siva. The grand*

*Beacon festival (DIPA-UTSAVA) extending over ten days and the lighting of the Beacon on the summit of Arunachala on the evening of the tenth day are meant to draw the attention of earnest spiritual aspirants to the profound truths mentioned above.*

*We are all greatly indebted to Bhagavan Sri Ramana, who revealed to us the secret of Arunachala, the Heart of the universe. He Himself was one with it and yet sang its praise — and lived in Arunachala for more than fifty years, initiating by his very presence all earnest seekers into the mystery of Arunachala.*

*And that is why we celebrate the Beacon Festival at the Ashram with our Heart attuned to Arunachala-Ramana, who is Himself the Hill, the Beacon and the Light Transcendental !*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*. p. 82.



(l to r): Miss Jacqueline, Miss Diane, Monica Matthis, Mr. Wilhelm Schneckeburger, Mrs. Klara Maser, Mr. Kurt Maser, Mrs. Lieselotte Andra, Mr. Heinz Andra, Mr. Hugo Maier, Mr. Rolf Denzel.

### PILGRIMS FROM WEST GERMANY

Seven German friends, who spent five weeks at the foot of Arunachala during October and November, were determined not to waste a second of their precious time. They engaged in vigorous *sadhana* with the utmost earnestness — and finally left their 'spiritual Home' to return to the West, spiritually invigorated.

They regarded their stay as an invaluable opportunity for making firm spiritual foundations to withstand the demands of everyday life in Germany. Better equipped to face the impacts of a materialistic culture, they now write encouragingly that the radiant peace they have discovered remains mostly undimmed amidst their family and professional responsibilities.

In their own words, it is as if the tender saplings of their higher aspirations have grown into strong

young trees. And they are convinced that the rough winds of adversity will merely serve to strengthen the roots of their endeavour still more.

Several members of the party had stayed at the Ashram before. Previously, on returning home they were apprehensive about their ability to retain and live up to the inspiration they had received. But now, they no longer doubt that their further growth in Truth is, with His Grace, a matter of course.

Meditation is found to be deeper than ever before, they say, and this profound peace begins to make itself noticeable in the working hours as well. Yet they fully realise the necessity of humility until egoism is finally annihilated once and for all.

In gratitude for their stay, our friends write more formally as follows :

"Through Sri Bhagavan's Grace and the friendly invitation of the Ashram management, it became possible for us devotees from Germany to spend five unforgettable weeks at Arunachala. With the

aid of helpful friends, we tried to follow the Path as shown to us by Sri Bhagavan and we all felt His Grace quite distinctly. Our gratitude for the guidance and Grace we received will be shown by our unceasing pursuit of *sadhana* with sincerity and perseverance.

"Our special thanks also go to the management for their help at all times and for the excellent accommodation. This made it easier for all of us to find in Sri Ramanasramam our *spiritual home*."

"We all hope to return to Arunachala in the years to come, by Sri Bhagavan's Grace!"

HEINZ ANDRA  
MRS. LIESELOTTE ANDRA  
KURT MASER  
MRS. KLARA MASER  
MONIKA MATTHIS  
WILHELM SCHNEKCEBURGER  
ROLF DENZEL

#### FROM FRANCE

Misses Jacqueline Leprince and Diane Sundin of France (referred to in our April '72 issue, p. 153) are now at the Ashram for a few months' stay. They work professionally in France for a few months so as to be able to come here for as long as possible and spend their time doing *sadhana*. Miss Diane is also helpful to the Ashram by keeping the ladies' guest houses and rooms clean and tidy.

#### FROM ENGLAND

Mr. Brian Matthews of England spent a month from November 11, at the Ashram. This is his second visit. Before arriving at the Ashram he wrote: "Although my previous visit was for less than three weeks I benefited greatly. In that abode of peace the grace of Sri Bhagavan is so potent that I felt it tangible. Sri Bhagavan has given me the strength I have searched for all of my life. Without Him I am nothing, His guidance is unremitting. Sri Bhagavan has again made it possible for me to behold Arunachala!"

#### FROM SWITZERLAND

Miss Ella Maillart of Switzerland paid her visit, though for a short stay, after 30 years. She has written a travelogue, which she dedicated to Sri Bhagavan, about her visit to this Ashram and about Sri Maharshi. The old resident devotees who remember her quite well were happy to have her

amidst them after such a long time. Since the tourists, whom she guides over the globe, were impatient to see other places of interest, she had to leave after a couple of days' stay. We hope she will be able to repeat her visit soon on her own!

