



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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

Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1975

“ Seeking Thee within
but weakly, I came back
(unrewarded). Aid me,
Oh Arunachala ! ”

— *The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 45*

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(A QUARTERLY)

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

Vol. 12

JANUARY 1975

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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

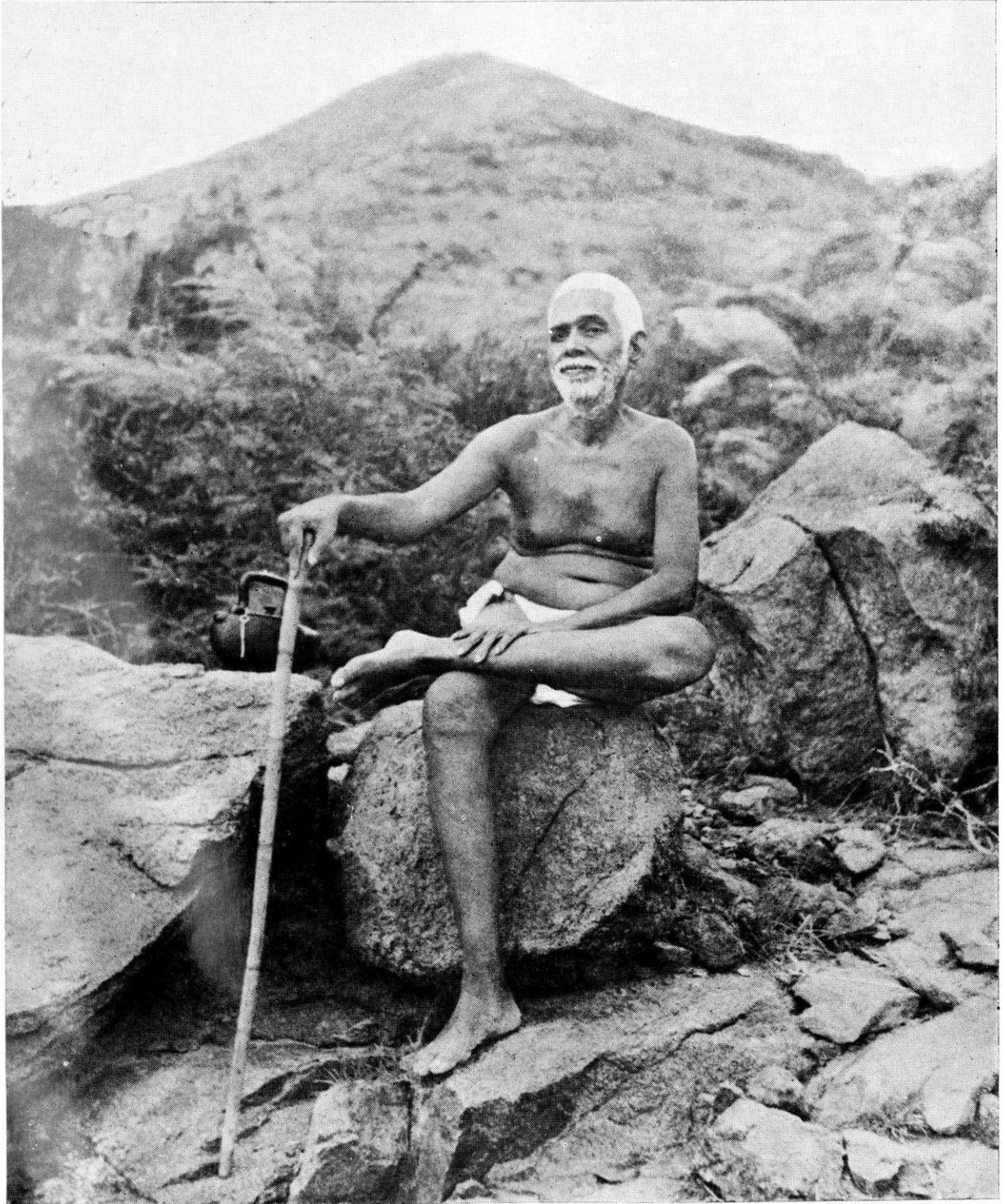
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

