THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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

Vol. 11, No. II, April 1974
"Thou hast realized the Self even without knowing that it was the Truth. It is the Truth Itself! Speak (thus if it be so), Oh Arunachala!"
— The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 42

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
(A QUARTERLY)

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— The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1

Vol. 11 APRIL 1974 No. II

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All remittances should be sent to the MANAGING EDITOR and not to the Editor.

— Editor.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
ONCE when Bhagavan was asked what his central teaching was, he replied that the Centre itself was his central teaching. By the Centre he meant the Heart, the Source of everything.

Though we find mention about the Heart in the traditional scriptures, as for instance,

“*I am the (One) Atman everpresent in the heart of all beings.*” (XV. 15)

“*Iswara (God) dwells in the heart of all beings.*” (XVIII. 61)

— *The Bhagavad Gita*.

we do not find a satisfactory definition of it anywhere. Many take it as the physical heart. Though life and death are due to its throbbing and stopping, it is not the spiritual Heart. Then, what is the Spiritual Heart?

Here is the reply, as recorded in Chapter V of *Sri Ramana Gita*:

“Wherefrom all thought-movements of embodied beings emanate, that is known as the Heart.

The I-thought is the root of all thoughts and so, from where the I-thought springs up, that, in short, is the Heart.” (V. 3)

And so, Bhagavan directs us to watch the source from which the I-thought emanates.

“The I-thought disappears as one searches for its source. This is Self-enquiry.

“On the annihilation of the I-thought (by means of constant Self-enquiry) the Heart itself shines forth as ‘I-I’ and it is the Supreme Self, all-pervading.”"
The ego, I, as subject is always associated with an object, whereas the real I shines alone as ‘I-I’, Pure Awareness, devoid of the mental subject-object split. And this pure Awareness is known as the Heart.

“As Thou dancest in the heart of all beings as ‘I-I’, the Self of all, Thou art known as the Heart.”

— Arunachala Pancbaratna, verse 2.

Bhagavan has from his own experience revealed to us the location also of that Heart Centre. It is on the right side of the chest and not on the left. It is the centre from which the mind with its root-thought ‘I’ is born and it is the source of light and life in the individual. It is the natural centre where everyone feels his identity. The mind withdraws into it during sleep without knowing it. If one consciously touches it seeking the source of one’s being, then one transcends individuality. It is the centre from which the ego emanates and perceives the world.

Withdrawing consciously into it one experiences the Unity of the Self, in which all differentiation is lost and everything is experienced as nothing but the Self. That is blessedness and that is not only the summit of spiritual experience, but should be the quite normal state of every being, the Reality of all beings. All suffering born of a false sense of separate individuality completely disappears and that is the state of unalloyed, perennial Bliss.

Those who find it difficult to follow this path of pure Self-enquiry may practise mental repetition (japa) of any Name of God or simple OM as representing the One Self of all, with their attention focussed at the heart-centre. By this process also, all thoughts including the root-thought ‘I’ get destroyed and one reaches the same goal, the One Real Self of all, the ever-blissful Pure Awareness. We find approval of this method in the following verses of Sri Ramana Gita (Ch. III, verses 10 and 11):

“By incessant japa of mantras or even by the japa of simple pranava alone thought gets turned away from objects and merges in the Self.”

The first is the Path of Self-enquiry and this is the Path of meditation. Both of them lead to the same goal, the One indivisible Self of all. This merging in the Heart, the re-union with the ground of Being-Awareness, is of course the heart, the core and the ultimate goal of every religion. That is why earnest seekers, whatever their religion, find Bhagavan’s teaching not only acceptable but the very essence of their own tradition.

What makes the teaching most attractive is that it is so clear, precise and definite and comes from a realized Sage. Also it carries with it a sense of special urgency because it is accompanied by the safe and simple method of Self-enquiry (vicvara) which is the practical and most useful side of Bhagavan’s teaching. This method explained in Who am I?, Upadesa Sara and Forty Verses on Reality is the final stage in the spiritual path, but all other sadhanas like bhakti, dhyana, upasana, yoga and seva, prescribed by the various traditions, are recommended by Bhagavan as helpful preliminary or supplementary disciplines. Self-enquiry, whether taken up as the main or a collateral method, forces the pace of self-surrender and the access of awareness.

The mutual re-inforcement of the two processes — extinction of the enquiring ego and merger in the cherished ideal — is well brought out in the contents and arrangement of the first two verses which form the Invocation of the Forty Verses on Reality (Sat Darsana).

“Without the Reality existing, can there be a knowledge of existence? Free from all thoughts, that Reality abides in the Heart, the Source of all thoughts. It is therefore called the Heart. How then to contemplate it? To be as It is in the Heart, is Its contemplation.”

“Those for whom there is the intense fear of death, seek only the Feet of the Lord as their refuge, who has neither death nor birth. Dead to themselves and
The Central Teaching of Bhagavan Ramana

1974

their possessions, can the thought of death occur to them again? Deathless are they."

The first asserts that Being and Awareness are identical, and that this Being-Awareness is no object for meditation, being indeed the Heart to know which can only be abiding as itself. According to the second stanza, the dissolution of the ego in Pure Awareness is accomplished by confrontation with death, that is, by a willing acceptance of individual non-being, and by the consequent total surrender to the Lord immortal, for true surrender amounts to the extinction of the individual self with all its attachments. Once the ego has disappeared, who is there to think of death?

Dissociation from the perishable body and identification with Awareness which has no beginning, end or change, should not merely be accepted as an intellectual proposition, but directly experienced and remembered as a transformation of consciousness. This when it happens is the real "conversion" for which all the religions have come into being and are labouring hard, a death which is a rebirth, for which, according to Bhagavan, all men and women are eligible here and now.

The enemy to overcome is not death of the physical body, but the fear of death. Whether it is the philosopher Socrates who did not shirk from drinking hemlock, or the poet Shakespeare who declared: 'Death once dead, there is no more dying then', or the Seers who smile at the dissolution of the body as the common human lot, the "critical moment", or "the voluntary process", which releases the god imprisoned within our ignorant, limited self, does occur when one dares and chooses, consciously and willingly, to die as corruptible and mortal flesh only to find oneself born into incorruptible and immortal Being-as-Awareness. It is only after this event, which has now been brought within the reach of many by Bhagavan's grace, that true human living can commence in the plenitude of awareness and in the harmony of right relationship.

Publisher's Note

Many letters of appreciation have come to us praising the quality of the journal and its universal scope covering all manner of spiritual and religious subjects. Readers have assigned these achievements to the superb skill of our founder-editor, the late Mr. Arthur Osborne and more recently to his wife, Mrs. Lucia Osborne. Throughout the course of the journal, everybody connected with it, whether as contributor, reader or staff, has always felt the abiding Grace and guidance of our Master, Sri Ramana.

Owing to strain and failing health, Mrs. Osborne has now relinquished the editorship, the responsibility being really too heavy for one person to carry. We express our profound gratitude to her for all she has done to keep up the standard of the journal. It is most considerate of her to continue to help us for the present with the Letters to the Editor column.

The following devotees have readily agreed to serve The Mountain Path and we express our appreciation and grateful thanks to them. We are sure our readers also will heartily welcome the new Editorial Board, consisting of:

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T. N. Venkataraman,
Publisher.
The following episode is related by Srimathi Nagamma in her Letters from Sri Ramanasramam about the origin of this composition by Sri Bhagavan.

She had been pressing Sri Bhagavan to write a Telugu verse. Sri Bhagavan however seemed reluctant remarking ‘What is there to write about?’ But eventually He yielded and in the course of two days the five verses were composed. He also gave the title to the poem, remarking ‘They make five (verses) in all. They may be called Atma Panchakam! But Sankara has already composed something under the same name. Let us therefore call them Ekatma Panchakam.’ The verses were also translated into Tamil verses by Sri Bhagavan later.

* * *

He who is forgetful of the Self, mistaking the body for it, and goes through innumerable births, is like one who wanders all over the world in a dream. Thus realizing the Self would only be like waking up from the dream-wanderings.

One who asks himself ‘Who am I?’ and ‘Where am I?’ though existing all the while as the Self, is like a drunken man who enquires about his own identity and whereabouts.

While in fact the body is in the Self, he who thinks that the Self is within the insentient body is like one who considers the cloth of the screen which supports a cinema picture to be contained within the picture.

Does an ornament exist apart from the gold of which it is made? Where is the body apart from the Self? He who considers the body to be himself is an ignorant man. He who regards himself as the Self is the Enlightened One who has realized the Self.

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?

(Five Verses on the Self, 1 to 5)
THE
IS
NOTHING,
BE!

By Sadhu Arunachala
Major A. W. Chadwick

The philosophy of Sri Bhagavan, the greatest of sages, can be summed up in just three words "There is nothing." So simple and yet so supremely difficult. "There is nothing." All this world that you see, this mad rush of people after money and 'existence' is just a fabricless thought. "There is nothing." You, as a personality, as a petty entity striving for your own selfish ends, ever seeking so-called 'Self-Realisation', are nothing. You are like the shadow of a leaf cast by the moonlight, intangible, unsubstantial, and in fact non-existent. And, as the shadow is a purely negative phenomenon, is in fact nothing but a shutting out of light, so is the ego and everything else (because everything follows in the train of the ego and is actually a part of it) only a shutting out of the light of the Self.

Sri Bhagavan tells us just one other thing. He says: "Be." Just be your real Self, that's all.

"Certainly, it sounds all right," you say, "but when one tries to do it, it does not seem so easy. Has he no method?"

Method! Well what exactly do you mean by method? Sitting on the floor and concentrating on the navel? Or blowing the wind out of alternate nostrils? Or repeating some incantation one crore and eight times? No, he hasn't got any method. All these things are no doubt good in their way and help to prepare one, but Sri Bhagavan doesn't happen to teach them. That's all!

"Then what am I to do?"

You must just BE, he says. And to be you must know the 'I that is.' To know the 'I that is', just go on enquiring 'Who am I?' Don't take any notice of anything except the 'I', throw everything else away like refuse. And when you have at last found the 'I', BE.
All talk, all empty words. 'There is nothing' and that's the end of it. No method, nothing to discard, nothing to find. Nothing at all is except the 'I'. Why worry about anything else? Just BE, now and always, as you were, as you are, and as you ever will be.

'There is nothing.' You may justly ask: 'Who wants this purely negative state?'

To which I can only reply: 'It is just a question of taste.' Though, note you, I have never suggested that Sri Bhagavan ever says that the ultimate state after which, it is presumed, we are all striving is negative. On the contrary, when he says: 'There is nothing', it is obvious that he is speaking about our present egoistic existence, which for us is everything. But this being where there is nothing must obviously be a state which is something. That state is Self-Realisation. Not only is it something but it is EVERYTHING, and being everything then logically and philosophically it must be PERFECT.

'If we are already perfect and there is nothing else, what need is there for us to go to Bhagavan?' you ask.

And this reminds me of a story against myself.

An Australian journalist came to the Ashram, quite why he came is a mystery, I doubt if he would be able to tell himself. Anyhow he did come and in the course of his visit came to see me in my room. It was obvious from the first moment that I was a tremendous problem to him. Why a European should shut himself away in a place like this was beyond his comprehension. He asked many questions but none of my replies satisfied him, how could they? Especially as he had not the first idea of what the Ashram was, or what people were doing here. I didn't even write, then what on earth did I do? At length he could contain himself away in a place like this was beyond his comprehension. He asked many questions but none of my replies satisfied him, how could they? Especially as he had not the first idea of what the Ashram was, or what people were doing here. I didn't even write, then what on earth did I do? At length he could contain himself no longer and bluntly asked me what I was doing here. Now here was a problem to answer. If I had tried to tell him the truth he would never have understood, that I realized, so making the best of it I just said that here I found peace of mind. I knew it was an inadequate answer but hoped it would stave off further enquiries.

He looked at me seriously for a few minutes and then said pityingly: 'Oh I see, I have never been troubled in that way myself!'

All I had succeeded in doing was in confirming him in the conviction that I was insane! And was there not, after all, some ground for his belief? Here have I been spending ('wasting', he would say) half a lifetime searching for something I already possess. I know that I possess it too, which makes matters appear worse.

'Just BE.' It sounds so easy. Well, Sri Bhagavan says it's the easiest thing there is. I already don't know. I suppose it all really depends on how much refuse there is inside. We're all different anyway and perhaps some of us were handicapped at the start. It's certain that the rubbish has to come out and the coming out process is full of surprises. All kinds of hidden vices and evil tendencies start to pop up their heads which one never suspected were there at all. But it's all for the good. Bhagavan says they have to come out. But let them come out, not take charge. Don't give way to them.

Those who expect Sri Bhagavan to hand them Self-Realisation, as if it were some tangible thing, are surely sadly deluded. How can anybody give one what one has already got? All he can do is help one to remove the ignorance that hides it. It is like going to a lake with a cup and sitting by its side praying to it to fill the cup with water. You may sit there for a thousand years but it is certain that unless you lean forward and dip the cup into the water yourself nothing will happen. Even then you have to make certain that the cup is not already full of a lot of residue. Most cups are!

You say: 'If there is nothing, why write?'

Yes, why? The whole thing can be summed up in four words: 'There is nothing, BE!' When one understands those four words one understands everything including Bhagavan himself.

Then there is no more to say!
CENTRE WITHOUT CIRCUMFERENCE

By “Sein”

“Shankara made three statements: that Brahman is real; that the universe is unreal, and that Brahman is the universe. The third statement explains the first two; it signifies that when the universe is perceived apart from Brahman, that perception is false and illusory. What it amounts to is that phenomena are real when experienced as the Self, and illusory when seen apart from the Self.”
—Sri Mabarsbi, from TEACHINGS p. 10.

FROM time immemorial the struggle to know the Truth and grasp the Real has been going on. While all seeking indicates duality and effort, there has also been stress on the oneness of truth, on spontaneity and effortlessness. The contradiction has thus persisted between the goal and the path, between theory and practice. But Bhagavan assures us that the contradiction is only apparent, that the effort is sublimated and the oneness is ever-present. Dualistic understanding is the common experience. There is nothing wrong in it. But it fails to satisfy the longing for peace, happiness, oneness. At this stage multiplicity poses a conflict. Then the seeking becomes a pressing, urgent need. In the life of every seeker, we find that at some time or other he has been faced with this vital question: Can multiplicity be real? Is the world real?

Hence the contradiction between the real and the unreal. For one who is limited to sensory experiences, everything seen, heard,
tasted, smelled or touched appears quite real. But when one recalls the absence of this objective world in deep sleep and the presence of a subjective world in dreams, one suspects that there is something beyond the report of the senses. No scriptural authority need be brought in to prove this; one's own experience is enough.

Now the seeker goes deeper into the problem and turns from outward wandering to inward search.

Who is the one who sees the objective world in the waking state and its total disappearance in deep sleep? What is the confirming reality behind all outward appearances and their total disappearance?

Before going into the question of what is this reality, let us consider the basic theory of creation, the origin of the world we perceive. Each religion, each school of philosophy, sets out its own theory, whether mythological or scientific, but all agree as to the nature of creation as consisting of names and forms, of mind and matter. Instead of going into the various theories of creation, and getting lost in details and controversies, the sages advise us to hold on to the first principle, the creator. Sri Bhagavan said that the many theories of creation meant and served only to indicate that the creation has a cause—a creator—so that one might seek the cause. "The emphasis is on the purpose of the creation and not on the process of creation." (Talks p. 353). Reality is the basis and origin for the entire emergence of creation, though it is termed variously as Brahman, Father, Self, Allah and God.

Is this reality perceivable and is it a Person or a Principle?

The individual perceives both the world (waking state) and the absence of it (sleep). Thus there is an awareness which stands as the witness both of the perceiving centre and of the perceived circumference. Broadly speaking, the world can be termed as the circumference and the mind as the centre. But on deeper analysis we see that there must be a basis for both the circumference and the centre, for they do not exist independently of each other. The circumference is proved non-real by the postulation of the centre, but the centre also is not free from such a flaw for it is not there in sleep. Thus the Being which is the basis for both the perceiving centre and the perceived circumference alone can be true. Scriptures and sages call it Self, Brahman, God, the circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. The circumference merges into the centre and the centre too merges into Being. The circumference (the world perceived) and the centre (the perceiving mind) both depend on Awareness, the Brahman, Atman, Being. This Being is the giver of light and substance to both the perceiver and the perceived. Without this Being there is neither Knower nor anything known. But the Being remain unaffected always as Pure Awareness; as the Sun the light-giver and sustainer is not affected by the activity or the inactivity of the world. Individuals imprisoned in their bodies may have their own respective circumferences and centres; but they are all rooted only in one Pure Awareness, whether we term it a Principle or a Person. This Pure Awareness we call Brahman. Bhagavan says: "If you consider yourself as the body the world appears to be external. If you are the Self the world appears as Brahman." That is, the world is unreal if viewed as apart from the Self and real if viewed as the Self (Talks, pp. 228, 499).

This state of Pure Awareness is purnam, fulness of Being. It includes all the centres and circumferences — the whole of the phenomenal world and all the perceiving minds.

Shankara's famous statement, 'Brahman is the Universe', does not mean that the universe is real as it is, but that as Wholeness, as Being-Awareness, everything is real.

Paul Brunton asked: 'If each one diving within reaches a centre, are there so many centres for so many individuals diving within?'

Sri Bhagavan replied: 'There is only one Centre and that is without circumference. All diving within reach the self-same Centre.'
A veteran western sadhu tells us in a humorous vein of his encounters with Ramana Maharshi, "whose chief language is radiant Silence." Ramana’s cryptic utterance, "We are always aware, Sunya", made a profound impression on the author.

Sunya Baba in his early years had escaped formal education and had undergone no examination or intelligence-test until he met Sri Ramana Maharshi whose mere presence was a great test of his inner quality and intuition. The darshan of Sri Ramana is one of Life’s richest experiences and amounts to a liberal education in itself.

Sunya had read the Vedas and the Upanishads and also various Gitas and the Dharmic Wisdom-Karma of the Buddha, in both poor and fair translations. He was fairly familiar with Sufi lore and with the Greek mysteries, the Egyptian and Tibetan books of the Dead, and with Theosophy and other philosophies. So, in our India, Sunya was mainly interested in the simple and mature masters who emanated a natural spirituality — the real and integrally awakened ones.

In order to avoid semantic muddles and scinti- or supra-mental wallowing in ideals, sticky concepts and glittering word-symbols, we have only to be innerly still and stark and egolessly to attune ourselves in the essence. Where nothing is said all may be innerstood and intuited. As Ramana Maharshi said, "The assertion that I am THAT, is still of the ego", 'Anathag' and 'the Source and I are One' are still duality-play in words. Therefore Sunya was especially interested in the inherent wisdom in-and-beyond knowledge and in the freedom and joyous ease in-and-beyond peace and power and ego-exhibitionism. How is the essence and integrality lived in Swadharma? How is it actualised in interrelatedness, human and otherwise?

Sunya had heard of Ramana Maharshi in Kashmir and Tibet from Lamas like Sri Buddhadisa and Sri Cow Chuji, and later on, also through Paul Brunton and Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz; but five years were spent in the Himalayas and in other sanctuaries before he had darshan of Sri Arunachala. It was during the years 1936-1946 that Sunya was within the bodily radiance of the Ramana four or five times, for a few weeks at a time.

Since Sunya’s first darshan, Ramana Maharshi has been, to him, a consciousness within and around, a natural spirituality, like the mature harmony and akasha-purity of Sri Himalaya. It is an awareness of experiencing to be enjoyed, rather than a vision or egomemory to be asserted, exhibited or explained. Darshan is wisdom in identity-experiencing and our word-symbols are but shadows (a descent into duality) and our “effort is our bondage”.

Ramana Maharshi is the advaita experience, whose chief language is radiant Silence, and mature souls, familiar with solitude — in and beyond loneliness and trying — can smile calmly in response. During Sunya’s stay at Arunachala, he asked no questions, but on a few occasions Sunya was made to speak...
once he did on the Nordic Paramashansa (Hans Christian Anderson). Some passages in the Christian Bible were mentioned; for example, the Prodigal Son, who “came to himself”; the phrase “I AM THAT I AM”; and the words exchanged by Nicodemus and the Christ-conscious Jesus-ben-Miriam, regarding death in the flesh and awakening in spirit: “Art thou a Sage in Israel and ignorant of this?” Then he spoke of some of the Beatitudes, and the injunction — “Be still — and know that I AM GOD”, and also “Know ye not that ye are Gods?” (i.e. more than human).