#### FROM SOUTH AMERICA

Zofia Gaffron, author of a best-selling Portuguese translation of Paul Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*, finally fulfilled a long-cherished wish by visiting Arunachala at the first of December 1973.

The Ashram is no longer the 'jungle hermitage' she had written about in her version of Brunton's book! Yet she is happy with things as they have now developed.

Polish-born Zofia, who is a Brazilian citizen, now lives in Rio-de-Janeiro. It was 13 years ago that she set out to find Paul Brunton after hearing he had written about Sri Ramana Maharshi.

After three years she succeeded in tracing the famous author in the U.S.A. He instructed her to undertake the task of translating *A Search in Secret India*, the book that made him famous, as her *sadhana*.

Her own spiritual quest started 20 years back, she says. Sri Ramana came mysteriously to her in a vision, before she had even heard of him or seen his picture. In the vision she perceived the Sage sitting compassionately in lotus-posture on the slopes of a golden Hill she after realised to be Arunachala. After a while the image of Sri Ramana gave way to that of a small deer — but his eyes remained the same. Thereafter she developed great love for Bhagavan.

Now, on the second day of her stay at the Ashram she fell sick with high fever and is grateful for the care received here during her illness. As soon as the fever subsided she went on a *pradakshina* of Arunachala, although she was very weak. Somehow, aided by Grace, she completed the circuit to her great joy!

#### FROM JAPAN

Father H. M. Enomiya-Lassalle, S.J., founder of the Christian Zen Meditation Centre in Japan, whose

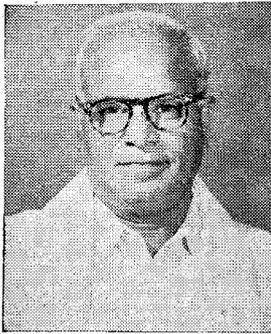


Zofia Gaffron

article appeared in our October '73 issue (p. 215), came to the Ashram for a couple of days' stay in quiet meditation, in the beginning of October, thus fulfilling his assurance given earlier. He was warmly welcomed and he felt very happy to be able to spend such a useful time at the abode of the Great Master!

#### FROM PONDICHERRY

Formerly a prominent nationalist leader *Sri R. L. Purushothama Reddiar* of Pondicherry has now renounced his political activities and dedicated the remainder of his life to spiritual practice as an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He arrived at Sri Ramanasramam prepared for a long stay on July 7, 1973 and settled happily in a congenial atmosphere.



*Sri R. L. Purushothama Reddiar*

Sri Purushothama Reddiar hails from an agricultural family near Pondicherry. He was educated at a French College affiliated to the University of Paris, before serving for many years as a wireless engineer under the French Government.

While still a student, he made a private study of astronomy and atomic theory and this inculcated in him an indestructible faith in a Supreme Intelligence governing the universe. Attracted early on by Gandhian ideals of truth and service, he became a social worker and subsequently leader in the Harijan Sevak Sangh, besides actively participating in the Independence movement in India. For nine years from 1945, he organised and led the liberation movement of former French settlements in the country. Thus appropriately he was chosen as the first Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Pondicherry State in 1956.

Sri Purushothama Reddiar's inherent faith in the Divine drew him to Sri Bhagavan in 1940. Thereafter he frequently visited Tiruvannamalai for *darshan* of the Sage Arunachala — and gradually his spiritual convictions deepened.

From a militant freedom fighter he was transformed into a sober adherent of non-violence. Describing this remarkable change in his attitude to life, he says: "Amidst the sterile and exhausting political desert, the influence on me of Sri Bhagavan and

His Ashram constitute the only oasis for a reorientation of my life's purpose and discharge of duties!"

#### FROM MAHARASHTRA

*Mr. M. R. Kulkarni*, Proprietor of M/s. Ajit Laboratories, Miraj, (manufacturers of medicines), and a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, spent a few days at the Ashram together with his wife. He has been for the past few years, supplying medicines to the Ashram Dispensary free of cost. Sri Kulkarni was introduced to our honorary doctor, Dr. Anand, and he expressed happiness to see the Dispensary running well and helping the poor and needy.