Vol. 12. No. I, January 1975

Revelations of the Vedic Rishis

EDITORIAL

By Viswanatha Swami

IT is a sign of our awakening that there is a wider recognition now of the greatness of the Vedic Mantras and of the Vedic Rishis, Viswāmitra, Vasishtha, Vāmadeva, Bharadwāja, Atri, Bṛhigu, Gotama, Kasyapa, Angirasa, Parāśara, and others. It is a pity that the Mantra-Samhita (collection of Mantras) had been disregarded for long as relating to mere ritual (*karma-kānda*), though even the Seers of the Upanishads have often quoted Vedic texts in corroboration of their findings. Among those who in recent times jolted us out of this attitude and reminded us of the incalculable value of the Samhitas was Vasishtha Ganapati Muni. Being a Rishi himself, he was able to recognize the inner significance of the hymns and the greatness of the Vedic Rishis, who not only sang the praise of all forms and aspects of the Supreme Being but also proclaimed their ultimate unity. This Rishi of our times was quick to see the supreme spiritual worth of Ramana, accepted him as his Master and called him *Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi*.

Ramana Maharshi is a scion of the line of Maharshi Parāśara who sang the praise of Agni and Agni alone in all his hymns, even as Ramana sang the praise of Arunāchala alone the Linga of Fire (*Tejo Linga*). Parāśara says that Agni glows in every heart and that whoever perceives this Dweller in the cave becomes one with the river of Awareness. Bhagavan in his introduction to

the *Five Hymns to Arunāchala* says, "Though Arunachala is verily the Fire of Awareness, He has chosen the gracious form of this Hill out of solicitude to all beings". And Bhagavan himself was such a form, or manifestation of Divine Grace.

Agni, in the Vedas, is not merely terrestrial fire. It is the flame of aspiration for the Divine that finally fills the human heart with the all-consuming Fire of Pure Awareness. Agni is praised by Rishi Madhuchandas as "the protector of all, glowing in spiritual striving, the Light of Truth that grows within" (Rig Veda, I, 1, 8). In the next mantra he prays to Agni, "Like a father to his children; O Agni! be easy of access to us and dwell with us for our well-being".

Vaisvānara is the aspect of Agni glowing within the heart of all beings. The seer Bharadwāja in three superb hymns sings of Vaisvānara as the summit of Heaven, as the heart of Earth, as the offspring of Truth, the Wise one, the Poet, the Sovereign and guest of all, Hub of all sacrifice. Home of all nourishment, of great splendour and fame. (VI, 7, 1 and 2).

Again he says: "O Agni! Of you are born the sage with stamina, heroes who vanquish all evil forces. O Vaisvānara, our Lord, bless us with all desirable riches." (3)

Fresh and pure understanding, like Soma juice, flows to Vaisvānara. (VI, 8-1).

“Look at him. He is the first to call upon the Divine. He is the light immortal within mortals. Established firmly he perceives all; the immortal one grows within mortals.” (VI. 9-4).

“Steady light, faster than the mind, is kept within flighty mortals. All devas with all their heart and understanding aspire for and go to that one Awareness. (5)

“My ears long for it and fly; my sight and the light within my heart long for it; my mind and intellect probe for it from afar. (6).

“May Vaisvānara, the light immortal within mortals, save us with His Grace.” (7).

There is an important and well-known Mantra of Agni seen by Maharshi Kasyapa (*Jātavedase*) which alone constitutes the hymn 99 of the First Mandala of the Rig Veda, the substance of which is, “We propitiate with Sōma (the essence of pure mind) all-knowing Agni, who confounds the wits of evil forces and like a ship takes us over to the other shore”. The famous Savitā-Gāyatri of Visvāmitra, *Tryambakam yajāmabe* of Vasishtha and *Jātavedase* of Kasyapa are praised by Acharya Sankara (in one of his great works: *Prāpancha-Sara*) and by others also. Of these, the first deals with meditation upon the glorious Sun of Awareness, the Heart, giving light to our understanding. It is the text of daily meditation for all followers of the Vedic tradition. The second one: *Tryambakam* (vii, 59, 12) is a prayer to Rudra, the remover of all suffering and ever-fragrant nourisher of all, for release from mortality and establishment in immortality. The import of the third mantra *Jātavedase* has already been given above.