So, in symbols and in word-free silence he also spoke of Meister Eckhart, William Blake, Jacob Boehme, of Soren Kierkegaard’s “existential leap”, of Chow Chu, Wei Lang (Hui Neng) and so on. The Maharshi was all these and more. Then — “there was Silence in heaven for half an hour” or at any rate for a timeless while and, suddenly out from the pure akasha and the living Silence, there sounded upon Sunya, “We are always aware, Sunya”. It was not as an answer to any conscious questioning, yet the words were apposite, strikingly confirming and helpful.

In the mystic north Sunya had, already in the early twenties, used such favourite phrases as “the ego-conceit of agency”, “Spiritual suffering is a contradiction in terms”, “Bondage is delusive” and “Awareness is all”. This last dictum was built upon Shakespeare’s “Ripeness is all”. But to be suddenly reminded and made aware that we are always aware, was a startling and a wider truth. The after-hush of that experience seemed to say, — “Why assert, when we are always and eternally aware? Simply be the awareness in Graceful radiance and in purma integrity: do not assert or fuss!”

“We are always aware!” It resounded in consciousness like a clear chime, a pure note struck in the akasha-silence to linger in the memory as AUM or the I-mantra, or as an echo of Sri Arunachala and the inner Dakshinamurti. It was like the stately Vedic hymn of projection or like Shankara’s refrain in the six stanzas on Nirvana: “I AM — Eternal Ananda and Awareness! I am Siva! I am Siva!” The final assertion — “The rest is Silence”.

We are the Awareness, the Purna, the Experiencing. Therefore Sri Ramana’s statement was a reminder to Sunya that we are always aware — (and not least in infancy) before desires usurp the mind and blur the truth through willfulness of power and the conceit of agency. But are we always consciously aware, and free in the midst of ego-woes and duality-play? Are we Sahaja awareness in natural spirituality? Yes: in the psyche as in the Swa there is ever the central akashic memory of integrity, of the non-dual essence and of wholeness experiencing. Swadarshan is ever in Swali. We are the Awareness in every form and interplay, so why not Be — word-free, home-free and time-free artists in Life, without psychic strain, tension or dis-ease?

The Lila is real, or “Unreal Reality”. It is divine and joyous because “I” plays in it. “With one fragment of myself I projected all these universes and interpenetrating multiverses” — I remain in-and-beyond the self-interplay, and only because of I, the beloved forms are dear. The shadow-play in Shakti-Maya is fun in essential freedom. Self-aware, we need not cling to shadows or part-play, and need not get stuck in forms and word-symbols, bodies and playthings, but can, like Ramana Maharshi, freely speak and write and play from out of the living Silence, in the intuitive Prajna-Light and in the rhythm of passion-free, possession-free Karuna. The Self, in other forms, and Self-interplay, human or otherwise, ever innerstands, recognises and smiles wisely.

Sunya’s naturally spiritual neighbour, Sri Chowji, opines that only egos are too solemn and too respectable to play: the thing in the nothing-ness, Sunya, is to Be alertly alive and eternally Self-aware. Sri Chow Chuji applauds Kalidasa’s dictum — “That the world is not made for man, that man reaches his full stature only as he realises the dignity and worth of a Life that is more than human.” But Sunya may remind his Himalayan wholeness that “We are always Aware! Sunya! Wu!”
SHANKARACHARYA’S

MAYA PANCHAKAM

Five Verses on Maya

1. Although I am the Pure Awareness which is unparalleled, eternal, whole without parts and entirely conceptless, notions like the world, God and the soul (jiva) arise in me. This is the work of Maya¹ who is extremely clever in accomplishing the impossible.

2. Maya, who is extremely clever in accomplishing the impossible, distracts even those who have closely studied hundreds of Vedic and Vedantic works. She makes them hanker for riches and other things and behave like animals. What a wonder!

3. Maya, who is extremely clever in accomplishing the impossible, attaches what is non-dual, unbroken Consciousness and Bliss to (the world) composed of (elements) like ether, fire and sun and tosses it about violently in the ocean of samsara.

4. Maya, who is extremely clever in accomplishing the impossible, gives rise to the notion of ‘I’ and notions of brahmin, vaisya, and so on as well as the delusion of wife, son and house in what is pure Awareness and Bliss entirely free from distinctions like caste, colour and attributes.

5. Although the Supreme Being has no parts and is free from all distinctions like Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, even the wise are deluded into thinking that there are differences like Vishnu, Siva and so on. This is the work of Maya who is very clever at accomplishing the impossible.

¹Maya is generally used in the feminine gender.
WHAT
AM I?

By Wei Wu Wei

I am the Absence of all presence,
and the Presence of all absence.

MAY it not be otiose merely to ask ‘Who, What, or Whence AM I’, for any answer becomes a concept, and no word, even ‘Tao’ or ‘God’ or ‘Zero’ could ever be anything else, and any concept must represent an object in a psyche, which what-I-am could never be.

Nor can any term, cypher, or symbol ever be other than objective, even ‘unicity’, ‘absolute’, ‘noumenon’, ‘subjectivity’ itself, which seek to represent by description the ultimate origin of all relative phenomena; subjectivity remains ‘subject’, noumenality remains noumenon, and ‘unicity’ remains a unity, for no grammatical form, by adding ‘-ness’ or ‘-ity’ can do more than generalise the concept to which it is added.

Sri Ramana Maharshi, who used the term ‘I-I’ as an indication, also said that in posing the question ‘who am I?’ it is necessary to abandon the ‘I’ when apperceiving.\(^1\) The reason for this is sufficiently obvious.

Yet without a verbal, which is relative, which is conceptual, motive how can attention be directed? It would be presumptuous to seek to do more than to see how far it may be possible to go in seeking to resolve an insoluble problem, which is to find a solution-of-continuity to the continuity of relativity itself. However, may we not at least do that?

If I pose the question, the eternal question, ‘Who, what, where, whence am I?’ may I not reply:

‘I am the Absence of all presence,
and the Presence of all absence’.

Two concepts are employed herein, interdependent counterparts, each of which mutually negates the other, leaving what I AM in absolute conceptual negation — negation of all phenomenal, which is conceptual, Relativity. ‘I’ cannot hereby be conceived. Revealed I cannot be, conceptually. But at least I remain in absolute isolation as I.

\(^1\) The only enquiry leading to Self-realisation is seeking the source of the ‘I’ with in-turned mind and without uttering the word ‘I’.” (The Collected Works, p. 80).
Sir, In Sri Ramanasramam there are, and every month, every day flooding numbers of ardent “Seekers” — because, they have been told — even educated — to seek (and not to “enquire” — Please Sir !)

Is Reality — Truth — a matter of Seeking .... or rather it is the delving into (— majjan —) or, simply the enquiry (— Vichar —) without any direction ? (Please !) 2

That means, it is not enquiring into anything or about anything .... but only to be in the state of “enquiry”.

So, MEDITATION should have no directive, no ‘Will’ as such .... whether you close your eyes, or sit straight with eyes open !

Are we going together ?

To really meditate, our mind must not be crowded whether by material things or by so-called spiritual things (“Knowledge”, which is merely the information, is not ‘Spiritual’. It is an encumbrance.) The mind must be totally empty, it must have space within .... to Meditate !

(That SPACE is MEDITATION .... to which we will go later !)

When we are before BHAGAVAN directly in ASHRAM, or indirectly anywhere in your house or in a jungle or on a sea — shore ............... just MEDITATION (or be doing it, say, even twenty-four hours) 3

................. are we required to beg anything even HIS GRACE .... (which is pouring — downpouring — itself on you, every second — every fraction of a second —) ?

---- on every pore of your body in and out ?

(Feel it now ! !)

(Feel it now ! !)

(Feel it now ! !)

(Look ! He is looking at you from without and from within — and the miracle of it ......... at the same time !) Now ......... while Meditation .........................

(— We will be proceeding —)

1 See our review of the author’s book : Ramana Maharshi and J. Krishnamurti — concomitant factors in their teachings, in this issue. This article however is not an extract, but stands separately.

2 Because, as you know, TRUTH has not any fixed point .... it is LIVING — it is a living thing.

3 Because, MEDITATION (which we have seen is really SPACE within .... yet we are operating the known) .... should go on twenty-four hours!
While meditating ............... extraneous thought may come —— nay, it may — it is bound to come —. Please do not control it, because, it will go!  

By controlling it you make it more powerful.

Allow it to flower ............... it will go! Because, if we control ............... there is conflict!

Look! the so-called controller is the part of the controlled — the thought — Is it not?

When we see this — when we have INSIGHT into this ................................

both the controller and the controlled vanish —— and, we are Meditating —— we are in the state of MEDITATION! —— Again, see! We condemn or justify the thought which arises —— If we leave any of these things doing ............... if we 'reject' any of these things doing ............... have we noticed what happens to that thought? ............... Have we noticed what happens to that thought? (Kindly! actually do it ............... in the process! !)

Is there any thought, at that particular moment?
This becomes (-is-) an AUTOMATIC DIVINE ACTIVITY  
(Because, 'time' is 'thought').

Please, just listen!!

This constant and instantaneous understanding

This constant and instantaneous understanding (— you may call this in big words: INSIGHT —) saves us from dissipating ENERGY, which is spent in controlling 'thought' all the while. Because, for Realization a tremendous ENERGY is necessary.

This trick (or GRACE) ............... when with us ............... we are all the while MEDITATING.

In SPACE — in "MEDITATION" ............... there is compassion — LOVE —!

4 May I quote from Sri Ramana Gita: "If a thought occurs there, it will not survive." (Ch. v-8).

5 Sri Bhagavan's actual uttered words — "Automatic Divine Activity."
LOOK FOR YOURSELF
By Douglas E. Harding

" 'To look at things out there is easy; to look within is difficult!' That is absurd. It's the other way round."

"The delusion that 'I am the body' is the cause of all mischief: this delusion must go. That is Realisation. Realisation isn't acquiring anything new nor is it a new faculty. It is only the removal of all camouflage."

"The ultimate Truth is so simple... But people want something elaborate and attractive and puzzling."

"Find out if you are physical."

"The Eternal Being is that state where you have disappeared..."

"Although you do not manifest, yet you are not lost."

"Even in utter darkness when a man cannot see his hand, he answers: 'I am here.'"

"Spiritual men are not bodies... They are limitless and formless."

"Any form or shape is the cause of trouble."

"The Self is obvious."

"What are you waiting for?"

from Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

In his inimitable style, one of our most notable contributors offers his uniquely practical interpretation of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings — and invites the reader to see for himself here and now the truth of his own identity.

CAN you see, for yourself, without the slightest difficulty or doubt, that you are not the body, not a thing at all? In other words, are the above-quoted sayings of Ramana Maharshi obviously true right now, in your own personal experience? If so, don't bother to read the rest of this article.

If, again, you neither see what he is talking about, nor want to, there's no point in reading on.

But if, on the other hand, you don't see it, but are willing to try anything that might enable you to do so, then it is suggested that you devote the next 20 minutes to carrying out some simple experiments. Just reading about them is rather worse than useless. They have actually to be done. The following questions are for settling on present evidence alone, on what you find given at this moment, dropping imagination, memory, and hear-say:

1. Stand up, look ahead, keep still. (It helps to get a friend to read the questions out to you, but you don't need to answer them out loud). How many feet do you now have, so far as you can tell? Of course you feel sensations, but what are they really like? Do they add up to feet? On present showing, couldn't you just as well have claws or hooves or fins? How many legs can you now find? How many trunks? How many heads? Where are your boundaries? How big are you? How old? What sex? Are you anything at all, or are you the space in which various things are now happening?

Unable to say 'I am this, or that', are you any less able to say: 'I AM'?
2. Answer the same questions, with your eyes closed.
3. Look at your hand. Are you in it, or is it in you? Have you any present clues to what it’s like in there?
4. Keep looking at your hand.
   How could you see its colour, if you were coloured?
   How could you receive its shape, if you were shaped?
   How could you register its movements now, except in your stillness?
   How could you contain it, if you weren’t empty?
   How could you take in all that complexity, except by being absolutely plain and simple?
   How could you feel the pain in it (as your thumbnail presses into the ball of your finger) if it were not for this background of no-pain?
   How could you hear the noise it briefly makes (as you snap your fingers) if it didn’t drop into your on-going silence?
5. How many eyes are you now looking out of? See what happens when you put your glasses on, slowly. Outline with your hands the extent of your ‘Eye’. What’s behind it?
6. Point to your feet, legs, belly, chest, then to what’s above that. Go on looking at what your finger’s pointing at.
7. See if you can get face-to-face with anyone. Isn’t it face-to-no-face?
8. Observe where you keep your face. Is it where you are? Or is it over there in your mirror, and where your friend is in receipt of it (and can therefore tell you all about it) and where he holds his camera (which can therefore record it)?
9. By stroking and pinching and pummelling, try to build up on your shoulders a coloured, opaque, complex, bounded, thing. Try to get inside and describe its contents. Aren’t you still at large immense?
10. Lie flat and look up at the sky. Is your Earth-body now voided, just as your man’s body and face and eye were
11. Get your friend to check your emptiness (at 0 feet) by coming right up to you with his camera (a viewfinder-hole in a sheet of paper will do). Doesn’t he start at a place (say 6 feet away) where he finds you to be a man, then come to a place where (at, say, 3 feet) he finds half a man, then a hand or a head, then a patch of skin, then a mere blue? (Supposing he had the right microscopes, etc., wouldn’t the blur read as cells, then as one cell, then as particles of descending order, and in the end as practically empty space — featureless, transparent, colourless?) Isn’t it true that the closer he gets to you the closer he gets to your own view of yourself as No-thing whatever?

Can you now see for yourself, whenever you like and without any doubt, that you are not the body, not a thing at all, but simple Being? If so, the following additional quotations from Maharshi may be helpful:

"Disciple: With all your penance for so many years, what have you got?
Maharshi: I have got what needs to be got. I see what needs to be seen.
Disciple: Can all see the same?
Maharshi: I see only just what all do. The experience is the same for a person who realises the Self once as for a jnani who experiences it uninterruptedly. Self-Realisation itself does not admit of progress.
The first experience (of ‘I-am-not-the-body, but pure Being’) is temporary and by concentration it can become permanent.
Disciple: Can jnana be lost?
Maharshi: Jnana, once revealed, takes time to steady itself . . . To remain unshaken further efforts are necessary . . . .
Samadhi with closed eyes is certainly good, but one must go further until it is realised that actionlessness and action are not hostile to one another. Fear of losing samadhi while one is active is the sign of ignorance."
1973

DESPONDENCY

By I. S. Varghese

Whether things go well or ill as we pursue the path we should never forget that these states are but modes of the ego. Carry on! This is Sri Varghese's message.

From the testimonies of seekers down the ages, we find that there are many hindrances on any spiritual path. On the path of Self-enquiry propounded by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi one of the main hindrances is despondency — a feeling of utter failure, a loss of hope — in short a serious doubt whether it is worthwhile to continue the quest.

The Maharshi himself has indicated in his answers to many seekers that the path of Self-enquiry is one of the hardest — for here one is diving deep into oneself and questioning the status of the ego. This is against the grain of a lifetime of assumptions on the material plane, where the existence of the individual as a separate entity was held as axiomatic. “I want this, I want that;” “I feel thus and thus;” “I think so and so;” — and so on.

On the path of Self-enquiry, the very first question is, “who is this I?” Is it the body? Definitely not, because the body is referred to as “My body”. Then is it the mind? It cannot be, as I refer to the mind as “My mind”, “My mind is troubled”. Then who is this ‘I’? By such logic we can only come to the conclusion that this ‘I’ is some mysterious enigmatic entity, who cannot be spotted or pinpointed. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that one exists! Bhagavan has stated in his answer to Paul Brunton that the answer to the query will ultimately well up as a realisation from the very depths of one’s being.

And the Maharshi has stated clearly that one can carry on the enquiry into oneself only up to a certain depth. From there onwards Grace takes over — the Atma itself guiding the devotee further inwards into the Holy Sanctuary. For the Guru — the Master — is none other than the Atma, the greatest guide of all. But on the earthly plane, as Frank Humphreys, the earliest Western devotee of Bhagavan, wrote: “The Master is one who has wholly and solely meditated on God — has immersed his personality in the sea of God and forgotten (and drowned) it there — so that when he opens his mouth he speaks God’s words and when he stretches forth his hand, God again flows through that to work a miracle!”

Despondency on the path of Self-Enquiry can be traced to one main cause — the feeling that one is not making any progress. And how is one to know whether one has made any progress? Aspirants try to assess this ‘progress’ in many ways, according to their predispositions. Some may be expecting certain things to happen as a result of starting some spiritual discipline; maybe a betterment of their worldly affairs, maybe greater peace of mind, maybe psychic experiences. This is not casting any aspersions on the integrity of aspi-
At the full moon after supper we set out from the Ashram to walk round the Hill.

Walking, sitting, gathering 'experiences' we return feeling so enriched. And we are back at the Ashram again. Is not that wonderful?

If we are still young and athletic we may even climb to the Summit. This really does feel like an achievement. And how rewarding gazing down from our lofty height over the endless samsaric plain below. But now it is time to climb down again. Descent quite acrobatic so that we shall arrive back at the Ashram in time for the midday meal.

Round and round. Up and down. Even Bhagavan Himself did it!

Once when Bhagavan was walking aimlessly on the Hill he was accosted by an old woodcutter woman who addressed Him angrily: "You are supposed to be a great Swami, why are you wandering about restlessly like this? Why don't you sit quietly in your Ashram?" Bhagavan graciously accepted the reprimand.

Arunachala Himself wandering aimlessly about on Arunachala! How wonderful!!

The Non-path to No-where
No Mountain, No path
Only Arunachala

By Ronald Rose

"I shall remain active and vigorous even after leaving this earthly body.
I am ever living to help those who come to me.
Surrender and seek refuge in me.”

This too is what Sri Bhagavan himself said on the eve of his Mahasamadhi — "where am I to go? I am here."

Can there be any despondency if He is here?

1The usual interpretation of this saying is not correct. Christ was referring to a very small gate in the temple of Jerusalem, called the 'needle's eye' gate.
SADHANA WITHOUT TEARS

By Muz Murray-Garden

The author provides a provoking analysis of the paradox facing seekers of Truth. While admitting that effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature, he shows with convincing humour the necessity of effort in sadhana.

WHY should I bother to make any effort on the path of Self-realisation? This is the question we all ask ourselves at one time or another in our frustrating endeavours towards the Light. All the traditional teachings enjoin us to practise austerities and spiritual exercises, known as sadhana, of many different forms and levels, and yet we are also told by enlightened sages that the true and perfect way to understand reality is effortless. How can this seeming paradox be resolved? In the words of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi:

“Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain that state and abide in it, that is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort.”

And again: “If you do not realise your essential nature, your sight remains obstructed. What is the obstruction? Find it and remove it... one’s efforts are meant only for the removal of obstructions which hide the true vision. The real nature remains the same... A practiser gains peace of mind and is happy. That peace is the result of his efforts. But the real state must be effortless. The effortless samadhi (state of superconsciousness) is the true one and the perfect state. It is permanent. (When) the efforts are spasmodic... so also are their results.”

No doubteffortlessness is something we all crave for in our sadhana; perhaps from the deep-seated knowledge that in reality we do not have to do anything — we only have to be. But we have forgotten how. So we try various methods to remind ourselves. If the path we find ourselves on becomes too hard we lose faith in it and get discouraged or distracted. It takes intensive effort merely to stay at home and stick to meditation or yogic exercises at constant times, day after day, when your friends are all out enjoying themselves, or inviting you to join them — especially if you feel you are getting nowhere with it all.

After a year or two of such self-imposed austerities, I can recall my own sense of glee when I came into contact with the school of

1 Teachings of Ramana Maharshi, p. 70.
2 Talks with Ramana Maharshi, pp. 552-3.
thought whose motto was: *Don't push the river — it flows by itself.* What an excitement surged in me at the words! It was almost a mini-revelation in itself. ‘Now why didn’t I think of that before?’ I wondered, ‘it’s so obvious! Am I not forcing the issue with all these austerities and practices? Why shouldn’t I just flow with it — like everything else in nature? The river has no need to push itself, it just flows with its own momentum. If inner harmony and bliss is my true nature — then why am I making all this effort to become what I already am? Maybe I am ignoring the flow of nature if I am asked out to the theatre and I don’t go. Is it not in effect the natural process of the universe bringing me the invitation?