#### FROM RISHIKESH

*Sri Swami Shanmugananda* of Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, who was of immense help and assistance to our Ashram President during his Badrinath pilgrimage (referred to in our Oct. '72 issue, p. 286), spent here a week in the middle of October '73. We were happy to extend a warm welcome to him and reciprocate hospitality.

#### FROM NEW DELHI

*Lt. Col. V. Balakrishnan* of New Delhi, a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, spent a fortnight in quiet meditation at the Ashram in October-November. On his return to Delhi he expressed to Prof. K. Swaminathan that he had a very happy time at the Ashram during his recent fairly long stay.

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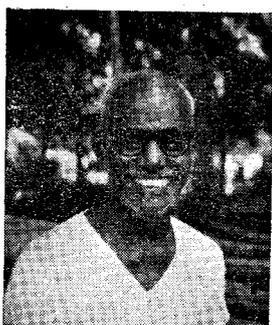
There has been a regular flow of visitors, devotees, during the whole of 1973 and it continues to be so. We give hereunder list of a few of the large number of devotees who recently visited and stayed at the Ashram:

- Dr. C. RAMASWAMY (Ex-Director General of Observatories), Delhi
- Mrs. and Mr. A. DORAISWAMY, Sri Lanka
- Dr. H. CHANDRASEKHARAIH (Ex-Minister of Mysore), Bangalore
- Dr. MANI and family, Bangalore
- Smt. SOORI NAGAMMA, Vizianagaram
- Prof. SHYAMA RAO, Mysore
- Smt. & Sri S. GUHAN, Madras
- Smt. & Dr. SANJEEVI, Madras
- RAMESH KRISHNAMURTHY and RICHARD MEKEE, Bangalore
- DR. RANGABHASHYAM and family, Madras
- Mrs. & Mr. M. R. KULKARNI, Miraj
- Smt. & Sri K. SIVARAJ, I.A.S., New Delhi
- Madame C. RENAULT, Coonoor

J. S. KAPOOR (Principal, Civil Aviation Training Centre), Allahabad  
 Smt. SUSHILA PARTHASARATHY, Madras  
 P. S. EASWARAN and family, Madras  
 ELISABETH M. SCHWABE, Canada  
 Mrs. & Mr. C. V. PAREKH, Madras  
 Lt. Col. V. BALAKRISHNAN, New Delhi  
 Prof. S. S. BOMMANAVAR, Belgaum  
 P. R. S. MANI (Retd. Ambassador of India), Coimbatore  
 BHOOPATHI RAJU NARAYANA RAJU, Bhimavaram  
 V. RAMAMURTHY, Madras  
 Mrs. PAMELA LEAH, London  
 NORMA SHELTON, U.S.A.  
 ERNST RAINER SANDROCK, West Germany  
 Brahmachari DEVENDRA, Madras  
 V. K. NARASIMHAN, Bangalore  
 H. O. BOMBERG, Denmark  
 Sadhuni ANANDA BHARATI of Ananda Marga and party  
 Mrs. MEENA SABHARWAL, Bombay  
 Mrs. KAMLA JAISWAL, Jullundur  
 Mrs. PURNIMA KISHANDAS, Bangalore  
 Smt. & Sri SIDDALINGAYYA (Ex-Minister of Mysore), Bangalore  
 V. S. LAKSHMANAN (Ananda Pictures) and family, Madras  
 Justice K. K. SHARMA (Retd. Judge, Rajasthan), Jaipur  
 KISHOR KUMAR GANDHI, Ahmedabad  
 Mrs. & Mr. HASSEL BALCH, Denmark  
 RAVINDRA DAMANIA and family, Bombay  
 G. S. AIYER, Madras  
 N. B. K. NAMBIAR, Bombay  
 UMESH, Madras  
 Smt. INDIRA SURENDRANATH REDDY, Pulicherla

### OBITUARY

#### SRI M. RAJAGOPALA IYER



Sri M. Rajagopala Iyer

at the Ashram rendering service in the

So soon after announcing the demise of Sri M. Venkatarama Iyer (in our October '73 issue) we are grieved to write this obituary of his younger brother, Sri M. Rajagopala Iyer, at the age of 76. After retirement from railway service he spent his last years

office as a sincere and tireless worker in charge of the accounts of our journal. He deserves special mention for the hospitable attention he paid to visitors, particularly for those from abroad. We miss him very much in the Ashram office!

May his soul rest in Peace!

#### SRI MUKUND M. THAKORE

With deep regret we announce the passing away of Sri Mukund M. Thakore on November 15, 1973

at Ahmedabad at the age of 71. After a successful practice as a lawyer he was appointed as Principal of the Law College, Ahmedabad, in which capacity he served for 25 years. Having inherited a deep spiritual tendency from his parents, Sri Thakore was early attracted to Bhagavan Sri Ramana and he soon became one of His ardent devotees. He visited the Ashram several times and was generous in his help

any time the Ashram was in need of it. The bathroom near the old office used by Sri Bhagavan for so many years was constructed by him. We convey our sincere condolences to the bereaved family.

May his soul rest in Peace at Sri Bhagavan's Lotus Feet!

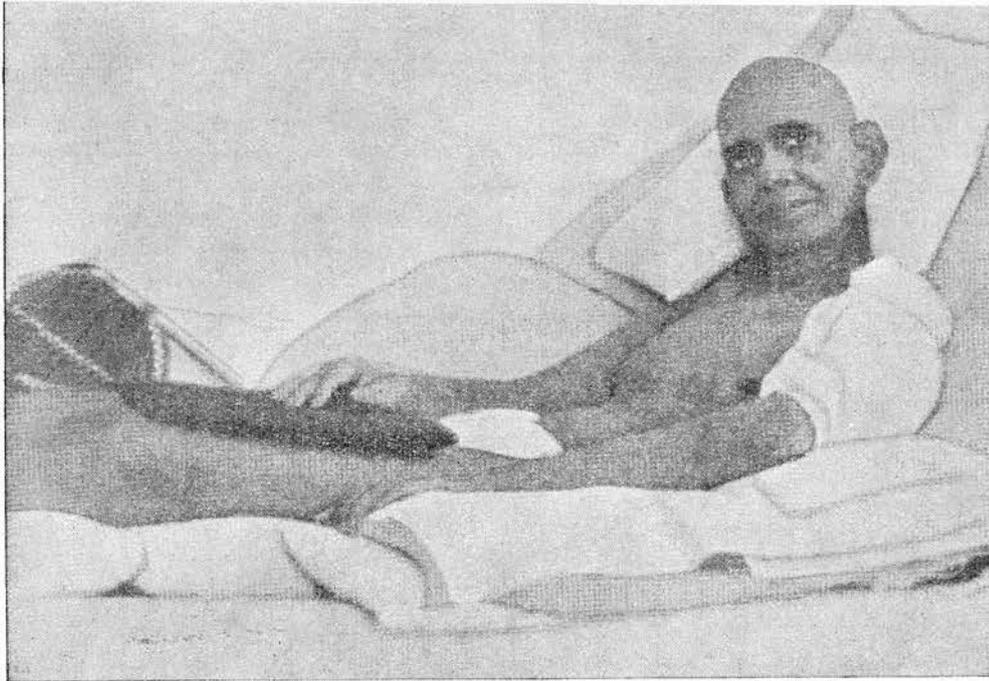


Sri Mukund M. Thakore

### THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

#### New Additions

- Mudra*: By Chogyon Trungpa. Shambala, Berkeley & London. (£1.75)  
*Meditate the Tantric Yoga Way*: By Jyotirmayananda. George Allen & Unwin, Ruskin House, Museum Street, London. (£3.50)  
*Mandala*: By Jose & Mirium Arguelles. Shambala, Berkeley & London. (\$5.95)  
*Lankavatara Sutra*: (Tr.) By D. T. Suzuki. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., Broadway House, 68-74, Carter Lane, London-E.C. 4. (£3)  
*Awareness and Peak Experience in Hinduism, Buddhism & Existentialism*: By J. M. Hondius. B. Rao, Bookseller, C/o. Sri Vaishnavi Shrine, Madras-62. (Rs. 2)



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## INTRODUCING...

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### Sri Sadhu Brahmaniam

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It is a remarkable fact that during Sri Bhagavan's last illness almost all the eminent doctors in Madras State spontaneously offered their services together with the most up-to-date medical equipment for the Master's treatment.