So it was with such self-justifications that I decided with great relief to throw in the towel and abandon my *sadhana.* However, I found that ‘just flowing’ was sooner idealised than done. If only one could just ‘let-go’ and relax enough to simply flow with the world and its ways, then that would indeed be the perfect way to realise the ‘essential nature’ of oneself. But for most of us it does not work that way. Have you ever tried to *flow*? In the first flush of freedom it is joyous — but how long does it last? One very quickly floats out of the conceptual dream of ‘flowingness’ and gets sucked into the endless stream of conflicting thoughts, clamouring like flotsam on the surface of the mind, getting whirled around in the eddies of the social current and all kinds of diversions destructive to one’s peace of mind — without even realising where the changeover began. Very soon the mind is back to its habitually disorganised and chaotic condition. At this point I realised that I could carry on ‘flowing’ like that until Doomsday and still not be any the better for it. But having become disillusioned with both my *sadhana* and with free-flowing I was totally without direction and soon gave way to despondency.

In such a condition I always turned to nature for solace. Sitting in a field, or a wood, or on a mountain and soaking up the healing harmony of my surroundings, I could always experience that clouds and sunsets, and birds and trees and flowers and bees were all still flowing on as happily as ever — eternally changeless in essence. What was the difference between me and nature? Why does it flow and I don’t? Where did I go wrong? The trees and flowers are not neurotic or mentally confused and yet they are just as sensitive. Over the past few years laboratory experiments have shown that even plants have primitive ‘emotional’ or vibratory rapport with all other forms of life. They are attuned to the thoughts of man and beast. But these reactions are momentary and not reflective. A tree does not fret and worry about how it is going to manage to put out buds and blossoms and bear fruit, not does it have anxiety about its future existence in case there is not going to be enough rain or sunshine this year. It does not know how, or what, it is going to do and yet through an ‘effortless unawareness’ it grows and opens out in glorious manifold diversity. Like the rest of organic nature it is conscious, but without thought. The world of nature is a complex process of consciousness in operation without the intervention of locally individualised mentality. That flawless flow of consciousness which is the substratum of all existence is simply flowing through the natural world and unfolding it without resistance.

There was my answer! Nature has not set itself apart from anything. It just is. As a function of the inseparable *All* it is sustained by it. But man has come to think of himself as a separate entity from nature, even on the gross relative plane. He has the illusion of having his own separate existence, his own mind and an individual consciousness, and therefore a belief in the necessity of forging his own salvation, or ‘unfolding’ for himself. Thus the ideas of his own mind, and his idea of mind itself, obstructs the flow of that underlying consciousness of the universe and prevents him from experiencing the ‘true vision of himself’ — described in Sanskrit as *sat-chit-ananda* — the primordial condition of existence-consciousness-bliss.

But even when we understand the problem intellectually it does not help us very much. Although we may know, in essence, that we are already Self-realised, we do not experience it as a living reality — but only as a mental idea. All mental ideas must dissolve in the
light of direct experience. Therefore since the mere intellectual knowledge does not make us any the happier, it is futile to give up our sadhana — which is the only conscious and well-proven means to realise such experience. As Bhagavan says: “Even if we find somebody who has achieved this supreme state of stillness, (without any obvious effort — such as Bhagavan himself) you can take it that the necessary effort has already been made in a previous life.”

So effort has to be made, not to gain anything new, but to experience ourselves as we really are. To do that means we have to toss out all the concepts and conditionings of our upbringing and empty the mind of its endless chatterboxing. But man’s mind is so full of the price of fish, rice and beans, the daily news, the political situation, radio reports, television and films, bosses and board-meetings, sex and the social whirl, the family, the job, the future, the past, the harassment of the neighbour’s wife or kids, or dog, or anything other than his true condition of existence that he never has a thought-free moment to realise the blissful nature of his real Self.

Even when falling exhausted into bed there is no escape from the mind. Not only does it chatter away all night long, it even creates a non-stop living theatre of dreams for us to participate in. Whether we remember them or not, they still go on and we cannot but join in. So if ‘I’ am asleep — then who is the dreamer? Who is participating in the dream? If one admits that ‘I am’ — then who is getting any sleep and rest? The mind is completely involved in the dreamworld. If I am the mind — then what is the use of going to bed if I am only going to spend the whole night gallivanting around in my own fantasies? But if the mind itself is only one of my fantasies — then what am I?

At some point in the night comes that period of deep sleep when that peculiar entity we imagine ourselves to be, and think of as ‘I’, strangely dissolves into a blissful oblivion of no-thought, no-world and no-dreamworld. The waking and dreaming ‘I’ ceases to exist. Without that ‘I’-idea there is no mind. If

that ‘I’-idea and what I take to be my own mind can disappear, then my whole existence is founded on an unstable illusion. Now you see it, now you don’t. How could that impermanent mind or ‘I’ be myself? For that ‘I’ which one believes to be oneself to have remained in existence in deep sleep, there had to be that very ‘I’ remaining consciously alert to know it. So who was the witness in deep sleep? Something exists in that condition. Is there a deeper ‘me’ — an ‘I’ beyond myself? Who or what is the real me? Am I some other I? With the extinction of that ego-sense-of-‘I’ with which I am familiar, it appears that a mindless ‘something’ still exists in a seemingly paradoxical state of ‘non-existence’, comparable with the mysterious condition of ‘death’. Yet one always wakes up from it. Can it be then — by extension — that there is such a thing as death?

Nightly sleep is nightly death of the individual ‘I’. Yet we are not afraid to enter into that terrifying ‘non-existent’ condition. On the contrary, it is the greatest bliss for us. We are only too eager to escape into it after spending only sixteen hours or so of wakefulness in this workaday world. Why is it so? The sages say that with the dissolution of thought we enter into the ‘Consciousness of God’. And that is where we came from. We are only conscious of ourselves at any moment in dream-life or in waking-life because of the re-emergence of the ‘I’ idea on ‘awakening’ out of That. In deep sleep we reach again ‘That’ condition. All the unreal and super-imposed gabblings of the waking and dreaming worlds are finally stilled and we blissfully abide for a brief time in our true condition as the substratum of existence — in the state of Is-ness or existence-consciousness-bliss. And this short contact with our real nature, be it only a few minutes per night, is the only experience which re-furnishes us with enough strength to go on through another sixteen-to-twenty-odd hours of what can sometimes be absolutely hellish non-stop thinking. Even a few minutes of that blissful oblivion is enough to recharge us. If we are denied access to that condition by being kept at the surface level of sleep for a few days, then we would

3 Teachings of Ramana Maharishi, p. 70.
soon become physically uncoordinated and mentally disorientated to the point of madness. Therefore the deep sleep state, or nightly ‘entry’ into the Self, is a vital necessity — at least for those who are not experiencing the real thing through ‘effortless awareness’ in meditation.

It is frustrating to realize that every night we effortlessly enter into a similitude of the sat-chit-ananda-samadhi state, but with veiled awareness — like the flowers and trees unfolding themselves in the flow of universal Consciousness, we are not cognisant of it. We can only infer even the ‘existence’ part of that condition, since the body-mind-ego-complex we think ourselves to be, still appears to exist upon waking — but the ‘consciousness and bliss’ experience is lacking altogether. Yet even in the oblivious ignorance of that nightly event we are revitalised and refreshed. What if we could experience that mindless condition while remaining fully conscious and alert? What a wonder it might be! The experience of who we really are. Is it possible? Not only is it possible but it is the ultimate joy of joys and the fulfilment of the purpose of individual life, as expressed by all the soul-elevating mystics of the ages who have entered and remained in that divine state. What they have done, everyman can do, is the assertion of all those who have attained to the realisation of the Self. And to prove it, over thousands of years, the sages have perfected step by step methods of controlling and subduing the mind-and-ego-idea which will eventually achieve the desired result — provided the flighty mind is kept from butterflying out into the illusions of the world during lapses in sadhana.

As Bhagavan says: “Though all the scriptures have said it and though we hear it daily from the great ones and even from our Guru, we are never quiet but stray into the world of Maya (illusion) and sense objects. That is why conscious, deliberate effort is needed to attain that effortless state of stillness. Now (in the early stages of development) it is impossible for you to be without effort. When you go deeper it is impossible for you to make effort.”

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**SUSTAINING PEACE**

*By Cornelia Bagarotti*

SUSTAINING Peace is achieved by centring one’s thoughts on God. Then peace, instead of being a fleeting experience, will become a steady certitude. A flame on a windy night must be shielded if it is not to go out. The flame of love and contact with God must be shielded by conscious maintenance of thought that is centred upon His Eternal Presence. In all you do or say carry ‘this with you. As love grows, as God’s ever-present companionship within our heart is steadily mediated upon and affirmed gradually, all sense of duality departs. Concentration upon God within becomes at-one-ment with God within. Egoism disappears.

Outside God, all is a hurricane of desires, fears, anxiety, sorrow, obstacles and problems. The mind and emotions are constantly being swept up in them and torn apart. Only a self-discipline which centres upon that one point of Peace in which there is only eternal Love can reveal where peace abides.

“Love God and do what you will,” said St. Augustine.

“My Peace I give unto you,” said the Christ.

There in the heart is the seat of Love, is the Presence of the Christ, is at-one-ment with God. Turn your thoughts there and all else will disappear. “For where a man’s heart is, there his treasure lies.”

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A scientist discusses the nature of Maya and how the scientific method alone can never discover the way out.

A STUDY OF REALITY

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI in his Forty Verses on Reality poses the fundamental question: "Apart from existence, can there be any knowledge of existence?" One is aware that one exists and infers others' existence through one's own existence. Hence a study of Reality should begin with the study of one's own existence as awareness. But modern scientific method is different. Even the most abstract parts of science are accepted because of observed facts. What I want to emphasise here is that unless the observed facts lead on to the nature of the 'I' (i.e. the observer), scientific methods will never take us to Reality.

For convenience, let us begin by dividing the world into two — the subject 'I' and the external world. Now the external world as understood by modern scientific methods comprises fields carrying energy (light) and 'regions' of energy (matter). Both matter and light are merely a way of grouping 'events' or transitions of energy in space-time. Who groups the events? The 'I' of course. The structure of matter and light is built up in our brain or mind. Depending upon our response to external energy through our sense perceptions, we group these events.

We can see that our response to external happenings depends upon the modalities of our own mind. Essentially there are three modes of existence — the waking mode, the dream mode and the deep-sleep mode. The world of science, indeed the world of empirical life, takes place in the waking state. The dream state is comparatively transient. The sleep state takes up much of life, yet we attach little importance to it.

Let us first study the waking mode. In this state we remain energised like a television receiver. The brain is switched on; it can now receive signals from the external world. The 'I' is merely a group of events, as it were, having structural relations with other groups of external events. It is very similar indeed to the relationship between a television receiver and the electro-magnetic waves. The signals which reach the 'I' relate to outer happenings; the shaping and forming is done
within the structure of the ‘I’, resulting in a certain persistence of perception. In this sense, things are not real as such — the shapes and forms are clipped and clamped and synchronised in the ‘I’ structure.

“If one has form oneself (i.e. if one has structural awareness), the world and God also will appear to have form, but if one is formless (i.e. without structural limitations), who is it that sees these forms and how? Without the eye can any objects be seen? The seeing Self is the eye and that Eye is the Eye of infinity.”

In the dream state, the Energy content of the ‘I’ or Self activates the impressions left in our mind. The brain like a Doppler Radar goes into memory mode, while the sense organs remain inactive. Hence there is no input of signals from the external world. The thin film of memory is lit instead. Impressions can be a distorted picture of events perceived in the waking state or they may be true pictures; they may even get mixed up with other latencies of the brain. Also harmonics of impressions can recreate another chain of impressions, which explains some of our weird dreams.

In deep sleep, the ‘I’ is not receiving any input from either the external world or from the roll of impressions. The very notions of outer and inner have no meaning. The ‘I’ remains in a stand-by state like that of a radar set, giving enough energy to sustain its own structural continuity. All empirical distinctions subside in deep sleep. There a thief ceases to be a thief, a scientist does not function as a scientist, a President or Prime Minister has no special status and a doctor is not different from a patient. One does not have the notion of good or bad, yet one does not cease to exist. So a world notion is not necessary for existence.

From the study of the three modes of existence, certain conclusions can be drawn.

1. In both the waking and dream states the experiences remain real so long as one remains in that state.
2. In deep sleep these experiences cease to be; but one does not cease to be.
3. Hence there can be a mode without experiences.
4. In all the three modes, one has a subtle awareness that ‘It is the same I’ that was asleep and dreamt and is now awake.
5. Therefore, the I-awareness transcends all modes — and that ‘I’ is Pure Consciousness. In this pure ‘I’, there is no illusory manifestation of the external world or of the individual self. Since this consciousness is the motive force creating the structural relations between the I-sense and the objects, it is the substratum of all events.
6. This leads us to the fact that the ‘I’ is the way (“I am the Way,” Christ said) to Reality. “The only enquiry leading to Self-realisation is seeking the source of the ‘I’,” says Sri Ramana Maharshi.
7. If one enquires ‘Who am I?’ with introverted mind, one is bound to reach one’s inner recess of pure consciousness. In that natural state, there is no external or internal world, it being merged with the Substratum. There is only the non-dual Self.

The fact is that modern science is adapted to the measure of the mind, and hence also to the measure of the world based on observed data. But Reality can only be gauged by the measure of pure Consciousness of Self or I-ness. Hence science should seriously undertake the study of the ‘I’.

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2 Doppler Radar measures velocity and drift from the desired track. It refuses to take unreliable data and then functions on the last reliable data. This mode is called memory mode.
VERSES FROM
THE
NIRVANA SUTRA

"How great and good is my present understanding!
When others revile me, I feel no vexation,
I keep silent, not speaking of right and wrong.
Nirvana and the round of life and death are all the same.
I know now what I really am.
From the beginning there has been no light or shade.
My wayward thoughts have all departed.
I see that people do not understand.
I exhort all you ordinary beings
To rid yourself of the rubbish in your minds.
How great and vast is my present understanding!
Saying nothing, doing nothing, my mind remains at peace.
Easily and spontaneously I am delivered.
I go hither and thither, easily and without trouble.
The whole day I remain voiceless in the midst of silence.
Ceaselessly I concentrate my thoughts and gaze upon the fundamental law.
Spontaneously I roam about contemplating the Way.
Life and death are of no consequence.
How great and wonderful is my present understanding!
I am no longer faced with the aggressions and deceptions of the world.
Glory and beauty are indeed but empty deceptions.
Tattered clothes and coarse food are sufficient for my needs.
I don’t care to speak to the people I meet upon my way.
These worldly men all say that I’m mad.
Outwardly I appear vacuous and stupid.
In my mind everything is as bright as glass.
In secret I fathom Rahula’s mystic arts,
Which lie beyond the knowledge of you ordinary mortals.

— Extracted from John Blofeld’s translation of “The Path to Sudden Attainment” by Hui Hai.
THE QUEST

By Narayana

The author gives us a timely reminder of Bhagavan’s assurance that only when Self-enquiry has been pursued to the limits of our endeavour will the Inner Power take over, and surrender to the Self become a reality.

The method of Self-enquiry recommended by Sri Bhagavan is to make the mind one-pointed, and apply it steadily in the search for the Self.

The state where the body-bound ego does not rise is the state of pure ‘BE’ing, of abiding as That. How to annihilate the ego and be established in one’s true state as THAT?

If the ego or the ‘I’ thought rises, all else, i.e., jiva, God and the universe rise and veil the ever-present Self. We are always sat-chit-ananda Brahman, the reality which is Being-Awareness-Bliss. But we do not experience this identity because the ego intervenes.

In the waking and dream states, the ego appears as the ‘I’ sense and hides the Atman. In deep sleep, the ego is reduced to seed-form and merged in darkness. These three states constitute samsara. Turiya, the substratum of these states, is the only real state according to Sri Bhagavan. Turiya is not conceivable. It can only be described as ‘not this, not this’.

When the mind reaches the source of the ego and disappears, one reaches one’s natural state of Turiya, the Sahaja Sibiti. This annihilation of the ego is termed by Sri Bhagavan as our ‘real birth’.

The annihilation of the mind by merging in its source is the state of Turiya. Laya does not lead to Turiya. Laya occurs during sleep, stupor, or hatha yoga practices. Just as sleep cannot lead to Turiya, mano-laya cannot lead to it. It is in the waking state that the mind must reach its source by introversion and get dissolved there. Success in the sadhana depends on our strength and determination.

Verses 27 and 28 of the Forty Verses explain clearly the need for and the method of this enquiry:

27. The state where ‘I’ does not arise is the state where we are That. Without seeking whence the ‘I’ arises, how can one attain the self-extinction where the ‘I’ does not arise? And without attaining this self-extinction, how is one to abide in one’s own state where one is That?

28. Just as one dives down to recover an object fallen into water, even so, one should with keen mind dive into oneself, controlling speech and breath, and seek and find the place whence the ‘I’ arises.

Turning the mind inward and searching for the source of ‘I’ leads to loss of body-consciousness.

Like one diving into water, one should dive deep into the Heart with one-pointed mind and determined will. As the pearl-diver dives into the water with a heavy stone tied to him, the sadhaka should dive deep into the Heart, with the stone of vairagya tied to him. Self-realization is not for him who is weak, say the Upanishads.

Sri Bhagavan assures us that when, during sadhana, one has reached the limit of one’s effort, a power from within emerges, and takes over. The ripe soul surrenders to this power without resisting. Maturity comes through bhakti (devotion), vairagya (dispassion) and viveka (discrimination).

The enquiry “Who am I?” and “Whence does this ‘I’ arise?” has been well compared by Sri Bhagavan to the faithful dog’s pursuit of his master with the help of the latter’s scent. ‘I’ is the name, the form, the nature and substance of Being-Awareness. ‘I’ is the trail to hold on to and never let go and to follow till we merge in it.
The Gospel story of Mary and Martha is used by the author to illustrate the part work has to play in the pursuit of spirituality. What matters is not the duty as such, but one's attitude towards it, she points out.

ALL readers of this will know the story told of the visit of Jesus to the sisters, Martha and Mary: of how Martha was preparing a magnificent feast to welcome him and was a little annoyed that Mary was not helping her, but sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to his teaching of the way to the Kingdom of God: of how Martha asked Jesus to tell Mary to come and help her, but how Jesus said in effect, “No Martha, you are busy preparing an elaborate meal when one dish would be sufficient. As for Mary she has chosen the better part and it shall not be taken from her.” At least that was the interpretation put upon it by a Unitarian minister when I was a little girl.

But that was not the interpretation of the Roman Catholic Church. And again, as readers of this will know, under the influence of the Church Martha became symbolic of the way of karma yoga, the way of good works, and Mary symbolic of bhakti yoga or the way of love, but each had need of some ingredient of the other.

Anyhow, what are good works? The Church did not elaborate.

The catechism of the Presbyterian Church starts by asking the question, “What is man’s chief end?” and replies, “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” It is a somewhat cryptic answer, but the general idea is clear. Our object in life is not foremost to do good works, but to find God and find enlightenment. And no amount of good works can replace the main objective. In fact there are no works that in themselves are either good or bad, for it all depends on whether or not we are striving to find Nirvana, the Further Shore, the Deathless State, the Kingdom of God, or Enlightenment, whatever name you prefer.

Westerners are especially prone to declare categorically that so-and-so is doing “a very good work” — perhaps helping the downtrodden in Bangladesh or the starving in Italy. And most of my friends would declare that Margaret Barr, who has recently died, did a marvellously good work in establishing a Gandhian rural school in Assam for the Kasi people there. And what about Gandhi’s work in bringing self-Government to India by the methods of ahimsa and non-violence, for the first time in history showing the power of these things on a large scale?

The Stoics of Greece and Rome (best known through the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius) said that we are here on earth to play our part, the part that has been allotted to us by nature. What matters is not the nature of the part, but how we play it. We may be a successful prince like Shotoku of Japan or Asoka of India, or a humble slave who dies in torture, or a man who helps remove some of the pollution from New York, or perhaps
a worker in a factory, or a house-wife in the kitchen. A good actor will play his part well, whether it be that of a prince or of a slave. Judged by eternal values no work, no part, is more important than another; what counts is whether we played it regardless of consequences, and regardless of success or failure. And of course the Bhagavad Gita says exactly the same. A good work is what falls to our hands. At least it is that work which we can make good or bad according to how we do it, that is, according to the best of our ability, or not.

Further, all work is ephemeral. Gandhi's momentous work for India now survives in his Sabarmaty museum as a tourist attraction. Christ taught the epoch-making gospel of love, and Christianity gives the great examples of saintliness in St. Vincent de Paul and Mother Teresa of Calcutta; and the great examples of devilry in priests who signed the cross on the forehead of 'heathen' children and then dashed their brains out.