This situation was largely due to the great devotion and sacrifice of *Sri Sadhu Brahmaniam* (then Dr. R. Subrahmaniam, Director of Public Health) under the able direction and care of Sri S. Doraiswamy Aiyer<sup>1</sup> and Sri Sadhu Parthasarathy (S. Parthasarathy, as he was then known).

Familiarly known to his close circle of friends as 'Bell' (Mani) — when referring to him Sri Bhagavan also used that name many a time — the doctor donned the ochre robes after Sri Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana* and settled down at the Sri Vaishnavi Shrine, founded by Sri Sadhu Parthasarathy at Ambattur near Madras.

The role assigned to 'Bell' by Divine Providence, he considers, solely due to Grace, for it is of no little privilege and importance to be instrumental

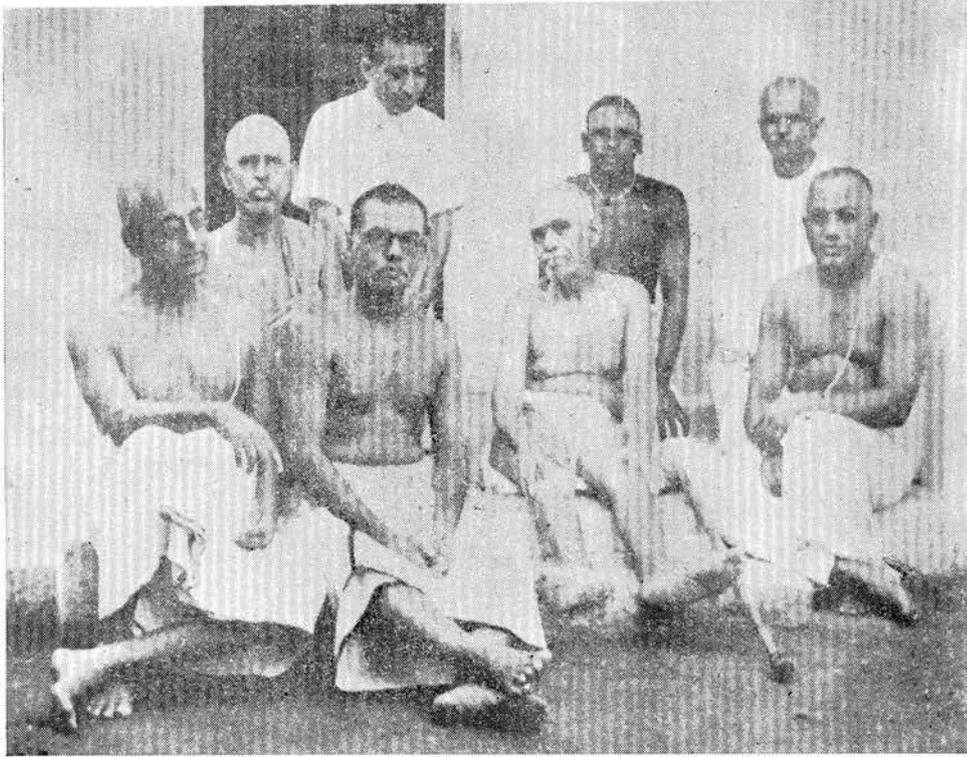
in serving the Guru in the the capacity of a physician. Dr. Subrahmaniam gave his services unstintingly.

Strict and disciplined throughout his career, he received special Government permission to have the best equipment available in Madras hospitals placed at his disposal for transportation to and use at Tiruvannamalai. Consequently the expert team of medical men in attendance on Sri Bhagavan were able to carry out their operations in the Ashram Dispensary in a bid to stem the cancerous growth on the Master's left elbow. At this time the most modern treatment for cancer was radium and this was accordingly obtained and applied to the tumour also. That the Master eventually succumbed to the illness despite the most determined efforts of the medical profession in no way detracts from the outstanding worth of Dr. Subrahmaniam's endeavours with the guidance and co-operation of his colleagues. In humility he gives all credit to Dr. T. S. S. Rajan who was the Health Minister at the time.

Sri Sadhu Brahmaniam was born in poor circumstances in Pudukkottai and his devoted parents brought him up in an orthodox way. His father had a hereditary function in the big temple at his native place. But when the boy was at the Medical College he somehow gradually lost interest in rituals and temple worship. "I had a vague feeling that there is a shorter and surer way to Truth," he says.

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<sup>1</sup> Introduced to our readers in our July, 1969 issue, p. 212.



(Front row l to r): Sri S. Doraiswami Aiyer, Sri T. P. R., SRI BHAGAVAN, Dr. R. Subrahmaniam (now Sri Sadhu Brahmaniam). (Back row l to r): Sri Niranjananda Swami, Dr. B. Shanker Rau, Sri Sivananda Swami, Prof. Kelkar.

While serving in Madras, the doctor met Sri S. Doraiswami Aiyer and Sri Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni, who both told him of Sri Bhagavan. He developed a longing to meet the Master, but domestic events and official work prevented his going to Tiruvannamalai.

In 1930 Dr. Subrahmaniam was deputed to America by the Indian Government. During his absence abroad his mother went to Tiruvannamalai and for one and a half years spent every day with the Maharshi at the Ashram.

Soon after his return from the United States, the son also visited Sri Ramanasramam with his mother. Describing the significant first meeting with Sri Bhagavan he says : "Before going to the Hall, I purchased some books from the bookstall. I entered the Hall, placed the books at Bhagavan's feet and did my *pranam*. Bhagavan benignly smiled at me and asked my mother, 'This is your son?' He then lifted the books and placed them in my hands. I verily felt they were *Prasad* from Sri Bhagavan. I stayed for an hour gazing all the time at Him. When I left, I purchased duplicate copies of the books for my reading. The copies placed in my hands by Sri Bhagavan were preserved as precious *prasad*."

After 1940 the doctor spent almost all week-ends, holidays and vacations at the Ashram. He never

asked the Master any questions. In His presence all cares and anxieties melted away and no longer burdened his mind.

He describes the crucial period of Sri Ramana's illness as follows : "When the tiny tumour in Bhagavan's arm recurred after removal in April 1949, Sri Doraiswami Aiyer asked me to bring a competent surgeon from Madras and do what was necessary. I responded promptly. Allopathic treatment continued for some months, with operations and applications of radium. I was able to command the resources of all the hospitals in Madras. Dr. Rajan, who was the Minister of Health at that time, gave me a free hand. I used to come to the Ashram every week-end bringing an oven and equipment. It was the call given by Sri Doraiswami Aiyer that gave me the lucky opportunity to be of some service to Sri Bhagavan for a year before the *Mahasamadhi*."

The doctor retired in 1950 and spent two years in his native place before moving to Madras and joining the *Vaishnavi Shrine*. His cottage there is named 'Ramana Kutir' ! He feels there also deep peace of Sri Bhagavan's Presence.

We pray to Sri Bhagavan to shower His Grace on Sri Sadhu Brahmaniam, who has now reached the ripe old age of 80, many more years of devoted service !

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## TURN WITHIN

I have been practising transcendental meditation for some time and the strain on my nervous system and head is increasing instead of diminishing as I expected it would with time. I want to devote my life to spiritual *sadhana* to gain liberation from all conditioning but now I have misgivings as to the path adopted by me since it does not bring me any peace of mind only strain. What am I to do? Please help me and advise me. Having read some books on Ramana Maharshi and his replies to questions and having seen his picture I have developed great faith in him and would like to follow his teaching. May I just drop transcendental meditation as initiated into by one of the followers of a guru who delegates such powers to them? I shall be looking forward eagerly to your reply.

A seeker  
in Madras.

*You are not the only one who feels strain from this sort of meditation. It is of utmost importance to receive the MANTRA from a genuine guru who is authorised to give it to the right recipient. Such a guru is greater than the MANTRA and what remains unuttered is greater than the words uttered. Transcendental meditation implies that one has already transcended the mind. This hardly applies to a beginner. 'The three worlds will vanish if you can reach the state beyond thought' says Huang Po in the Wan Ling Record. All spiritual effort aims at transcending or stilling the mind but as Sri Krishna*

*says in the BHAGAVAD GITA it would be easier to harness the wind. Yet slowly step by step it can be done with steadfast concentration and effort till we reach the limit of our effort and then Grace, as if lying in wait, takes over. Sri Ramana Maharshi shows the way which is so simple and direct as to seem difficult to complicated minds but 'earnest effort never fails' we are assured by Him whose silent influence acts direct on the heart of a seeker and has the power to transform him. Sri Ramana Maharshi is all-pervading and not bound by the body which He discarded. Please read the books on Him carefully and you can always write to us when in doubt. The safest way is to turn within to the heart and remember Bhagavan as constantly as possible.*

EDITOR.