We cannot have good without evil, or evil without good. Indians have got over the difficulty of reconciling this apparently contradictory state of affairs by the symbolism of the goddess Kali. But Christians who postulated an all-good God, found considerably more difficulty, and volumes have been written about the problem of evil. But in fact it is the problem of good that is more difficult to solve. When good slides into evil and evil into good, why is it that the better part Mary chose leads along the way of goodness, not the way of evil. The answer, I think is, that goodness is more than morality alone; to be true goodness it must be selfless, whereas evil is prompted by desires for self, and leads to egoism and away from the Universal and Nirvana.

The object of our life in the world is to learn to see Beyond the things of the world. No work however much esteemed can teach us this. Some work is always necessary, but all work even the best, or what seems to us the best, will pass, all is transient. Whether the work we do is a good work depends on the spirit in which it is done, and this in turn depends on whether, as the Buddha said, "we are living the divine life?" or as Maharshi Ramana said of Gandhi, whether we have "surrendered". If we have surrendered our self-will, then the work that falls to our hands and does not injure others, is a good work, and our own particular 'worthy cause'.

The way chosen by Mary is the only way, whether it entails doing nothing in particular -- as often happens in old age -- or cooking food, or bringing self-government to India, all are immaterial. The work that Martha did cannot be made the symbol of karma yoga or any other yoga unless the individual learns to live the divine life.
PARADOXICAL ACTIVITY OF THE ‘ME’

By Dr. M. B. Bhaskaran

The false split between the knower and known is the source of all human conflict. But when the knower is made motionless by the fundamental question, ‘Who am I?’, an indescribable transformation takes place.

The ‘me’ is a form or movement of Consciousness just as mechanical action is a form or movement of Energy.

In this consciousness, there is the knower as the ‘I’, the knowledge as the known. The ‘me’ is operative only when these distinctions exist. This artificial division has a purely utilitarian character. Remove the known, the ‘I’ becomes inactive, as though dead.

The truth is that what I observe in myself as the object of knowledge is still myself. I am the consciousness which knows; by knowledge is also the same consciousness that operates. Therefore they are one movement though they appear to be divided.

But how to make this indivisible movement a basis for action?

It is like understanding that the earth moves around the sun and at the same time being incapable to abolish the sensory perception compelling to see the sun moving round the earth.

It is however clear that the knower can function only in the field of the known. His relationship, big or small, must inevitably be limited by the frontiers of the known. All his activities are taking place through the screen of his knowledge. When he says: ‘I know’, he has already in himself that knowledge as memory.

What exactly could be the link between the knower and the known? Would he come into existence without the knowledge?

We may take an example: The feeling called greed by the greedy, is not separate from him, though he assumes he is different from it. With this dissociation, he becomes the knower, and greed, the known. But in fact they are one.

The knower, through this separation, acts upon greed. He controls it, justifies or encourages it. Such an activity is essentially the product of greed itself. Greed itself as the knower is acting upon greed itself as the known. This paradox is the source of human conflict.

Is there then a possibility for this kind of activity to end?

It depends on the solution to the question constantly raised by Bhagavan: “Who is the knower who says ‘I know’?” Each one has to find the answer for himself.

The very first impact of this query stops all movements of the ‘me’, for or against, in respect of greed, in the example; the entity condemning or supporting greed is paralysed by this fundamental question. When the knower of greed is motionless, inactive, could there be greed? Does not Self-Enquiry subtilise the machinery of the ego? Who is there to describe what remains thereafter?
THE SONG OF TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

By Gladys Dehm

Gladys Dehm surveys the life and writings of one of the most controversial thinkers of our time. Applauded by many outstanding scientists and regarded with deep distrust by traditionalists, Christian and non-Christian, Pierre de Chardin drew his inspiration from the vision in the biblical Book of Ephesians of all creation evolving to eventual consummation in the Christ or Omega Point.

PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN was born on the 1st May 1881 in Sarcenat, France. The fourth of eleven children in a harmonious united family, Pierre was a thoughtful, affectionate little boy. He considered his mother to be 'a sainted woman'. She exerted a great influence on her son and fanned into being 'all that was best in his soul'.

Pierre was fascinated by nature, by rocks especially, and his intense, ardent search for the durable and enduring began there in that living, breathing schoolroom where he grew to love iron in particular. However, he was soon to realise the ephemeral quality of those objects which at first appeared to him strong and enduring. The passion for truth already marking him, Pierre the student of life pursued his inner quest while progressing rapidly with his studies, geology being his favourite subject.

In September 1905 Pierre was sent to the Holy Family College in Cairo as teacher of Chemistry and Physics. He taught there for three years, during which time he acquired a greater knowledge of palaeontology and geology. Egypt, with its deserts, light, fauna, and vegetation made an impact on Pierre who felt the exotic beauty of the East pass like waves over him. Impregnated by all this, Pierre became increasingly aware of a vibrant universe, one in which it seemed that 'a universal Being took form in nature.'

When Pierre had finished teaching in Cairo he went to England where he passed through

1 formerly Gladys de Meuter.
the last stages of his training as priest and religious. There he passionately continued his inner search for the 'inexpressible ambience.' He cognised that matter and spirit were not two separate substances, but were two distinct aspects of a single substance. Within the physical energy he beheld the spiritual, hidden, imprisoned as it were, and simply awaiting awareness of its presence.

In 1914 Pere Teilhard was confronted with the nightmare of war. He distinguished himself in the 8th regiment of Moroccon Tirailleurs, and was awarded the Legion d'Honneur and the Medaille Militaire.

After the war he was prevailed upon to accept the post of Professor of Geology at the Institut Catholique in Paris. It was not long before the brilliance of his thought impressed itself upon academic circles, but contrary to his friends' expectancies he was not to remain in the French capital. Pere Licent in China, a Jesuit scientist, asked Pierre Teilhard to join him there. His offer was accepted, and the 'French Palaeontological Mission' was founded with Pere Licent as its director.

Pierre Teilhard arrived at Tientsin on the 22nd May 1923 where he was soon to make one of the most important discoveries in his whole career. At the same time the inner man was undergoing intense weariness. In a letter dated the 27th May, Pierre Teilhard writes: 'I feel very much as though I have reached the very limits of my endurance...the feeling remains with me that as far as my own life goes, the day is ending...I think the only way out is to cling firmly to the blind and absolute faith – that God is the animating force behind every single event...I am convinced that the only true science we can acquire in this ocean of ignorance and weakness is the vision that begins to take form under and through the multiplicity of things.'

When Pere Teilhard joined forces with Pierre Licent they set out on an expedition to Inner Mongolia and the Ordos desert. It was there that they unearthed evidence of the existence of palaeolithic man in those parts. With this important discovery on the material plane emerged from Pierre Teilhard's inner soil the exquisite mystical prayer which has become known as 'The Mass on the World.'

Pierre Teilhard returned to France in 1924 to face the ordeal of being barred from teaching. Due to the wrong interpretation given to his works, his religious superiors saw fit to take this step. Bowing to their will, the deeply disturbed Jesuit returned to China where he remained at Peking.

Pierre Teilhard was immensely kind, tolerant, intellectually brilliant. And he heroically endured the severe trials which came his way. This sensitive generous nature was constrained to seal his lips and he could not divulge his discoveries on the spiritual plane to a needy humanity. Pierre Teilhard's 'finds' on the material plane became bruited abroad and given the recognition they merited, yet his inner 'finds' were closeted and put away. Needless to dwell on how great was Pierre Teilhard's anguish.

In March 1946 Pierre Teilhard returned to France where a severe heart attack prevented his going to South Africa where his help had been requested. He was able to undertake the journey only two years later.

Elected to the Academie des Sciences in 1951, Pierre Teilhard lived in New York, where as member of the Wenner Gren Foundation, he devoted himself to anthropological studies.

His last visit to France was in June 1954 when he passed by Saracenat, his birthplace. His stay in his native country was shortened when his religious superiors imposed yet more severe restrictions upon him. In great distress Pierre Teilhard returned to New York.

On Easter Sunday, April 10th 1955, Pierre Teilhard suffered a stroke. He died at six o'clock that evening. His remains were placed in the Jesuit cemetery on the Hudson River.

The message of Teilhard de Chardin is vital. In an age where technology has received an extraordinary impetus, man risks the loss of his identity, of his foothold in the constant flux and motion of this giant machinery. This will not happen if the individual focusses his gaze upon the spiritual fire which is within the world of matter. This spiritual fire energises and gives impetus to the convergence of the whole creation towards an ultimate point which Pierre Teilhard de Chardin termed the 'OMEGA POINT'. The individual must
plunge himself with optimism into the role assigned him, but he must do so realising fully that the spiritual pervades the universe. Adhering to this truth the individual must renounce the fruit of his works and seek to fulfil his mission in detachment and with devotion to the Adorable Presence everywhere vibrating.

Pierre Teilhard's example serves to encourage those who would make his vision their own. In him, the searching, probing intellect of the scientist had clasped hands with the hidden, vibrant mystic —

The Mass on the World

'Once again Lord, I have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, yet I will raise myself beyond these symbols towards the pure majesty of the True Itself. I, who am your priest, will take the entire earth as my altar and upon it I will offer you all the world's travail and anguish.

'Lord, imprison me within the deepest depths of your heart; and then, keeping me there, purify me, set me aflame, sublimate me, until I become that which you would have me be; utterly, through the complete annihilation of my ego.

'Lord, imprison me within you. Indeed, it is my conviction and this conviction is so strong that it has become one of the supports of my inner life — that an 'outer darkness' which was wholly outside you would be pure nothingness.

'Inescapably, all of us exist within you. You, the universal milieu in which and through which all things live and have their being.

'My God, for me, all felicity and all achievement, the very purpose of my being and all my love for life, all depend on this single basic vision of the unity between yourself and the universe

'I can preach only the mystery of your flesh....You the Soul irradiating all which is about us.

'My faith is dedicated to this pulsating glorious crucible in which everything is melted away in order to be reborn....Lord Jesus, in this dedication I wish to live, in this dedication I wish to die.'

The Divine Milieu

'How can the believer continue to believe seriously in the worth of worldly occupations? Such, upon achieving interior unity, suffer as victims of a true spiritual dualism. They experience on the one hand a true instinct congealed with their love for what exists, their taste for life which attract them towards the creative joy and towards knowing. On the one hand a loftier desire to love God above all else makes them fearful of the least division or side-stepping in their loyalties. In the most spiritual layers of their being they begin to feel a tension between the opposing ebb and flow resulting from the attraction of the two rival stars mentioned from the outset; God and the world. Which of the two is to be greater loved?

'...where lie the roots of our being? They fall back and return to the unfathomable past in the first place. How stupendous is the mystery of those first cells which were brought to life by the Soul's breath! Within each and every one of us, because of matter, the entire history of the world is mirrored in part.

'...each and every one of our actions, through its more or less far off or direct impact upon the spiritual world, aids in rendering perfect the totality of the Mystical Christ.

'...our work seems to us, on the whole, as a means of earning our daily bread. Yet its essential virtue remains on a loftier level — through it we render complete in ourselves the subject of the divine union.

'...We must endeavour to enter into our most secret self and scrutinize our being from all directions.

'...When I had been conscious of being something greater, other than myself — a second thing rendered me dizzy; that is, the highest improbability, the great likelihood of finding myself existing in the very heart of the world that has continued to survive as a world.'

Reflections

'Lord Jesus Christ...you have enraptured me as a world. My heart loves you as this world; I now realize that it is you my
brothers seek, even those who are non-believers — it is you they seek to sense, you they search for throughout the wondrous vastnesses of the cosmos.

‘Lord Jesus Christ — you are the central point towards which all things converge.

‘Love alone can render individuals complete, by causing them to unite with one another, because love alone can take possession of them and bind them together to what they possess in their innermost recesses. This is a fact encountered in daily experience. When do lovers receive access to an inner completeness if not when they admit to being lost in one another? . . . Why then should not that which is a daily occurrence on a small scale attain world-wide dimensions one day?’

* * *

The Teilhardian view offers a unique message to the world. Science with its cold objectivity, its arrogant dismissal of everything ‘spiritual’, must focus its vision anew in order to cease its outdated hostility. On the other hand those theologians who fanatically attack the advance of science, its breakthroughs, its established facts, must step across the threshold of science so that both sides can begin to appreciate one another.

Teilhard de Chardin was a true worshipper. His purity of vision pierced the raiment of matter to behold the fiery radial energy which was at work within it, spiritualising the whole and drawing it towards a centre of Amorization where transfiguration takes place.

He showed how it is possible to apprehend reality while entertaining two different viewpoints. His urgent message to mankind is to penetrate the veils of matter and see God there; a glowing, loving, glorious Being who abides within, without, above, below. God is here in the midst of our activities, and no matter how diverse they are, we must learn to sublimate them and offer them upon the Altar of the World. When we have stripped ourselves of the false conception that God is remote, beyond our reach, and that He is unaware of our anguish, our trials, our sorrows — when we have flung this ignorance from us, we will become aware, as did Pierre Teilhard, that the whole universe is a divine lovesong.

Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav Teaches the Torah of the Void

Translated by Z. M. Schachter

Without the void all would have been One. But then there would not have been any creature — any world. So the void is a kind of Divine Wisdom of not being so there can be division between one kind of being and another.

This wisdom of not being, the wisdom of the void — cannot be realised! It is not a something but it makes all somethings possible. Each something is infused with G-d and surrounded by G-d: There is in between a void that is not.

This cannot be known by knowing but it can be faithed by faithing past and through it.

This is why Israel is called Ivrim — Hebrew, through-passers. And He is known as the G-d of the Hebrews.

The wisdom of the void is dangerous, because where it is strong there is no sense and no knowing. So, be guarded, and seek to escape the void trap:
 ‘Those who come there do not return,’
A little man with big ideas
Went searching for his soul.
He met a sage who quick discerned
His robe and begging bowl.
The sage bade him be seated;
And filled his bowl with rice;
Then, when the meal was cleared away,
Began to speak of mice.
"Oh, prithee, Sir," the pilgrim said,
"I'm in a hellish hurry
And whether mice be this or that
I really couldn't worry.
I seek to know the truth of things;
What is reality,
And whether man is ruled by Fate,
Or if his will be free."
The sage was seldom serious
But when there was a need
Could ope his mouth and speak his piece
And say a word indeed.
So now he fixed an eagle eye
Upon the younger man;
He scratched his skin, he cleared his throat,
And finally began:
"Reality is all that is,
All that appears to you,
Provided it be something that
A man may follow through.
Something not a mere mirage
That, in a thirsty land
Beguiles the traveller to
Its source in desert sand.
So, when I speak to you of mice
I speak of something real.
Of something one may see and hear
And smell and taste and feel.
If you would know reality
Know all things, men and mice,
And how to grow chrysanthemums,
And why two times is twice."
362.
It's only when one knows one's source, the Heart,
That I, that false god, dies. It's only when
That false god dies that there springs forth direct,
Victorious from the depths, the true God-Self.

363.
About this empty goblin born
In languid darkness and now dancing
As this vast world start some inquiry.
Then like the bridegroom's friend, it flees.  
The Self-Sun rises clear
Shattering the darkness false.

364.
The I that penetrates the sky of silence
Spreads as the Heaven of pure awareness.
Hence
When the false ego dream-like fades into its source, the true Self rises
Of its own accord.

365.
On the body’s cross the ego Jesus
Stretched, tortured dies. The Passion ended,
The true Self shines as spirit supreme.
Such is the resurrection of the Lord.

366.
Attainment of Kaivalya is revival
After death in the immeasurable silence
Of non-dual Being,
The pure transcendent bliss
Experienced as awareness in that state
Abides and grows as one’s own natural Self.

367.
How can the jiva sore bewildered
By failure and frustration gain
Blest freedom and relief from care?
Only by knowing that the grace supreme
That rules it is no other than its Self.

1 The simile here of the bridegroom's friend is to illustrate that the ego is neither chit (consciousness) nor jada (matter) and that it vanishes on inquiry about its nature. A stranger was moving about in a marriage party pretending to be a friend of the bridegroom. But he disappeared as soon as he found that there was an inquiry about his identity. He belonged neither to the bridegroom's party nor to the bride's!
368.
What is That forgetting which
We have fallen under the powerful spell
Of this false world?
Unless we remember That,
There is no chance whatever
Of the passing of our pain.

369.
He who laments the death of wife or children,
Let him first turn within and seek his Self
And slay the ego body-bound.
Of all his dire afflictions, this
Will be the full and final death.

370.
If you love life that to the body clings
Know that the body's death must one day come.
To end all grief, cling to the Self,
The true support of life, and with a love Flawless and full, love That.

371.
A tiny atom seeming from afar
Meru-like, but when we reach it sliding
Into a void penurious is desire, Insatiable like an empty pit
Bottomless and impossible to fill.

372.
Good hearts that yearn for dear contentment,
Rather than rely on tangible things
To swim across this poverty of spirit,
'Tis good to gain serenity of mind.

373.
The heart surrendered to the Master's feet,
Will it dance wildly as it did before?
Does a wife living with her wedded husband
Jump about with fatuous excitement?

374.
To what great knowers call 'the highest bliss,'
Cessation of all movements of the mind,
The best way is desirelessness,
Freedom from all liking and disliking.

375.
Sure enough, only desire when crossed
Gives rise to anger vile.
Desire ending, every weakness ends.
Restraint of lust entails restraint
Of anger and the rest.

376.
If all desire, even the desire
For the state supreme of speechless silence,
Amounts to swerving from perfection,
Could attachment to the flawed
And lightless body and its pleasures
Be counted proper conduct?

377.
One who never has a thought
Of 'I want this' and 'I need that'
Is happy and contented with what comes
As fruit of former deeds.
How could such a one swerve
From his true state and suffer pain?

378.
Only for those who have snapped asunder the bonds
Of desire does the false phenomenal world
Cease to appear. Snap then, without a thought,
Desire even for the beatified bliss
Of radiant silence.

379.
Fond, foolish mind afflicted by desire
For transient pleasures in this world and the next,
If you stand tranquil, still, you're sure
To gain the freedom, the transcendent bliss
Beyond these two worlds.

* Name of a big mountain.
IT was in the darkest period of my life that I first heard of Sri Ramana Maharshi. At that time, I seemed heading swiftly towards scepticism; the world appeared to me full of injustice, cruelty, greed and hate and other evils, the existence of which logically led me to a strong disbelief in God. For, had He truly existed could anything dark or evil ever have flourished, I questioned. Doubt upon doubt assailed me to lose whatever reverence I might have had for sadhus and sanyasins.

One day, while travelling on an electric train to the office, I suddenly happened to meet a friend who had spent over a decade in Europe and America. I had not met him for quite a while and sometimes used to wonder where he had disappeared to. He said that he had been to Sri Ramanasramam, and while trying to describe to me his experience of the darshan of the Maharshi, he drew out from his pocket a small packet which he offered me. He explained that it contained something extremely precious — some vibhuti, ashes brought from the Ashram. He insisted on my accepting it, but I was amused and scornfully waved it aside. He felt insulted. I said: “Well, if that be so, to please you, I will take a pinch of the ashes.” He insisted that Sri Ramana Maharshi was not one of those ‘so-called’ saints, but an ‘authentic’ Sage, acknowledged all over the world, and gave me a book, to start with, – Sri Maharshi, by the late Sri Kamath of Sunday Times.

From another friend, I borrowed a copy of Self Realization. My interest grew even without my being aware of it. Something made me write to Sri Ramanasramam for all the literature on the Maharshi available in English. I studied it with great avidity and found that my outlook on life and the world began to undergo a subtle transformation; yet at the back of my mind there still lurked the old scepticism, which would not yield place so easily to the new faith. I argued with myself

How I Came to the Maharshii

By Chhaganlal V. Yogi
that while so many books were wonderful to read, their authors, more often than not, were not so wonderful to know. It was possible for men to teach truths which they could not live themselves. What then was the use of books? I decided to correspond with the Maharshi, which I did for a few months with more and more frequency. Answers to my letters reached me with rare punctuality. But they hardly gave me a glimpse into the nature of the daily life lived by Him. An inexplicable desire to visit the Asramam and see things for myself began to haunt me.

To fulfil that desire, I paid my first visit to Sri Ramanasramam in the Christmas of 1938. When I arrived at the Asramam I met with terrible disappointment. The Maharshi was seated on a couch, as quiet as a statue which did not move or speak. Neither did His presence seem to convey anything unusual. I was very sad when I noticed how indifferent towards me His whole attitude was. I had expected warmth and intimacy, yet now, I seemed to stand before somebody who lacked both. From morning till evening, I sat waiting to catch a glimpse of His grace, but He seemed cold and unaffected. My mind became a vacuum, my heart nearly broke in despair. I decided to leave that very night, more sceptical than before. The Veda Parayanam chanted every evening in His presence and which many considered the most attractive item in the daily programme of the Asramam, fell flat on my ears. The sun was setting and darkness slowly crept on the Hill and over my heart. I could not bear the stuffy atmosphere. I walked out of the Hall to breathe fresh air outside.

Just then a young boy came up to me and asked me where I had come from. 'Bombay' I said. And had I been introduced to the Master, he asked. I said 'No'. He was surprised. Immediately he led me to the office and introduced me to the Sarvatthikari, Sri Niranjananananda Swami, and proceeded with me to the Hall, where he introduced me to the Maharshi. When the Maharshi heard my name, His eyes looked straight into mine and twinkled like stars. With a smile beaming with Grace, He asked me if I was a Gujarati. I said, I was. Immediately He sent for a copy of the translation by Sri Kishorelal Mashruwala of the 'Upadesa Sar', a few copies of which had only just then arrived. He then asked me to chant the Gujarati verses from the book. "I am not a singer", I said, and for a moment I hesitated. But soon I got over my hesitation and began to chant verses from the book, fifteen of which I had hardly completed when the bell for the evening meal rang. While I was chanting, I could feel Sri Bhagavan keenly observing me; the light of His eyes, as it were, suffused my consciousness, bringing about a subtle but certain transformation within me. The darkness, which a few moments before had seemed heavy and unbearable, gradually lightened and turned into a warm glow. I felt in my heart an inexplicable joy.

I sat at the evening meal close to Sri Bhagavan and while I ate every morsel seemed to have an unusual and ethereal taste. This was an actual experience, of which I had not had a glimpse either during the morning tiffin or the lunch at noon. Literally I felt that I was sharing some heavenly meal in the very presence of God. The thought of leaving the Asramam that night vanished. I stayed on for three days longer in order to enjoy the experience of divine grace.

During my three days near the Master, I found my whole outlook entirely changed. I began to see the folly and the futility of seeing only the dark side of life and of the world. The divine magician had wrought a miracle and transformed the world for me. It was now full of hope and joy. His presence on earth was promise of a better future for suffering humanity. For the first time then, I understood the meaning and purpose of Darshan.

While I lay in bed in the guest-room of the Asramam, I recalled the entire scene on the electric train in Bombay. I saw that prasad from the Master was a gift of Grace which no wealth could buy. What a miracle of transformation! Why did it take half a lifetime before I could meet my Master? In the following years, visit after visit seemed to be miraculously arranged by the Maharshi who knew my need to be close to Him physically from time to time. Every succeeding visit deepened the light and joy within me!
Vasishtha said:

O RAMA! Just as a pavilion is held up by stout posts, so also Maya which produces this everlasting samsara is sustained perpetually by men whose nature is passionate (rajasic) or dull (tamasic). Men like you who are pure (sattvic) by nature can discard it easily just as a snake casts off its slough. All this is truly Brahma. This extensive (universe) is the Self (Atman). O Pure Soul! Overcome your delusion in the form of 'I am one and this is another'. In that eternal and homogeneous Brahman there are no distinctions (kalpanas) even as there are no real objects (like foam, waves, and so on) in the ocean. There is (really) no misery and no delusion, no birth and no one is born. What really exists alone exists. Realize this and be unperturbed. Transcend dualities (like, cold and heat). Always inhere in the Self, do not acquire things or be attached to those which you possess. Remain as the non-dual Self free from misery; do not be perturbed. Be self-reliant, tranquil, steadfast, quiet and calm. Be silent, care-free and pure as a splendid gem; do not be perturbed. Enjoy what comes by chance, do not crave for anything, leave all ideas of acceptance and rejection, do not be perturbed. Just as pearls are found inside the full-grown bamboo, so also genuine wisdom is found in one who has taken birth for the last time. Nobility of conduct, pleasing nature, compassion, tranquillity, non-attachment, steady wisdom, all these are found in him as ladies in the interior of a house. All persons like the company of a man of good and sweet conduct, even as the wild animals of the forest
like the sweet notes emitted by a bamboo in the wind. Two ways of attaining Liberation are open to embodied beings in this world (samsara). One is following the teaching of a guru and attaining the goal slowly in the course of one or more lives. The other, which is open only to men of discrimination, is attaining Knowledge quickly and by chance like fruit falling from the sky. You will understand how Knowledge can be obtained like a fruit falling from the sky if you listen to this old story:

There is a brave king of the Videhas named Janaka, a noble soul who has overcome all vicissitudes and attained great prosperity. He is like the wish-fulfilling tree (kalpa-vriksha) to those who seek his help. Like the Sun which makes the lotus bloom he makes his friends flourish.

Once in the season of spring he went into his beautiful park noisy with the calls of mating cuckoos, like Indra when he enters Nandana (his famous garden). He wandered away from his attendants among the bowers of that beautiful park which was fragrant with the scent of lotuses. Suddenly he heard voices coming from a grove of tamala trees. They came from invisible siddhas (liberated souls) who were living in seclusion among the mountain caves. In the course of their conversation they sang the following song expounding the nature of the Self:

We meditate on the changeless Self (Atman) which gives rise to bliss when the subject comes into contact with objects.

Abandoning the ideas of seer, seen and sight along with the latent desires (vasanas) of the past, we meditate on the Self which is the primal light that is the basis of sight.

We meditate upon the Self, the light of lights which lies between the two ideas of existence and non-existence.

We meditate upon the Self dwelling in all beings which constantly repeats (silently) the hamsa mantra.¹

Those who neglect the Lord who abides in the Heart and worship other gods are like people who throw away the divine jewel Kaustuba and seek an ordinary gem.

By renouncing all desires one cuts off the tangled roots of the poisonous creeper of desires.

The perverted man who, even after knowing that worldly objects are deceptive, still thinks of them is an ass, not a man.

One should strike down again and again with the club of discrimination these enemies, the senses, whenever they are active, just as Hari smites the mountains with his vajra (the weapon of Indra).

Conquer the mind first by pressing the palm with the palm, grinding the teeth with the teeth and twisting the limbs with the limbs.

The aspirant should first achieve sense-control which gives rise to joy. When the senses are controlled the mind becomes tranquil. One whose mind is tranquil abides firmly and constantly in the bliss of his own Self.

When the king heard this song of the siddhas he became frightened like a coward at the sound of battle. Leaving all his followers behind he entered his palace alone like a lion going up a mountain. Realizing that the activities of the world were unsteady like the wings of birds flying in the sky he cried in great distress: “Alas! I am living aimlessly in this unsteady world like one stone rolling upon another. How small a part of endless time is my life-time! What a pity that I place my hopes on it? Of what use is this kingdom which I can enjoy only during my lifetime? Stupid that I am, why do I live in vain like this? There is nothing in this world which is real or beautiful or noble or purely natural. What is there to rejoice in? Those who are at the head of powerful men tumble down in the course of a few days. Alas! my mind, how can you place any trust in glory? They enjoyed great prosperity and pleasures. They had dear relatives. All these have become merely objects of memory. How can one place any trust in the present state?

¹ soham, meaning 'I am He (the Brahman)'.

April
Where are the riches of kings? Where are the worlds created by Brahma? All objects have passed away. How can I place my trust in the present state? Millions of Brahmas have gone their ways. Heavenly worlds have likewise disappeared. Kings have passed away like particles of dust. How can I place my trust in this life? If desires bind me to the nightmare of samsara and if I cling to the delusion of a non-existent body, my state is pitiable indeed. Countless days have passed away and are still passing away. I have not seen till now a day which does not come to an end. Whatever is beautiful in the beginning, or middle or end is tainted by the evil of ultimate destruction. Stupid persons daily become more and more sinful, more and more cruel and more and more miserable. The stupid man is smitten by ignorance in boyhood, by the desire for women in youth and thereafter anxious about his wife. When does he do anything good? Non-existence sits on the top of existence, ugliness on beauty and sorrow on joy. In what can I take refuge? There are persons (like Brahma) who bring into existence the universe by opening their eyes and its extinction by closing them. How insignificant are people like me? Good fortune is a source of joy when the mind is peaceful. But it becomes a misfortune when the mind is vexed. Similarly misfortune is a source of grief when the mind is vexed. It is good fortune when the mind is peaceful. Samsara is the height of misery. How can one then find joy in the body which exists in the middle of it? The mind is the root consisting of innumerable sprouts, branches, leaves and fruits. It is mere imagination. I shall stop imagining and thus put an end to it. The tree of samsara will then die.

I have woken up, I have woken up. I have seen the thief who steals my Self. He is the mind. I shall now kill him. Long have I been his victim. Till now the pearl of my intelligence remained unpierced. It has now been pierced and requires only a string. I have been fully awakened by the good and wise Siddhas. I shall now go in search of my Self, the object of supreme bliss. I shall abandon false notions like 'this is I' and 'this is mine' which persistently arise. I shall kill the strong foe, this mind, and attain peace. O Discrimination! I salute thee!

Pondering thus Janaka became completely silent. The agitations of his mind ceased and he became like a figure in a picture. After remaining silent for a long time he who was the soul of his subjects got up with his mind completely disciplined. He said to himself: "What is there to be obtained? What am I going to accomplish through my efforts? I am constant and pure Awareness. Why should I imagine anything? I shall not hanker for what I have not got, nor reject what I have got. I shall remain as my pure Self, come what may."

Thinking thus Janaka began to attend to the tasks which came to him in the usual course, working dispassionately like the Sun (producing) the day. He did not contemplate the future, nor did he think of the past. He lived cheerfully in the present moment. By the power of his own thinking, and not through any other means, did he attain what he wanted to attain.

O Rama! One attains that state with one's own fine, clear intellect and ripe wisdom, not by action. The efforts which people make to obtain external objects should first be directed towards the development of their wisdom. Lack of wisdom is the greatest of all sorrows, the source of all misfortunes and the seed of the tree of samsara. One should therefore acquire wisdom. This wisdom which abides in the heart of intelligent persons is the wish-fulfilling gem (chintamani). It is also the wish-fulfilling creeper which yields the fruits desired. Evils coming from the various quarters do not affect the man who is wise and free from delusion, just as arrows do no harm to one who is clad in armour. The ego is inert, stupid and subject to bondage. It is like a cloud which hides the Supreme Sun (i.e., the Self). It is blown away by the wind of wisdom. One who wishes to attain this high and incomparable state should first cherish this wisdom, just as a farmer who wishes to reap a harvest should first till his field.

(to be continued)
TALKS WITH A PYTHON

As the twelfth year of their exile in the forests was drawing near, the Pandavas came to Dwaitavana around Badarikashrama to spend the remaining period incognito, before they entered into the thirteenth year of exile. While there, one day Bhima, the second and strongest of the five, went out hunting in the beautiful forests. Suddenly a huge python gripped him in his coils from which even the powerful Bhima (who had the strength of thousands of elephants) could not release himself.

As Bhima had not returned to the camp after a long time, the Pandavas became anxious about him. King Yudhishthira himself went out in search of his beloved brother, and was shocked to see him about to be swallowed by an enormous python.

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Running nearer, Yudhishthira asked the python to release his brother, promising that he would bring something else to satisfy his hunger. The python replied, "Here is a prince, my meal for today, caught in my coils. Better go away without delay, or else you will be my meal tomorrow. O great warrior, whoever comes within my region becomes my food, and you are within my limits. After a long time I have caught your brother. I cannot leave him now, nor do I wish for anything else."

Yudhishthira: "Tell me the truth, O snake, whether you are a divine being, a demon, or a snake dwelling in the Netherworlds? Know that it is Yudhishthira who questions you. What is the reason for taking my brother Bhimasena? On what conditions will you release him? What gain or information from men will please you? What food can I offer you, O python?"

Python: "O sinless Yudhishthira! I was an ancestor of yours, by name Nabhsba, a famous King, the son of King Ayu, and fifth in descent from King Soma. By performing sacrifices, studying the Vedas, by good character and prowess, I achieved the glory of the three worlds (the seat of the God Indra). On getting it, vanity possessed me. One thousand Brahmins carried my palanquin. Intoxicated with wealth and power I treated them with contempt, as a result of which, O King, I am reduced to this state. It is due to the kindness of the sage, Agastya, that I still retain my memory and human consciousness.

"The day is ending and I have just got a meal in your brother! I do not wish for other fare. However, if you will answer to my satisfaction the questions I propose to ask you, I shall consider the release of your brother, Vrikodara (voracious-eater like a wolf)."

Yudhishthira: "By all means, O serpent, ask any questions you please and I shall reply, and I hope you will be satisfied with my answers. Indeed, you know the essential knowledge of a Brahmana, O King of serpents. I await your questions."

Python: "O King, who is a Brahmana and what is worth knowing? Tell me these. I can see from your words that you are indeed a wise person."
Yudhishthira: "King of Snakes, one in whom satya (truthfulness), dāna (charity), kālma (forgiveness), śreṣṭha (character), abhasa (absence of cruelty), tapas (penance) and ghrina (compassion) are seen, is said to be a Brahmana.

"And what is worth knowing is Para Brāhmaṇa (the Supreme Being), which frees one from dukha (pain) and also sukha (pleasure). Having attained this one is not forsaken. What do you say?"

Python: "The four-class system is indeed basic, so is satya and Brāhmaṇa. Even among the shudras (lowest class), O Yudhishthira, one can find truthfulness, charity, freedom from anger and cruelty, non-violence and compassion. O King, the One worth knowing is indeed without sorrow and above pleasure. Otherwise, I imagine there is no state which is free from both pain or pleasure."

Yudhishthira: "The qualities seen in a shudra may not be found in a dwija (twice-born, i.e., the Brāhmaṇa, the Kshatriya and the Vaiśya inclusive). A shudra may not be a Brāhmaṇa. O Serpent, he is indeed a Brāhmaṇa in whom these characteristics are seen, and a man who does not possess these qualities may be called a shudra.

"Your doubt that a state which is free from both sorrow and pleasure does not exist in the world is true indeed, because all states are accompanied by one or the other. However, just as between cold and heat, there can be neither cold nor heat, so also between pleasure and sorrow there is a rare state which is free from both of them. This is the state of enlightenment. This is what I think, O Serpent. What is your opinion?"

Python: "O King, if you evaluate a person as a Brāhmaṇa by his conduct, then mere birth is nothing without right conduct.

Yudhishthira: "O great Serpent, I really think that due to the mingling of the classes (cārṇas) it is difficult to decide who is born of which class. Men unite with all sorts of women. Speech, procreation, birth and death are common to all human beings. Those who are authorities on truth consider character and conduct to be the chief assets of a person. The birth ceremony of a person is done even before the foetus is formed, and at that ceremony the mother is savitū (generator) and the father the priest. Therefore, a person is equal to a shudra until he is re-born (initiated) into the Vedas: That is the opinion of Manu on this controversy. Indeed, this question would be simple without considering conduct, O King of Snakes. Conduct is a strong consideration in settling it. Hence as I have already stated, O best of snakes, righteous conduct makes a Brāhmaṇa."

Python: "O Yudhishthira, I have heard your words of wisdom. You are truly wise. Why should I now eat your brother Vrikodara?"

Yudhishthira: "In this world you are such an expert in the Vedas and their supplements. Tell me, by which activities can one reach the highest resort."

Python: "O Bharata, I think that one may go to the heavens by giving charity to deserving persons, by speaking gently and truthfully, and by avoiding violence and cruelty."

Yudhishthira: "Between charity and truthfulness, which is more meritorious? And between non-cruelty and sweet words which is higher?"

Python: "The choice between charity and truthfulness, as well as between non-cruelty and sweetness, depends on the requirements of the occasion. In some cases, speaking the truth is preferable to charity, and in others, the opposite is the case. So too, between sweet words and non-violence, depending on the result. What more can I say?"

Yudhishthira: "How can one be sure of going to heaven as a result of actions? How can the bodiless enjoy it? Please explain, O serpent."

Python: "O King, there are three states attained as a result of one's actions. They are divine, human and bestial. From the human world one goes to the divine world by reason of charity, non-violence, and so on, and in the
absence of these, one is born in the human world again. One falls from the human world and is thrown into the bestial world, as the result of cupidity, greed, anger and intolerance, violence and cruelty. Even from the bestial world, animals like cows and horses may go to the heavens direct. Such is the rebirth of living beings. A *dwija* (twice-born) can rise higher and higher every birth through cultivating the right qualities. For a king, acting selflessly in the best interests of his subjects is bound to bring good results."

Yudhishthira: "O serpent, tell me who is the knower of sound, touch, form, taste and smell? What is it that does not receive them direct?"

Python: "O long-lived one, it is *Atma* which enjoys these through the sense-organs attached to the body. Knowledge, intellect and mind are its instruments of enjoyment. The individual soul residing in the body, which is an abode of sensuality, experiences these through the mind. Even then, the mind mediates between the *Atma* and the senses. Mind and intellect, entangled in the objects of the senses, are the cause of sorrow and pain. This is how the Atma acts when involved in the senses."

Yudhishthira: "Tell me the qualities and difference between the mind and the intellect, knowing which is an important duty of the knowers of adhyatma (spiritual science)."

Python: "The intellect, brother, is the immediate follower of *Atma* and is endowed with vibrations and a desire to return to the source, the *Atma* itself. The intellect arises when problems require it, while the mind is already active. The intellect influences the mind, when the necessity arises. This is the difference between the mind and the intellect. You are also well versed in this matter. What is your opinion?"

Yudhishthira: "O best of thinkers, your thoughts are so lucid. You know that which is worth knowing; why do you ask my opinion? That being so, how is it that you became subject to infatuation while in heaven in spite of your omniscience and great achievements?"

Python: "It is my belief that prosperous circumstances are conducive to intoxication. No wonder that I was also affected by vanity due to riches. I woke up when I fell down, and now I address you as one awakened by my fall.

"O King, you have done me a good turn. My curse has come to an end, though it was a very difficult one, by this discourse with you, my good sadhu! Moving about in divine aerial chariots in the past, I in my vanity did not have any regard for anyone except myself. The *Brahmarishis*, gods, *yakshas*, *gandharvas*, demons and the great snakes of the lower worlds—in fact, everyone in the three worlds used to pay homage and tribute to me. By a mere look I could cause the downfall of anyone. Such was the power of my eyes! Indeed, one thousand *Brahmarishis* carried my palanquin at the time when my rudeness brought about my fall. I Goaded with my foot the great sage Agastya, with the words ‘*Sarpa, sarpa*’ (move on, move on), and angered as he was, he cursed me, ‘You become a *sarpa* (a snake)’. Immediately, I lost all my glory and fell down from the palanquin head-long as a python. Then I came to my senses, and prayed to the sage for an end to the curse: ‘O sage! pardon me, an intoxicated being.’ The sage then said kindly, ‘You will be released from this curse by King Yudhishthira. When you reach the end of vanity and sinful actions, he will save you.’ Then I realised the powers of the saint, and that is why I prompted you to explain to me what is *Brahman* and who is a *Brahmana*. Indeed, *satiya*, *dāna*, *tapas*, charity, non-violence and virtuous conduct always lead to salvation, not caste or family. This your brother Bhima-sena is released. May God bless you. I am returning to the heavens. An auspicious time has arrived for me and I have become realised too."

As he said this, a shining chariot descended from the heavens. Nahusha cast off his python-body and rose to the heavens in his divine body.
Brahma said: At this the Mother of the world bowed to the Destroyer of the three cities and prayed that she should attain the state of non-separation from Him. Noted for her sweet words, she prayed very kindly in this way for the welfare of the world: "Let not this form of Thine which charms the eye and the mind be ever abandoned by Thee. Although I am guilty please do not forsake me. As this form of Thine is beautiful and auspicious for the world and is full of divine bliss let all persons always see it. Enough of Thy terrible appearance wearing the serpent, the poison, the skull of Brahma, ashes and so on. These things are no longer necessary. Please remain a handsome man taking delight in divine garlands, scents, robes and gem-set ornaments. Great Lord! Let Deva and Gandharva maidens come here daily and adore Thee, dancing and singing to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Let Thy followers in the guise of men also adore Thee day and night unceasingly. Let this vision consisting of our united form be always, by Thy grace, capable of inspiring devotion, bestowing prosperity and fulfilling all desires. Lord of the Devas! Let this form of Ardhanarisevara (half Goddess and half God), which is the truth underlying all mantras and which has now been assumed (by us), remain for ever for the sake of inspiring devotion and service. Let the faults committed knowingly or unknowingly by the devotees who have sought refuge with Thee be forgiven."