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## NEED TO DO EFFORT

During meditation or rather Self-enquiry the reply comes in a feeling of the unreality of the 'I' which is enquiring and of everything else. So if 'I' and the world are unreal why practise *sadhana* at all? If we are already That why make any effort? Quite a number of modern gurus are of such a view. What do you think about it?

A devotee  
from Poona.

*From an absolute point of view there is only the Self and the tendency now-a-days is to bypass effort but the greatest seers, among them Sri Ramana Maharshi, expound Truth from the absolute point of*

view not losing sight of the relative reality of the relative plane of seekers who cannot succeed without first eradicating age-old VASANAS and steadying the mind. So long as you are real to yourself when not meditating the 'I' that tries to find out WHO AM I? has its relative reality. The reply to WHO AM I? does not come in so many words or feelings; it is inexpressible and absolute Certainty. All genuine sages advise seekers to make effort till the mind is steady and not obscured by thoughts veiling our true state.

EDITOR.

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### WORLD AND ME

I read in an old issue of *The Mountain Path*. 'If the world at present appears to go awry — the cause is to be found in you; seek it therefore within yourself!'

I shall be grateful for an explanation how I can be the cause of the world going awry. I do not understand it. I would like to live in a happy world.

A devotee  
in Bombay.

*The world does not exist apart from your mind. If it existed independently it would be the same to everybody. Is it? To some it appears full of misery to others quite happy depending on the state of the mind which projects it. Duryodana could not find one good man while Yudishtira could not find one bad man in the same kingdom. If you turn within ultimately you will realise the Oneness of all life and the Harmony underlying all apparent diversity and misery. 'The world is like a painting on a screen, the screen being the Self — Arunachala', Bhagavan said. The Changeless underlying the continuous succession of changes which is the world.*

EDITOR.

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### SILENCE AND SADHANA

I am trying to establish myself in Silence but more thoughts than ever seem to crop up to disturb me and I often end up strained and desperate. Please give some advice.

A seeker  
from Bangalore.

*To establish oneself in Silence is not a simple matter. The greatest patience and perseverance are called for. Ordinarily we do not even notice the flux of thoughts crossing the mind. In meditation particularly in the beginning stages it is not that*

*more thoughts rise but we become aware of them. Whatever is hidden comes to the surface and that is the time to deal with them and still the mind by practising the VICHARA or letting them pass trying to be as unaffected as possible. If we go with the waves of the sea all is up and down but underneath all is quiet. When you feel strain resort for a while to simply watching your breathing without counting just watching and this is conducive to quietening the mind. Then the quest can be resumed with renewed strength. Bhagavan is always watching over you.*

*SADHANA is a succession of ups and downs. From the lowest ebb we may rise highest. Do not allow yourself to be discouraged. Success is often the result of many failures. Swami Ramdas explained once how nineteen strokes of the hammer may not break a stone but the twentieth may do so depending on the invisible changes which the preceding strokes produced in the molecules of the stone.*

EDITOR.

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### THE THROBBING

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi when speaking of *Sphurana* refers to its experience at times of utter despair and when in the claws of death. Then all emotions and every other feeling remain wiped out but not the 'awareness' . . . The following experience by David Livingstone, as reported in *Kingdom of Neighbours* by H. J. Hammerton . . . would, I think, explain it:

. . . an animal that has been seized by a lion instinctively stays quiet. "I even suspect" he writes, "that animals feel neither pain nor fear in the mouth of the lion. I could almost say I know it . . ." David Livingstone, the great African missionary and explorer was once gripped and dragged by a lion. He reported later: "The lion growled dreadfully into my ear and shook me as a terrier shakes a rat. The shock caused a stupor similar to that of a mouse caught by a cat. It produced a sort of insensibility during which I felt neither pain nor fear, although I was fully conscious. I was like a patient under slight narcosis who watches an operation on himself but does not feel the scalpel. This singular condition was not due to a mental process but to shock which wiped out all feelings of fear or pain — even when viewing the lion directly."

N. VENKATESAN,  
Madras.

*SPHURANA is a foretaste of realisation, Bhagavan also said. In Zen practice they sometimes resort to administering sudden shocks so as to achieve the desired effect.*

EDITOR.