The Lord of Arunachala listened to these words of the Goddess and fulfilled her wishes. With great affection he gave her the perfume obtained from the civet cat to smear herself with and said: "An Asura named Pulaka once performed austerities, assuming the form of an animal for that purpose, and obtained a boon from me. Thereupon his body began to emit a wonderful smell. He caused thereby the Deva women to become enamoured of him. The world fell into distress by that act which was contrary to dharma. So the Devas prayed to me. I then called that Asura and ordered him to abandon his Asura body for the welfare of the world. He said: 'Lord of the Devas! I shall abandon this body according to Thy command' and bowed to me and adored me with devotion. He also said: 'Lord of the Devas! The fragrant substance which exudes from my body is marvellous and world-deluding. Thou must therefore graciously accept it and smear it on Thy body. The exudation from my body is an aphrodisiac. Thou must esteem it highly. Let it be liked by
everybody. Let it give beauty and lustre to the user and bring him good luck. Deva of Devas! Lord of the World! I shall now abandon my body. But let this substance be esteemed highly not only by Thee but also by the Goddess who is fond of scents. Let my descendents acquire this smell by virtue of my austerities. Let them lean their bodies against the folds on Thy body and smear them with this substance.' I said ‘Yes’. Pulaka then entrusted his life to me and abandoned his body. Your (Parvati’s) body has become thin with austerities. You may also smear this (upon your body).’ Saying this Siva smeared the scent obtained from the civet cat on (the body of) Parvati.

Then, seeing a flower in Parvati’s hand, he asked: ‘What is this?’ Thereupon she explained how it had come into her hands. She said: ‘When I came from Kailasa to Kancheepuram at Thy command, to do penance, I worshipped Thee with this pure water lily which had grown in the Manasa Lake. I resolved to use it for worship regularly. The linga of Ekamra (which I worshipped) and which is always lustrous and anointed with the melted butter of Kamadhenu (the divine cow which fulfils all desires), should be adored well by kings. It should always shine as a symbol of dharma for the protection of the world. Every desire will then be fulfilled and I shall be pleased. It has been installed by me for the welfare of the thirty-two worlds. Those who adore that linga should carefully adorn it with all kinds of ornaments. They should look upon it as the repository of all joys and worship it. For it was installed by me with great pomp when I was a maiden.’

Brahma continued: On hearing this the Lord of Sonachala, the granter of boons, granted all the boons asked by the Goddess. That Lord himself now appears as Sonachala (the red Hill) which is adored by the world. It grants every boon. Sambamurti himself in all his glory stands with Gauri as Arunachala. Those who look at it or think of it or adore it attain the goal of their lives. All (kinds of) wealth accrue to one the moment one hears about the glory of Arunachala. Those who remember it will become noble men, masters of words, handsome and exceedingly strong. All their sins will be expiated. The moment one looks at it (Arunachala) one will attain the benefit of bathing in all the holy waters and performing all yajnas and yagas (sacrifices). He will obtain the grace of Sadasiva. The Goddess came here at Siva’s command from Kailasa in order to get rid of her curse. When she looked at Arunachala her curse was lifted. Among the various places on earth which are sacred to Siva and the various sacred places in the world of the Devas it is only at this place that Sambhu felt complete satisfaction. Sadasiva appears here in the form of Arunachala. This is the supreme effulgence. This is the effulgent linga adored by all the Devas. The Karmabhumi (the world meant for religious rites, i.e., the earth) is full of dharma because it possesses this linga. Hosts of devotees whose sins have all been burnt up by the lustre of Arunachala live happily everywhere in the land. Sambhu complies with the wishes of those who adore the Lord of Arunadri with circumambulation, prostration and austerities. Other kinds of austerities, gifts and yogas do not please Sambhu to the same extent as simply looking at Arunachala. The Vedas established in heaven, the Itihasas and so on, stand as hills around Arunagiri and praise Him. Neither I nor Vishnu can fully describe the glory of Arunachala even if we were to try for millions of years. The Devas headed by Vishnu and the wish-fulfilling tree always worship it while remaining invisible. Disease, distress, mental worry and other vicissitudes incidental to the age of Kali do not affect those who always adore this linga of Arunachala. I have thus described to you fully the glory of Siva known as the story of Arunachala which bestows more merit than what can be attained even in the course of an aeon (kalpa).’

Suta said: ‘When Sage Sanaka heard with attention the wonderful and nectar-sweet story of Arunagiri which came from the lips of Brahma, he gained the fruit of his austerities.’

Here ends the First Part of the GLORY OF ARUNACHALA. (To be continued)
RAMANA MAHARSHI and J. KRISHNAMURTI

The author has endeavoured to use Krishnamurti’s own precise approach to convey the essence of the two teachings, which he insists are complementary. Without an understanding of Ramana, we cannot “get to” Krishnaji, he says, for what the former suggested the latter expressed. Both viewpoints are necessary for a comprehensive grasp of the whole picture.

‘Alone’ explains that the central point or pivot of the two teachings is the word “self”. Bhagavan refers to the Self as representing Reality, while Krishnamurti’s usage denotes the individual or ordinary existence.

“In Ramana Maharshi’s case the query leading to the ‘self’ is therefore of very primary importance; as in the case of J. Krishnamurti understanding of the self (or what is), is of primary importance!”

The author goes on to say: “When we have love . . . both the methods for rising to non-dual state are easily (and at once) grasped — conveyed.” So love is essential, but it must be combined with Confidence, which is none other than faith or trust. Confidence is “not obstinacy nor arrogance, but extreme ‘humility’, ‘pliability’, and ‘not-knowing’-stakeness.”

Throughout the book ‘Alone’ tries to take the reader on a step-by-step verbal journey to a non-verbal understanding of Truth. It is in this way that he uses a mode of detailed investigation similar to the one employed by Krishnamurti during his lectures.

“This (Booklet) should be read as a letter, (as if it has come from a dear one . . .) in solitude — in a state of aloneness!!

“With a feeling of love, rather than with an attitude of scrutiny, analysis . . . this should be gone through.”

The above extracts show the author’s peculiar writing style, sometimes flowing, often jerky, strangely punctuated by which he tries to create an atmosphere “round about and inside words, phrases, sentences etc. . . .” This sort of prose-poetry does have a certain value, but most people accustomed as they are to conventional writing will find it somewhat confusing, complicated, unpalatable and hard to digest. The majority will regard it as a difficult book not worth their trouble and patience, but a few people are sure to respond to the valuable message. It cannot be denied that the author has a quaint earnestness, which is appealing. Affection and profound understanding often illuminate the pages.

There is beauty in the following passage taken from a short chapter on Dhyana or Meditation. ‘Alone’ says that when we sit before Bhagavan, our primary concern is “to be in his company” as it were.

“And this company of his is so soothing, as a beautiful sunset to the eyes, as song of a cuckoo to ears, a cool breeze on a hot day to senses, or a loving touch to the forlorn being.”

From the company of a Ramana Maharshi or a Krishnamurti “the perfume of love pervades to our innermost level, cleansing the whole mind of all the past totally and filling it with the ‘Now’ which is the Timeless.”
The most touching thing about this unique book is the quality of deep devotion which pervades it, notwithstanding its curious complex wordiness. Alone clearly has a deep love for both Luminaries, as he likes to call Bhagavan and Krishnaji.

PHILIP PEGLER


Although the feminist movement has been going strong for over half a century and is now enjoying a new boost in "Woman's Lib", its success, apparently, has not been all that it might. What has gone wrong?

Woman, instead of fulfilling herself and discovering the Divine Mother within her has used her emancipation solely to emulate man. This is the theme underlying the erudite articles assembled in the latest number of Maitreya.

The first contributor, Esme Wynne Tyson, writes: "Woman has failed to play her part in the evolution of mankind because she has not been true to the highest, the Divinity within her." Further on the writer becomes more emphatic: "Women have, since their liberation been heaping fuel on the fire, not only in many cases encouraging men in their policies of violence, but actually joining in the fray, going into uniform, marching with machine guns, entering into competition with men even in occupations that are most obviously suitable for men only, taking part in man's sports ... and in every way apeing the toughness, callousness and downright bestial stupidity of the unredeemed or unbalanced male nature."

That woman has had a raw deal all down the ages no one can deny. In the West with a civilization based on the Old Testament, Plato and Pauline Christianity it was inevitable. The whole sorry tale can be summed up in the words of the author of the book of Ecclesiastes. "And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hand is bands: whose pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her." But did not the cult of the Mother of God, deliberately encouraged in the Middle Ages to elevate her status help matters? Apparently not, Herbert Guenther tells us:

"When the cult of the Virgin developed it did not change the contemptuous attitude towards women, it even worsened it. The Virgin never being divine in her own right but only given preferential treatment, was contrasted with her less fortunate sisters, and since no concrete woman could match the fictitious ideal of her, this fact was additional evidence of the vileness and evilness of the ordinary woman."

Let us turn to the Far East where Yin and Yang, Shiva and Shakti are interdependent principles. Surely things must be better there. Charles Ponce quickly disillusionus us:

"There appears to be a universal law, unfortunate in its implications, which states that wherever you find a religious or mystical system which exalts the feminine ... you will find a proportionate disregard of woman as a social being."

Later the writer elaborates: "The Yang is that which is of light and positive, the Yin as that which is of darkness and negative." He goes on to explain how the Taoist monk attains to the birth of the inner man by sexual intercourse and comments: "No mention is ever made of the woman's development in this process outside of the fact that she is 'honoured'!!"

Mr. Ponce takes an equally poor view of Shakti's abasement before Shiva as narrated in the Kama-Kala-Vilasa and concludes: "All of which is rather interesting when one considers that the yogi's goal is disengagement from the world in his union with a masculine God." Rather interesting perhaps, but the Hindu reader is more likely to find Mr. Ponce's consideration rather surprising.

The point is made more than once that men and women are all to some extent androgynous. Women's lib is not just for women. Man too needs to participate in it, to temper his violent, brutal and bestial nature by developing those female qualities of tenderness, protectiveness and compassionate love which lie somewhere latent within him. I quote briefly Ruth Moebel: "Men need those qualities they project on to women ... He knows unconsciously that he needs those qualities. ... A man may seem to have individuality and dignity but this is not really the case. He is not himself because he has repressed part of himself. ..."

Very true. But does not woman also feel the need to develop to some extent those nasty aggressive qualities she so much admires in man? Apparently she does and the contributors seem a little unfair in being so hard on her for it.


In this little paper-back of only 60 pages the author, a Harvard psychologist gives us a lucid
resume of Buddhaghosa’s *Path of Purification*, the voluminous mediaeval compendium of Buddhist practice which is the vade mecum of all Bhikkhus and serious seekers in Theravada lands.

Republished in the valuable “Wheel” series, it was apparently originally written for the benefit of fellow workers in the field of psychophysiology and Buddhaghosa’s descriptions of various states of consciousness and their physical repercussions experienced in ascending degrees of samadhi are related to the new categories being evolved by psychological research.

“What has for ages constituted a fundamental transcendental religious experience and so been described in the terminology of religious belief systems is on the verge of being translated into the frame work of modern psychology, itself a belief system, as “altered” and “Higher states of consciousness.” (A.S.C. and H.S.C. respectively).

This paper is concerned with a subcategory of A.S.C.: “meditation specific states of consciousness” (or M.S.C.).

The reader may or may not be interested in A.S.C. and H.S.C. but in either event he has here a very competent digest of a fundamental work on Buddhist sadhana which, amongst Theravadins, commands almost equal authority with the Pali Canon itself. The bulk and scholastic style of Buddhaghosa’s great work may scare the not so scholastic seeker but no one need be scared of Daniel Goleman.

He has done a very useful job not only for his learned colleagues but also for the simple sadhaka.

RONALD ROSE


This is the second and revised edition of the autobiography of Sri Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati. He is, in many ways, a remarkable person. He has written numerous poems and songs in Tamil and English. He has practised yoga and meditation from his boyhood and has studied the doctrines of not only Hinduism, but also Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. He has worked as a schoolmaster for some years and taken an active part in politics during the pre-Independence days. He has travelled extensively in India and abroad spreading the spiritual culture of India. There is hardly an ashram or spiritual institution of any importance in India which he has not visited. And there are very few Swamis or holy men and men of importance whom he has not known personally. He has been invited to all kinds of places and asked to address all types of audiences. The autobiography is an account of all his activities which are rather glorified throughout to his advantage. Some short biographies of holy men and extracts of some of the numerous speeches delivered by him on various occasions also find a place in it.

Devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi will remember him as the author of *Ramana Vijayam*, the Tamil Biography of Bhagavan with whom he claims to have moved freely and conversed on numerous occasions (see Pp. 266-88). Some of these conversations are reproduced in the book. But it is not clear whether he had made any contemporary record of these and his talks with other persons. One feels that he has written the autobiography mostly with the help of his memory. This and the lack of dates in most cases detracts from the value of the book. The style is monotonous and the language needlessly ornate and high-flown. The indiscriminate use of Sri, Yogi, Pilgrim and I for narrating the events is often confusing. Descriptions of places, events and so on are also too short and sketchy. These defects are, however, to some extent made up by the narrative which is generally interesting and gives many pen pictures of the Social, Political and Spiritual life of India.

M. C. S.


“My Jewish Master, what is truth?
And Jesus said, Truth is the only thing that changes not. In all the world there are two things; the one is truth; the other falsehood is; and truth is that which is, and falsehood that which seems to be.
Now truth is aught, and has no cause, and yet it is the cause of everything.
Man is the truth and falsehood strangely mixed. And it is no cause, and yet it is the cause of everything.
Such and other striking passages abound in this Gospel which purports to be a transcript from *akashic* records revealed to the author. The special claim of this book for attention is its coverage of
the ‘lost’ eighteen years of Jesus Christ which are supposed by some to have been spent in India and Tibet.

We are told that when the author was “a mere lad, he had a vision in which he was told that he was to build a white city. This vision was repeated three times with years intervening. The building of the white city was The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ. This book was transcribed between the early morning hours of two and six — the absolutely quiet hours.”

We do not question the sincerity of the sponsors of such books. But how far these ‘inspirations’ are authentic, from what sources they emanate, are questions that each reader has to ask himself.


A very readable and informative work on the growth of the Buddhist Movement in the West. The author gives a brief survey of the book done in Britain, Germany, France, Denmark, Holland, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, Russia and America. He follows up this essay with brief biographies of the leading men of thought and religion who have contributed to the development in each of these countries. Thus we have Rhys Davids, Max Muller, Sir Edwin Arnold, Edward Conze, Humprays, Schoenbauer, Oldenberg, Zimmermann, Burnouf, Levi, David-Neel, Tucci, Paul Carus, to name only a few of the 84 names listed and documented. Interesting details about the circumstances leading to the entry of these notables in the Thought of Buddhism are given. The writer describes how irresponsible criticism based upon insufficient understanding on the part of some of them e.g., Oldenberg drew rejoinders from others like Paul Carus.

In a striking passage, Christmas Humpreys observes:

“Alone of the world’s religions Buddhism has nothing to fear from the activities of the modern Western mind, namely, the higher criticism of previous ideas and alleged authorities, and science, using the term in its largest scope. As to the first, the Buddhist attitude to all phenomena and to all teaching about it has ever been that of the Western scientist. Let all things be examined dispassionately, objectively, assuming nothing, testing all, for such was the Buddha’s own injunction to his followers. Western science today is rapidly approaching the conception of Mind only, and a remarkable feature of the recent change in the basis of physics is that the very terminology of its new discoveries might be paralleled in scriptures compiled some 2000 years ago. Truly, Buddhism has nothing to fear from Western Science, and in the world of mind, including that Cindrella of mental science, psychology, the West has more to learn from Buddhism than as yet it knows.”


A more scholarly but heavier book than Mr. Peiris’s. After tracing the background — political, religious, social and philosophic — that gave rise to Buddhism in India, the writer devotes a chapter each to the early life of Gautama Buddha, his missionary life, the patronage received by Buddhism from the royalty, the various sects that sprang up in the country, Buddhist literature, educational activities and the decline of Buddhism.

In the second part he develops the theme of Buddhism in south and south-east Asia, and in north and north-east Asia. These chapters contain as well the story of cultural contacts between India and the people of the south-east and north-east.


Regarded as nearly two thousand years old, this Sutra — A Dharma Door to Inconceivable Liberation — shows the way for a Hinayana Mind to develop into the Mahayana Mind. Individual perfection is sought to be extended into a perfection of all living beings. The discipline comprises the building up of the “straightforward mind, the profound mind, the Mahayana Mind, practice of six perfections, four infinite minds, fourfold Bodhisattva action to befriend and liberate all living beings” and other methods of making the supreme Dharma available to every one.

In an interesting Chapter (IX) it is described how after all the Bodhisattvas speak of their views of the Non-dual Dharma, Manjusri asks Vimalakirti to give his understanding of it. And then:

“Vimalakirti kept silent without saying a word, Manjusri exclaimed : 'Excellent, excellent; can there be true initiation into the non-dual Dharma until words and speech are no longer written or spoken ?'”

The translator’s note and glossary are helpful.

A fascinating exposition of the Theory and Practice of Mandala in the different mystic traditions of the world, with beautiful plates, designs and illustrations. The Mandala is approached as an interpretation of the Infinite in terms of the finite, a means of opening the consciousness to realms beyond the physical, a link between man and the Divine. The study is thorough and develops the subject systematically. There are many descriptions and definitions, depending upon the conception and the objective of the Mandala.

For instance: “A Mandala consists of a series of concentric forms, suggestive of passage between different dimensions. In its essence, it pertains not only to the earth but to the macrocosm and microcosm, the largest structural processes as well as the smallest. It is the gatepost between the two” (P. 12).

The emphasis throughout is on practice rather than on the philosophy of the *sanātana*. The role of the Mandala in Art and Temple architecture also receives due attention.


A most interesting and useful book clarifying many conceptions in the Buddhist Sadhana. It contains some poems, prose writings, Zen pictures with explanations by the author and also his translations of a poem of Petrol Rimpoche bringing the theory and practice of meditation together; and of the *mālamārti* text of Jigme Lingpa dealing with the graduation of ‘Idea’ into an experience.

The author describes the various Vehicles or *yanas* for the different stages in the Buddhist Path: *Hinayana*, developing the evolutionary tendencies, readiness for the path; *Śrāvakā yana*, listening to the teachings of the Four Noble truths; *Pratīyekabuddha yana*, self-analysis to clear mental confusion; *Mahayāna* or *Bodhisattva yana*, surrendering of the individual’s self-conscious search to the selflessness of the Bodhisattva Ideal; *Vajrayāna* signifying “death of luminosity as an external experience and birth into Sambhogakaya”; *Kriya yana*, perceiving the brilliant purity of the reality as energies; *upa yana*, becoming aware of creative-destructive aspects of the energies; *yoga yana*, perceiving the universe in terms of external situation, physical body and the state consciousness; *Mahayoga yana* beginning with the joy of union; *upa yana*, developing into complete devaluation of what is, *Maha ati* when ‘notion of freedom itself has been freed’, leading to a true perception of Dharmakaya.

M. P. PANDIT.


The author has attempted to project Indian history and culture as an expression of Ahimsa which pervades all activities of this ancient people. Ahimsa, in fact, is for the author the essence of Indian spirituality which is outside the pale of religion. Ahimsa inspires the individual and the nation to achieve complete harmony with all the noble impulses of human nature.

With a positive definition of Ahimsa, this tidy compendium dives deep into the history of India. It rejects the extreme austerity of Jainism as a negative attitude to life, ‘repugnant to the passive idealism of Ahimsa’ (p. 13). ‘Passive’ is not a very complimentary adjective and, we hope, it is a misprint for ‘positive’.

The author has focussed attention on the actual practice of the Ahimsa doctrine through the ancient, mediaeval and modern periods. He has summarised the teachings and achievements of Buddha, Ashoka and Kanishka, before delineating the philosophy and ethics of Hindu scriptures and epics. Then he has proceeded to the teachings and achievements of Harsha, Shankara, Ramanuja, Akbar, Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak and Chaitanya. Lastly, he has examined the impact of Western dominance on Indian spirituality. The renaissance was ushered in by Raja Rammohan Roy and carried forward by Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vinoba Bhave. The author has traced the teachings and practice of Ahimsa in the activities of these modern leaders.

While concluding his thesis, the author notes that scientific discoveries and technological inventions have not been guided by moral and human values. “What is needed,” says he, “is a consolidation of the spiritual forces of the world to give a lead to humanity.” The author considers that the Christian ideal of ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself’ is enough to bring the whole world together in bonds of brotherhood and understanding.

G. D. GADRE.
Sri Ramana Jayanthi Celebrations

The company of the Greek Royal Family gave added distinction to this year’s joyous Jayanthi Celebrations on January 9, 1974.
The following morning (9th) dawned bright and clear. The function started in the early hours with dhanur masa puja at the Samadhi. The morning programme, attended by a large gathering of Indian and foreign devotees, consisted of recitation of Tamil hymns on and by Sri Bhagavan, milk offering at the shrine, followed by Vedic chanting, puja and finally arati at 11-30 a.m.

The rituals were followed by a fine feast for the visiting devotees, and the poor were fed on a large scale.

In the afternoon there was another moving bhajan led by Sri and Smt. Raja Reddy and so as evening drew on, another glorious and happy Jayanthi Day, worthy of the Master, came to a close.

Royal Family’s Growing Interest in Sri Bhagavan

The Greek Royalty have shown an abiding interest in the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi and the activities of the Ashram over the past few years.

Their attitude is exemplified by Frederika, the Queen Mother, who recently indicated what she felt about Sri Bhagavan in a brief but meaningful remark.

Commenting on her visit to the Master’s birthplace, immediately prior to her attendance at the Jayanthi celebrations, she said: “If at all I would like to settle anywhere in the world it would be at Tiruchuzhi!”

A month after Jayanthi the Queen Mother was back again at Arunachala — this time to lay a foundation stone for a mantap to be erected over the Samadhi of Swami Rajeswarananda at the foot of the Hill.

The Swamiji, who passed away in 1964, was the guardian of Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director of the Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy at Madras. Dr. Mahadevan accompanied the Queen Mother and Princess Irene at the ceremony on February 9 — the anniversary day of Swami Rajeswarananda’s passing.

A special puja, performed by a former attendant of Bhagavan, Swami Satyananda, was followed by a bhiksha for devotees.
AT NEW YORK

Devotees of Arunachala Ashrama write as follows:

"Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi Day here found New York City buried in one of our largest snowfalls and it seemed the immaculate snow was an offering to the Master. Although our usual duties, like working in the office, had to be carried on, the environs took on such a festive air amidst the snow that it almost seemed Sri Bhagavan was with us in body. No formal announcement was made of the celebrations, yet the walls of our meditation hall — smaller even than the Old Hall at the Ashram — were lined with friends who came for the traditional recitation and chanting. In addition, poems were read, songs sung, offerings of flowers, fruits and sweets made; — and prasadam distributed. The recollection of how Sri Bhagavan has blessed us causes us to redouble our efforts and strive to be truly one with His infinitely gracious Being. Apart from such aspirations what hope is there for us in the world?"

AT NOVA SCOTIA

Friends at Arunachala Ashrama in Canada offer the following report:

After morning worship as the sun slowly rose over the mountain to welcome Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi Day, a poem was read to commemorate Him. A garland was placed around Sri Bhagavan's picture which was kept aglow all day. The quiet undertone of Grace and remembrance shone bright within our hearts. Our celebration was simple as we determined to try to imbibe Sri Bhagavan's teachings in our lives more firmly and devoutly. How can we celebrate the birth of Ramana better than in silence? In the evening our usual recitation and chanting filled the quiet meditation room ending in silence and a reading from Sri Bhagavan's teachings. Vibhuti and Kumkum were distributed and pictures were taken to mark the event.

SERENELY THOU CAME

By a devotee of Arunachala Ashrama

The procession continued on its way down the dusty lanes, Lord Shiva in all His Glory sways to the music of the distant drum and tolling bells from the temple, towering ahead.
The day has been long, great festivities to mark the event of Nataraja, His Name proclaimed throughout the small and peaceful village of Tiruchuzhi in the sunbaked land of Tamil Nadu.

At One a.m. the moon glimmered as the procession wended its way back to the temple, quiet patter of feet marching, singing to the distant tower, arched in the sky, to receive Lord Shiva.

Down the lane from the temple, lined by hut after hut, clay and straw, cow and cart a tiny light flickered in the front of the hut of Sundaram Ayyar and his wife Alagammal.

Their second child was about to be born, a blind nurse, stood by the Blessed Mother's side, as the doors opened wide and Lord Shiva re-entered the great temple Venkata Ramana was born.

At this moment all movement stopped and silence prevailed, the nurse was stunned by a brilliant glow, bringing forth Sri Ramana the Supreme Light Whose gracious form glimmered in the still of night.

Venkata Ramana blessed children we are, that into the world Thou serenely came ever radiating thy love and shedding thy Grace imparting thy direct teaching in silent eloquence.

AT LONDON

Sri P. K. Beri (124, Railton Road, Herne Hill, London, S.E. 24) reports from England: "The 94th Jayanthi of our Beloved Master was celebrated by myself and my wife, Krishna, on 9-1-74. We performed puja and sang His praises. We felt proud that this could have been possible only by His Grace. On the occasion we both sought His Blessings as it is our greatest desire to personally visit the Ashram."

AT BOMBAY

"The life of Sri Ramana Maharshi is important in showing the futility of all religious disputes and rivalries." This was written by Dr. G. S. Pathak, Vice-President of India, in a speech read out in his absence at the 94th birthday celebrations of the Master at Bombay on February 15.

Dr. Pathak stated: "The Maharshi's thoughts on the nature of religion have a particular value for a country like India where many religions exist side by side. He declared that 'religion, whether it be Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Theosophy or any other kind of ism or sophy or system can only take us to the one point where all religions meet — and no further. That point is the fact that God is everything and everything is God'."

Opening his speech, the Vice-President said: "I value this opportunity of paying my homage to the memory of one of the greatest saints of our country, whose life and teachings have been an unfailing source of inspiration and guidance to seekers of the highest spiritual truth and experience."

Bhagavan's renunciation of caste on his arrival at Tiruvannamalai after his enlightenment "is indeed a pointer to the need to eschew sectarianism and caste-feeling if we are to achieve an understanding of the highest truth," continued Dr. Pathak.

Towards the end of his address, the Vice-President warned that spirituality was losing ground in a world where materialism holds sway. There was "a danger of moral and ethical values being ignored by people in their breathless pursuit of prosperity and progress." Such a situation boded ill for the future humanity.
The remedy lay in a return to spirituality and the pursuit of the moral and ethical ideals as enjoined by one’s religion. “Through celebrations like the present one we are able to hark back to the message of the great Masters and re-dedicate ourselves to the ideals preached by them,” concluded Dr. Pathak.

Speaking later, Prof. K. Swaminathan (of Ramana Kendra, Delhi) dwelt on Bhagavan’s easy accessibility (saubhitya) and absolute normality (sahajata).

Referring to T. V. Kapali Sastri’s complaint that Bhagavan’s teaching was “too direct and immediate, with no steps in between the starting point and the final goal”, he explained that like Gandhi and J. Krishnamurti, Bhagavan had wrought a silent revolution by bringing home to quite ordinary people the core of Vedantic knowledge and practice, which meant in modern terms the existentialists freedom and responsibility of every person for shaping his own future and that of his world.

Smt. Mani Sahukar, well-known for her books about Shirdi Sai Baba and Godavari Mataji, also spoke on the occasion. She stressed that no account of the religious tradition of India is complete without mention of Ramana Maharshi’s contribution towards the evolution of spiritual culture.

Such messianic personalities “have come as harbingers of Divinity bringing with them a new dispensation of the eternal Light and Love,” she said.

Mrs. Sahukar’s own contact with Ramana was inspiring. “On the very first day Bhagavan looked at me with his luminous eyes, which seemed to penetrate to the very depths of my being, destroying my self-complacency.” He awakened her “through the sheer compulsion of love and the silent evocation of his Grace.” She later came to feel that, although Bhagavan primarily showed the path of Self-enquiry, he also subtly advocated the path of para bhakti.

“For those seeking knowledge, Bhagavan is eternal Light in which there is no darkness, to those struggling for virtue he is the eternal righteousness and to those who only wish to adore and surrender Bhagavan is eternal Love.

“So Bhagavan is what we want him to be, for he understands the need and hunger of every individual heart. In short Sri Ramana is the very embodiment of Sat-Chit and Anand,” summed up Mrs. Sahukar.

Those present were welcomed by her husband, Mr. N. D. Sahukar, Chairman of the Sri Ramana Jayanthi Celebration Committee.

Highlight of the evening was a documentary film on Sri Ramana Maharshi.
ATE CALCUTTA

Climax of the two-day Sri Bhagavan Jayanthi celebrations at Calcutta was the screening of the film of the Master, loaned for the occasion by Sri Ramanasramam.

The film most effectively invoked Bhagavan's awe-inspiring presence and devotees went home, captivated by His remembrance.

The 94th birthday celebrations began early on the morning of January 9 as devotees, bearing a photo of Bhagavan, joyfully did nama sankirtan proceeding to the house of Sri Viswanathan in Bhowanipore, where extensive pujas and veda paramanam were performed.

The second day of the celebrations on January 13 began with a poor feeding. The main function in the afternoon at Shankara Hall got off to a rousing start with the chanting of Arunachala Aksharamanamalai (The Marital Garland of Letters). Attention of everybody present was focussed on a life-size coloured photo of Bhagavan, beautifully decorated with flowers, in the centre of the hall.

Sri P. B. Mukharjea, President of Ramana Kendra, Calcutta, took the chair, while General Secretary, Sri S. C. Majumdar welcomed the audience. Chief guest and principal speaker was Sri Swami Smaranananda of the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. His one-hour lecture was entitled “Sri Ramana — Embodiment of Advaita”. This was followed by a talk in Bengali on “The philosophy of Arunachala-Ramana” by Sri S. M. Banerji. Next it was the turn of Sri Balsubramania Iyer to narrate in Tamil his visit to the abode of Ramana in the early days. In his presidential address,
Retd. Chief Justice Sri Mukharjea explained the total simplicity of Bhagavan's teachings and stressed the need for upasana.

Sri Radhika Mohan Sen proposed a vote of thanks, which was followed by a bhajan led by Smt. Lakshminarayanan.

AT RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The 94th Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on January 13. At the inter-school competition in reciting Tamil and Sanskrit poems by or on Bhagavan, which was held in the Madrasi School, Lodi Estate, a large number of pupils, junior and senior, took part and the performance of most of the candidates was of very high standard. At another function in the forenoon, held under the auspices of the South India Workers' Welfare Association, about 1,000 people were served a meal. In the public meeting held in the evening at 27, Meena Bagh, the residence of Sri A. R. Natarajan, veda parayana, music by ladies and talks by Dr. K. Arumugham and Professor K. Swaminathan were followed by a projection of movie films of Sri Bhagavan and the Ashram.

The Kendra's building plans, drawn up by the architects, Messrs. Anand, Apte and Jhabvala, have been approved by the authorities and the work of construction is proceeding fast. It is hoped that the first stage will be soon completed and the Shrine (Ramanalaya) formally opened by May next. Meantime it is proposed to bring out a handsome souvenir on the occasion of the benefit performance which Kumari Yamini Krishnamurti had kindly agreed to give in aid of the Building Fund on April 21.

AT BHADRAK

Numerous devotees attended Jayanthi celebrations at the residence of Sri C. H. J. Rao. Proceedings started in the morning with milk offering to Sri Bhagavan, followed by puja, chanting of Veda parayana, a Bhajan on Arunachala Shiva and Arunachala Ramana, Upadesa Saram sung by all devotees and Hridayavidya verses from Sri Ramana Gita, read by Sri Rao. In the evening puja and Veda parayana were followed by another bhajan by Sri D. S. N. Patnaik and Pashyharathy.

AT RAMANA SADANAM (Vijayavada)

The home of Sri Suri Nagamma, author of Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, was the scene of Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi Celebrations. Morning Puja with Sahasranama archana was followed by Manthrapushpan and Upanishad parayana. Prasadam was distributed to all those assembled.

In the afternoon puja was again performed before chanting of Veda parayana and Upadesa Saram. Afterwards a violin recital of the kirtans of Swami Thyagaraja was given by Sri Vankamamidi Veeraraghavayya Garu, ably assisted by his disciples. Then Sri G. Krishna and Sri Chathurvedula Anjaneya Sastri spoke about Bhagavan. The celebrations ended with a vote of thanks by Sri Nagamma.

AT NASIRABAD

The 94th Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan was performed on January 9, at Nasirabad, withupabhattam, sahasranama puja to Sri Bhagavan. Sri Golabgiri Swami of Sind gave a discourse. Devotees with their families from Mount Abu, Jhansi and Ajner came specially to participate in this holy function at the residence of an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan, Sri K. Hariprasad.
Mr. RONALD ROSE

We cherish the good fortune of having once again in our midst a long-standing devotee and noble veteran of spiritual life, Mr. Ronald Rose.

Mr. Rose hails originally from England as his dry sense of humour and delightfully phlegmatic manner clearly indicate. However he has been living continuously in India for many years, and has a small house of his own on the southeast coast at Nagore, a famous Sufi spiritual centre.

Mr. Rose would not dispute that his chief claim to fame has been a lifelong reluctance to shoulder worldly responsibility. It is therefore all the more remarkable that he has not complained at having his name associated with The Mountain Path as a member of the new Editorial Board — although he personally regards himself as "just the office-boy." We are indeed grateful for his sufferance in allowing editorial duties to be thrust upon him. At least he cannot escape the fact that he writes remarkably good English, as his Book Reviews show.

He was first introduced to readers way back in July 1964, shortly after the journal's inception. His remarks on that occasion still hold good. Reclusive by nature, the first thing he appreciated was that he was left much to himself. "To me this spirit of freedom is still the great feature of our Ashram," he wrote then. "Bhagavan has drawn his devotees from every nationality, creed, caste and temperament. Yet we are all living happily together, each getting on with his own work and no more interfering with another or laying down the law. We are not making self-conscious efforts to practise brotherly love or charity. It just happens and to my mind only Bhagavan's living presence among us can account for it."

PILGRIMS

As usual in the winter season we have been happy to have in our midst numerous pilgrims from overseas. Naturally Western devotees find the cooler half of the year more conducive for sadhana in the peaceful and potent atmosphere of sacred Arunachala.

FROM ENGLAND

We are sorry to bid farewell to two brothers, PHILIP and CHRISTOPHER PEGLER, who have both enjoyed a lengthy stay at the Ashram. Philip was pleased to find that his journalistic training came in useful for The Mountain Path and Christopher's artistic talents were not wasted either in helping to prepare photographs of Sri Bhagavan for the Ashram bookstall.

An account by Christopher appeared in our January '72 issue and now it is his younger brother's turn to make a contribution:

"Out of a thousand words written, there may be one and one only that need in truth be written. The rest are wasted ink and paper and minutes given feet of lead instead of wings of light..."

"This striking passage from The Book of Mirdad confirms what every writer on the spiritual path soon begins to feel about his craft. Unless what he writes springs from deep conviction of the heart, it has little value. It is so easy to give out glib statements about Grace for example without feeling the immediacy of Grace's transforming power. This is the problem facing every contributor to a spiritual journal like The Mountain Path."

"Bearing that in mind I will try to describe what it has meant to me to have been granted the special privilege of spending 18 months or so in the potent orbit of Arunachala. I have been given every opportunity to learn, grow and unfold in the light of Truth. And if I have failed to utilise these rare opportunities to the full, I have nobody to blame but myself."

"Having responded to a most gracious summons to live in tune with the Divine, one then has to accept the total implications of the task—and prove oneself worthy of the highest calling. At the outset this requires utter honesty and the willing—"
ness to recognise one's self-deceptions and evasions of life's demands. Sustained effort, despite the inevitable flow of difficulties, does gradually bring a hard-earned reward of steadiness. Such stability is the foundation of lasting joy.

"Working on this magazine has been a welcome responsibility, enabling me to channelise and purify my energies in preparation for a balanced working life at home in England—if that be Bhagavan's will. Anyway I now know the need to work with love and detachment and this has to be put more into practice.

"The word 'responsibility' means in actual fact the ability to respond properly to all one's obligations and relationships. Here at the Ashram, in particular, it implies the necessity of participating whole-heartedly in a spiritual community. What better training for worldly responsibility could there be?

"If this training for life at large seems arduous at times, it is only because one is required to transform idealism into realism, which is easier said than done. Anyway I am repeatedly reminded by fellow-devotees that what counts in the long run is persistent self-exertion in all aspects of living. This alone—in God's own good time—gives birth to inner substance and maturity."

**Philip Pegler**

Mrs. Pamela Leah is a jolly person and one is glad to see her smiling face about the Ashram. However she is a regular and earnest meditator too, setting a good example to less diligent folk. She has the following to say about her five-month stay:

"This is my third visit to Sri Arunachala within a space of two years and once having found this most wonderful, holy place, how can one stay away?

"The first time I came I was completely overwhelmed by the atmosphere, particularly in the Old Meditation Hall, where I still love to go and sit as soon as the doors are open early in the morning. Such blissful peace of Ramana Sad-Guru!"

"I have been on pradakshina many times, but this visit brought about a long-cherished hope to climb to the summit of the Hill. This was undertaken on a Full Moon night. With two companions, I left the Ashram during the afternoon, reached the top just in time to watch the moonrise and sunset and then slept up there. It was a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

"With Bhagavan's guidance may I return again and again to His Lotus-Feet — ever surrendered to Him!"

**FROM WEST GERMANY**

Mrs. Marlies Hibschenberger first 'found' the Ashram a decade ago and since then has made several return visits. At the beginning of December she arrived with her husband Herman, who was here in 1972 with her. Mr. Hibschenberger spent much of his six-week stay up in the semi-solitude of Skandasram and returned home glad of such a special opportunity to deepen his meditation practice. His wife took leave of us in March.

Mrs. Hibschenberger

Mrs. Ruth Hartman from West Berlin spent a joyfully diligent month at the Ashram after Christmas. She earnestly applied herself to sadhana and derived considerable benefits from her stay. She hopes to settle in the vicinity of Arunachala in due course.

Mrs. Trudel Elssasser left full of gratitude at the end of February after a five-week stay.

She writes: "Each visit here lets me feel how Arunachala helps..."
to make us conscious of our real Self and of our proper place in the world. All our searching here comes to an end if only we surrender to That, which was revealed to us by Bhagavan’s Grace. I want to thank the management wholeheartedly for making us feel part of a big family where all are brothers and sisters."

Once again it is time for resident devotee, Hugo Maier to return to his family and medical practice in Germany for a while. As always his solid presence will be sorely missed.

Albert Frahm, who arrived in December 1971, has finally decided to go home to see his parents for a few months. While here he took up the life of a sadhu in earnest, living in a temple compound on Arunachala. Although living outside, his was a familiar face at the Ashram, and he hopes to return at the end of the year.

FROM HOLLAND

Mrs. Marline Boers enjoyed a three-week stay at Arunachala in January and so was able to attend to plans for a house she is having constructed here.

Mr. Johannes Meihuizen seemed almost surprised to find himself of Arunachala once again in March after four years’ absence. But a three-week stay in the benign atmosphere of the Ashram convinced him that his return-visit was most worthwhile. He says:

"Paul Brunton’s book A Search in Secret India brought me in touch with the name Ramana Maharshi long ago. After that, in about 1960, someone lent me a copy of In Days of Great Peace by Mouni Sadhu. Some years later, when I saw in a Dutch bookshop a copy of Who am I? the title alone was enough to interest me. Next (Mr. Francis Allen) a devotee of Sri Bhagavan gave me some issues of The Mountain Path — and then my search got truly under way. I first came to the Ashram about four years ago, but as I did not know yet how to practise the method of ‘Who am I?’ I stopped trying, although still having this question in my mind.

"While in India last year I met someone in the train from Madras to Bombay, who came from Tiruvannamalai and so a talk about the ‘Who am I?’ ensued. My companion said I was really a pupil of Ramana, but I was still not certain of this. Nevertheless the encounter encouraged me afresh.

"This year I went to Thailand and Burma first, where I tried my hand at Buddhist meditation. Burma was a happy experience, but a monk in Thailand told me one had to know who one was before one could meditate properly. So finally I came here again and have much enjoyed the atmosphere and the kind treatment of the Ashram staff.

"As I am by no means at the end of my path and I am not yet ‘almost Realized’, which is a funny expression I heard here, I cannot give interesting accounts of meeting Sri Bhagavan in dreams and so on. Yet strangely I like it better in the Ashram this time, although during both visits I have been made equally welcome. Might it not be a change in my capacity of appreciation? Who knows?"

Johannes Meihuizen

FROM SWEDEN

Elderly Mrs. Nadia Backman, who came here in December for the second time unfortunately fell ill, but made an excellent recovery and actively participated in the life of the community. It was with considerable reluctance that she finally left towards the end of February.
FROM FRANCE

Jacqueline Lepine and Yvonne Dauguet from Paris are old friends, but this year their stays only coincided for a few days. Yvonne arrived in late January to replace Jacqueline, who came in October with Diane Sundin, but had to return to work earlier than usual. Once here Miss Yvonne tried not to waste a second of her three-month stay. She left with Miss Diane, who was happy to have been able to stay so long on this third visit to Sri Ramanaramam.

Miss Diane

Miss Yvonne

Miss Jacqueline

* * *

Mme. Jeanne Guerineau has visited the Ashram several times (see p. 114 of April, 1973 issue) and this year she brought along with her, in the middle of January, her dear friend, Mme. Edith Deri from Paris. They spent a month at the Ashram during which time they could visit Tiruchuzhi (birthplace of Sri Bhagavan) and Madurai, where Bhagavan had His Final Experience, accompanied by our Managing Editor and Sri M. S. Nagarajan (introduced to our readers in July 1973, p. 184).

On their return from Paris, Mme. Deri writes: "It is difficult to tell you all there is to tell; there are things which are almost impossible to put into words, because they would sound artificial. So I must content myself with the expression of my heartfelt thanks for all of you who have done so much for us in every way. It has been a very great thing for me to have been able to visit Arunachala, the Ashram and you all. Some fundamental change has taken place in and around me — that is certain. Nothing is quite the same as before. An upheaval seems to have befallen me, yet I am at peace in a manner up to now unknown to me."

FROM SWITZERLAND

We were pleased to welcome though just for a day, two staunch devotees, Dr. and Mrs. Brunner.

FROM THE WEST INDIES

Young Sharon Westmass was so keen to come to the abode of Sri Ramana that she did not hesitate to make the arduous journey from her home in Georgetown, Guyana, although she was low in funds. She has happily settled down here and plans to stay on indefinitely.

FROM MYSORE

Dr. L. K. Nadgir, a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, visited us in February with his wife and on his return wrote to Mrs. Osborne:

"We reached our place safely with the blessing of Sri Bhagavan. We were very happy to have had discussions with you regarding Bhagavan's teachings and the miraculous help to devotees and people with faith. You cited very instructive examples of His powerful directions that are imparted by Him even now. I do believe in it and I have also had many such experiences. . . ."
FROM MADRAS

Formerly a leading disciple of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Brahmachari Devendra came here for a few days in November with a German friend. They both thoroughly enjoyed their stay, they said.

FROM POONA

Yuvaraj Nagnath, son of the Raja of Bhor, was glad to pay us a brief visit in mid-January, with his newly-married wife. Sri Nagnath came here as a child with his father in Sri Bhagavan’s time and has always had a deep reverence for the Maharshi. We wish the young couple well and hope they will repeat their visit again soon. The Raja of Bhor himself paid us a visit in December.

FROM KANPUR

Sri Hari Chand Khanna came to the Ashram on January 15 to spend ten quiet days here. He was accompanied by his wife, Smt. Premvati Khanna, after whom one of the main Ashram guest-houses is named. After some persuasion, her husband joyously and enthusiastically narrated the following anecdote from the fund of his reminiscences to our Managing Editor:

“As a newcomer I was reluctant to talk to Sri Bhagavan or actively participate in the activities of the Ashram, since I was shy I should commit mistakes. It happened in the early forties. My talks were always mental and Sri Bhagavan understood and answered them too. Bhagavan’s compassion for such a shy person was stupendous.

“Once I wanted to take back to my children at Kanpur some prasad from Bhagavan, which would not get spoilt on the way. I bought two coconuts and placed them before Sri Bhagavan in the morning, hoping that one would be given back to me as prasad. But the attendant took them away and did not return anything. I was quite disappointed. Immediately I thought that perhaps I had purchased too few and so decided to get five more coconuts the next day. After lunch when I returned to the guest-room, I found to my great surprise, one coconut on my trunk. When I asked for an explanation from the guest-room keeper, he told me to contact one of Bhagavan’s attendants. The attendant explained as follows: ‘When Sri Bhagavan got up for lunch he told me to give one coconut to you and added that otherwise you would bring five the next day. I did not understand what he meant.’ I was thrilled to know that Bhagavan had read my thoughts exactly and yet compassionately come down to my level in answer to my prayer.”

FROM BOMBAY

It is undoubtedly a sign of Grace that the moment of Sri Bhagavan’s passing from the body should occasion the bringing into His fold of a man living far away and knowing little spirituality.
Sri N. K. KHARAS eventually became a devotee after seeing the comet portending the Master’s Mahanirvana at his home in distant Bombay.

“I was in bed on the night of April 14, 1950 and looking out of the window,” he recounts, “when I saw a red and blue flash streaking across the sky. Never before or since have I seen anything like that.”

Noting the hour he found it was 8.47 p.m. precisely a few days later he received confirmation of his sighting in a news report bearing witness to the strange phenomenon.

Yet it was not until two or three years later that he happened to see an article on Sri Ramana Maharshi and with wonder recognised the description of the remarkable comet. From then onwards Sri Kharas became a staunch follower of Sri Bhagavan’s teachings.

During August last year he visited the Ashram for the first time and was delighted to find his coming coincided with the anniversary of Bhagavan’s arrival at Tiruvannamalai.

DR. DASTUR FRAMROZE A. BODE, chief priest of the Parsees, who had seen Sri Bhagavan during his visit in the 40’s visited the Ashram again, together with his wife SMT. HOMAI FRAMROZE BODE and a friend, MRS. EVELYN in the middle of January and spent two days here. DR. BODE was pleased to write in the Visitors Book the following:

“It gave me great joy in revisiting Sri Ramanasramam after my first visit in 1948 when I had the good fortune of being in the illuminating presence of Sri Bhagavan and experiencing His Divine Presence. Bhagavan’s teachings are so profound, direct and practical. May Bhagavan’s guidance and protection be always there to His followers and His fundamental principles and ideals of Wisdom, Love, Unity and Peace be always maintained. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and we are thankful for all the help we received. Our humble Namaskaram to Bhagavan and Arunachala.”

FROM CALCUTTA

SRI ANANDA BHARATI, an active leading member of the Ananda Marga, and formerly a resident devotee of Anandashram, Kunhangad, visited us in November with a few colleagues, though for a day. She expressed that she experienced great peace and quietude at the Ashram and that her visits here have helped her much.
SRI SATYANARAYANA TANDON, a staunch elderly devotee, who is by no means a stranger to our readers, again came here from his home in Kanpur for a six-week stay at the beginning of December 1973. One morning in the Old Meditation Hall during his contemplation he had a remarkable vision of the Master, which he describes here in his own words:

"As usual, I am concentrating when I see Sri Bhagavan standing in front of me with a kamandalum (water pot) in His right hand. After prostrating when I get up, I see water gushing out from His head. I take it to be the Sacred Ganges flowing from Siva’s head. I see the entire area all around me, full of water, which has by that time come up to my knees. In a very short time, it rises up to my waist and then up to my neck. I am still standing facing Sri Bhagavan. When the water reaches my mouth and nose, my feet leave the ground and the body begins to float on the surface of the water. I see the body going further and further away from me. I say to myself, ‘I am not the body, else how can I see it floating’ and I am unconcerned.

"Within me, on the right side of the chest, I see OM shining very brilliantly. I again prostrate to Sri Sadhashiva, but neither He is visible nor the floating body. Immediately I hear the chiming of the bell for Milk Puja at the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan and I am again in this world.

"For quite some time afterwards I am not in my usual senses. I try to conceal the tears that well up in my eyes. I am overwhelmed by Guru’s benign Grace. May Sri Bhagavan bestow upon me strength to live up to His Grace!"

SRI VIDYA HAVAN

The annual function in commemoration of the commencement of worship of Sri Chakra Meru, consecrated by the Touch of Sri Bhagavan was performed at the Ashram, on a grand scale as usual, on Friday, March 15. The function lasted the whole day, attended by a large number of devotees.

ASHRAM FREE DISPENSARY

Sri Ramanasramam Free Dispensary, which was started even in the days of Sri Bhagavan with Dr. K. Shiva Rao as the honorary medical officer, has been well taken care of by a succession of honorary physicians, the line of which includes Dr. M. R. Krishnamurthi Iyer, Dr. B. Shanker Rao, Dr. Acharya, Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer and Dr. D. Subbarayan. Till the end of 1972, Dr. K. R. Srinivasan has been rendering yeoman service. He was followed by Dr. M. V. Shatrughna Setty.

From the middle of 1973, Dr. Anand, M.B.B.S., a young medical practitioner of Tiruvannamalai, has taken charge of the Dispensary. Dr. Anand’s voluntary assistance is gratefully appreciated by the devotee-patients, in and around the Ashram. We are happy to inform our readers that the parents of Dr. Anand are also staunch devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

The Dispensary has been attracting more and more patients. We, therefore, appeal to medical firms to kindly help this useful institution by supplying free medicines and samples to the extent possible. Any help that may be rendered will be gratefully accepted.

OBITUARY

D. KARPURASUNDARA BHATTAR

Sri D. Karpurasundara Bhattar passed away after a brief illness. He had a unique record of devotion and service to Sri Bhagavan and to the Ashram for over three decades, having been in charge of Sundara Mandiram, the house in which
Sri Bhagavan was born at Tiruchuzhi, from 1944, when it was reacquired by the Ashram. He was the son of Sri Deivasikamani Bhattar, a playmate of Sri Bhagavan in His boyhood. With the added advantage of being an undergraduate Sri Karpurasundara Bhattar evinced a genuine interest and took active part in the growth of Sundara Mandiram and the routine in Sri Bhagavan's shrine therein. He was of immense assistance to all the visitors to Tiruchuzhi who had learnt many an incident in Sri Bhagavan's early life from him.

All the inmates of Sri Ramanasramam, and old devotees of Sri Bhagavan in particular, were deeply grieved to have this sad news. With deep regret we record his demise and convey our sincere condolences to his bereaved family.

We pray to Sri Bhagavan that he may rest in Eternal Peace at His Lotus Feet!

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY
New Additions

The Buddhist Way of Life: By Christmas Humphreys. George Allen and Unwin, London. (£ 0.85)

Vedas, What and Why: By K. S. Srinivasacharya. From the author, 3-5, South Bank Road, Madras-28. (Rs. 2)
Meditation: By Monks of Ramakrishna Math. Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 54, Holland Park. London W-11 3-RS. (£ 0.85)
Buddhist Meditation: By Edward Conze. George Allen and Unwin, London. (£ 0.75)
The Tantric Way of Life: By Herbert V. Guenther. Shambala Publications Inc., Berkeley and London. (£ 3.75)
The Mind and Its Control: By Swami Buddha-nanda. Advaita Ashrama, 5, Dehi Entally Road, Calcutta-14. (Rs. 1.75)
Vivekananda, a biography: By Swami Nikhilananda. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta-14. (Rs. 3.50)
Yoga as Philosophy and Religion: By Surendranath Das Gupta. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi-7. (Rs. 20)
Sri Ramanuja and Upanishads: By Prof. B. S. Pajhavachar. Prof. M. Rangacharya Memorial Trust, Triplicane, Madras-5. (Rs. 10)

Ramana Coloured Photo Album

We are happy to announce that we will soon be bringing out a well-got-up ALBUM containing 20 beautiful coloured pictures of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, in size: 15” x 11”.

This attractive ALBUM will be available for sale by the end of May, 1974. We request devotees to book their order for their requirements in advance since only a limited number alone is going to be printed.

The price will be announced later.

Please write to:
SRI RAMANASRAMAM BOOK DEPOT,
Sri Ramanasramam, P.O.,
Tiruvannamalai - 606603, South India.
INTRODUCING...

Sadhu Sri Trivenigiri Swami

Born in 1895 the son of Sankaranarayana Iyer and Parvati Ammal, Swamiji was originally known as Sundaram. To the older section of our devotees however he is known as Sundara Arya, an account of whose experiences we have already published. The present name of the Swamiji, Trivenigiri, was conferred on him by Sri Jnananda Swami of Tirukkolur while formally initiating him into sannyasa (in 1965).

Not many details are known about his early life except that he lived a normal married life till 1932 at his birthplace, Srivalkuntam (Tirunelveli District, South India).

A remarkable aspect of his life was that he received his spiritual guidance at the Shrine of Lord Subramanya at Tiruchendur. With his inner hearing he once heard these words: 'Regard all women as your mother. Regard them as Valli Herself (Consort of Lord Subramanya).’ When he tried to ignore it the words were repeated. What followed was more remarkable. At the Shrine it flashed into his mind: ‘Here I am a God who does not talk. Go to Tiruvannamalai. There I am a talking, walking God.’ He had no difficulty in learning that by this Maharshi was meant. He heard of the Maharshi and the quiet and peace prevailing in his presence from Sri Narayana Iyer of Manamadurai.

1 See *The Mountain Path*, January '71 (pp. 38-39).
Returning home he found a letter from the Ashram in reply to a request he had made earlier for Sri Bhagavan’s guidance. The letter, conveying Sri Maharshi’s teachings said that the body was the result of accumulated karma, and the joys and sorrows relating to it were inevitable. The whole burden could be easily borne if it was surrendered to God.

A friend gave him a copy of *Sri Ramana Vijayam* (the Tamil biography of Sri Bhagavan by Sri Yogi Suddhananda Bharati) and also spoke at length about His greatness. Swamiji used to read out *Sri Ramana Vijayam* to his mother. Once while he was doing this his mother was inspired to say: 'I see the Lord of the Hill before me. He points you out and wants that I should hand you over. He says you are His. So I hand you over. Go on this right path by which you will bring emancipation to twentyone generations of the family. If any time you hear a contrary advice, asking you not to go on this path, know that it is the work of *maya*.'

So, Swamiji came to the Ashram in 1933. He came with many aims. One wish was to remain at the Ashram for some time and do service. The second was to know about the Heart. And the third was to seek Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni. All these were fulfilled. He heard Sri Bhagavan Himself explained about the Heart. He was also asked to serve in the Ashram Book Depot as the attendant there went away unexpectedly. And of course he saw Kavyakanta!

In 1936 he moved to Kumbakonam. Continuing his spiritual practices he visited various holy places as Tirukoilur, Chidambaram, Tiruvidaimarudur, Vaideeswarankoil and Karuvazhaikarai. Elaborate *japa* of the *Gayatri Mantra* and meditation on Gayatri Devi was his special practice. He used to come to the Ashram regularly and spend his time in meditation and service. Swami Trivenigiri now lives at the Vaishnavi Shrine at Tirumullaivayil, near Madras, continuing his austereities.

An incident during Sri Bhagavan’s days is worth mentioning. When the eldest son of our President was born they carried the baby to Sri Bhagavan and also requested Him to name it. Sri Bhagavan immediately turned to the door of the Hall where Sundara Arya was seen peeping in and said: ‘There he is. Does he not say name the child after me!’ And so the child was named Sundara Ramana, combining the names of Sri Bhagavan and His father.

We were happy to receive Sri Trivenigiri Swami once again in January. We wish him many more years of a happy life dedicated to *sadhana*!
A VIVID DREAM

... Last September (1973) just a month before his death, he (Dr. Vaidyanath) said he had had a vivid dream. He told me he climbed a mountain and on top there was a mantap. There he saw Bhagavan seated on a wooden swing with a crowd of people, men and women, seated around him all silent. As my husband prostrated before Bhagavan, Bhagavan said smilingly: "Oh! so you have come. We have been wondering why you have not come so far. Good. Come sit here by my side." And he indicated a place next to him on the swing. My husband hesitated to sit in such proximity but urged by Bhagavan he sat down. Bhagavan put his hand on his shoulder, patted him with affection and asked: "Are you tired? Will you have something to drink?" My husband replied in the negative. Then Bhagavan took him to a nearby well, made him take a bath, gave him Vihhuti and asked an elderly man there: "Sastrigal! Shall we begin the initiation (mantra upadesham)? He is now ready." The old man looked at the clock and said: "No, there is still time. I think we shall do it later." Whereupon Bhagavan told my husband to go now and come back later.

Just then he woke up and realised it was all a dream. He felt thrilled!

Now it is all over and I remain here thinking of him, waiting to finish the duties towards the children (he has left undone). Patiently, peacefully, I am waiting for my turn. In the course of the three years since his first major heart-attack, he has prepared my mind so well for this happening that now I feel it is all the will of providence and I should face it with courage....

MRS. VAIDYANATH

The dream was a sign of Grace and an indication of Bhagavan's continued presence and guidance. The last thought when dying is of utmost importance since this determines the next stage. It will accord with the life one has been leading, particularly towards the end. Only a true devotee will be able to remain serene in the face of death of a beloved companion.

L. O.

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VICHARA VERSUS THE KOAN

What is the difference between the Vichara and a koan? Both seem to be equally inaccessible. I shall be grateful for an explanation.

I know it is a tricky question intellectually. It has been on my mind for a long time. I hope you can throw some light on it. Thanks in anticipation.

LAYA, L.
Poland.
The question is less tricky than it appears though neither the Vichara nor the koan are accessible intellectually or in any other way. A koan is of such a nature that it violates the postulates of logic. It is an exercise for the mind beyond thought, leading to such one-pointedness that finally it resolves itself in intuition (anubhava); an intuitive enlightenment where the idea of question and answer are both lost. Typical koans are: "What is the sound of the clap of one hand?" or "What is nothing (wu)?" or "What is Mu?" (an expression of negation).

The Vichara path is an introspective analytical method of enquiry. Bhagavan explained that wrong knowledge consists of the false identification with the body. Self-enquiry dissipates this false identity and there remains the ever-present Self. Nobody doubts his own existence. If he did, the question would arise "Who is the doubter?" To pursue this quest till question and answer are both lost in intuitive enlightenment is the Realisation. Thus Vichara and Realisation are the same, Bhagavan affirms. "Who am I?" is also a koan, which so to speak is focussed in a positive direction on the heart or being, till the direction is lost like the stick burnt in stirring the funeral pyre.

CONTINUE AS YOU DO!

In my boyhood I heard that rebirth is according to one's deeds, so I cultivated bhakti to God that I may be released from rebirth. For a long time I was searching for a genuine guru who could show me the right path to follow.

Years passed. Accidentally I came to know about the book Self-Realisation by B. V. Narasimha Swami. I got a copy from Sri Ramanasramam and after reading it began practising Self-enquiry. On the night of August 5, 1955, after two years of this practice, my mind slipped into an extremely bright and calm experience. Even so I was doubtful about the correctness of my experience and so I prayed to Bhagavan for guidance. To my extreme joy, in September of the same year, Bhagavan appeared in my dream and said to me: "You may continue as you do. You know the 'I' — you may follow that 'I'." Then he disappeared.

I was very happy and confident and continued my sadhana more vigorously, being drawn deeper, forcefully drawn deeper. Then I started resisting in fear and pulled back. Afterwards I came to know that it was Grace which drew me deeper. This experience tried to repeat itself, but fearful of losing my identity, I resisted and finally it stopped.

Years passed in inertia. At last I determined to continue my sadhana (Self-enquiry) but not trying to go deeper. After a time, again my mind became calm as if sleeping awake in the heart. Later I experienced a sort of dense feeling around the heart accompanied by a deep humming sound which was constant. At times it was like the roaring of the sea from afar, or rain falling, or gas ascending in a gaslight. Nowadays the sound is heard on an even 'sruthi'.

Every day I read copies of The Mountain Path and on reading the editorial AUM, I understood that this humming was the result of my sadhana due to Bhagavan's Grace. I am very happy attending to the humming sound and to the Heart at the same time. Both are the same. Is it the correct path to be followed?...

A DEVOTEE

With regard to practising Vichara, one can only repeat what Bhagavan told you in your dream: "Continue as you do..." There is no necessity to attend to the humming sound. If it is there you will hear it in any case. When you are in doubt turn to Bhagavan in your heart and all will be well. You are blessed to have had Bhagavan's darshan and upadesh.

REQUEST FROM POLAND

Thank you very much for the fourth number of The Mountain Path. I learnt with sorrow about the passing away of Sri Murugunar. May his soul rest in peace. I am anxious about your state of health and hope it will soon be restored as we here need people like you....

I hope I will continue receiving The Mountain Path. I will not use big words believe me I NEED IT BADLY. I wait impatiently for every number. The last one came late. I waited for it like a lover waits for his beloved. I was afraid it would not come and when at last the postman brought it I was transported with joy. I value it more than gold. ....

ALEKSANDER FEDOROWICZ, Poland

Thank you for your good wishes. You will continue receiving The Mountain Path and our Managing Editor will send you some more literature for which you have been asking.

L. O.