Indra of the Vedas is not the Indra we see in the Puranas, who is evidently an individual, a jiva, governed by the law of karma. The Vedic Indra is the Supreme Lord of the Universe. The mantra of eight syllables (in the Sāma Veda), seen by the Sage Vasishtha, *Indrō Visvasya rājati*, means that Indra is the Lord or the Light of the Universe. The very meaning of the word Indra is derived from the root *idi*, indicating supreme overlordship. This Mantra was found in the Sāma Veda by

Ganapati Muni and imparted to his disciples. It is to the devotees of Indra what the *Siva Panchāksbhari*¹ is for the devotees of Siva and the *Ashtāksbhari*² and *Dwādasāksbhari*³ are for devotees of Vishnu. It is well known that the *Siva-Panchāksbhari* occurs in the Ekādasa Rudra of Yajur Veda in the invocation (Anuvāka) beginning *Namah Somāya cha Rudrāya cha*. Siva means Supreme Auspiciousness, Blissful, tangible Awareness. In that Hymn in praise of Rudra, everything animate or inanimate in creation, plants, trees, creepers, hills, mountains, rivers, the Sun, Moon, Fire, all beings are without distinction adored as manifestations of Siva. All differentiation is on the level of the finite mind and there is only one Reality behind and beyond it all.

The Rishis become ecstatic, singing of Indra, who destroys Vritra, enveloping darkness (ignorance), and brings light and harmony. Bharadwāja says, “My understanding chooses for adoration Indra alone, the Supreme Being, ever vibrant, eternal, ever-fresh and youthful.” (VI. 19-2).

Gritsamada says: “Other than whom there is nothing of this Universe and in whom is concentrated all prowess, who likes Sōma juice, who is the personification of all strength, the wielder of the invincible Vajra and omniscient in his understanding.” (II. 16, 2).

Visvāmitra: “O Indra! you are the acceptor of self-surrender; you are self-effulgent; everything is under your sway. The glory of your splendour shines everywhere. Growing within us with your light Supreme, dwell with us for ever for our well-being.” (*Svayurindra Svarāsi* . .) (III. 45, 5).

Vasishtha: “Indra! Mover of all creation, you bless us with strength, light and all things good and beautiful.

“And we, on our part, yearn for you and you alone and adore you with all our heart. This, you know, is the bond between us.” (VII. 31, 3 and 4).

Garga: “He is reflected in every form and this reflection moves about with a seeming

¹ Om Namah Sivāya.

² Om Namo Nārāyanāya.

³ Om Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya.

separate individuality and intelligence. Indra, by his mysterious power, takes innumerable forms and is linked with them through his countless rays. (VI. 47, 18).

“Indra, make me happy. Provide me with your elixir of life. Make my understanding razor-sharp. Whatever I say in praise of you, yearning for you, accept it and make me divine.” (VI. 47, 10).

All the 23 mantras of the 86th Hymn of the Tenth Mandala of the Rig-Veda have as their refrain the text *Visvasmāt Indra uttarab*, ‘Indra is superior to and beyond everything.’ The following is the substance of the 10th mantra of the Hymn : “Indrāni graces with her presence all spiritual effort and the battle of life. She is the omniscience of the Reality (Indra) full of valour. We adore her, the consort of Indra. Indra is superior to and beyond everything in the Universe.”

Again, the first six of the seven mantras in Hymn 134 of the Tenth Mandala (R. V.) have as their refrain, “*Devi Janitri ajijanat, Bhadrā Janitri ajijanat*”. The purport of the first of these is : “Indra ! you yourself have manifested both Earth and Heaven like Ushā (Dawn) and shine forth as the greatest of the great and the sovereign of all beings. The Divine Mother brought you forth, the most auspicious Mother brought you forth.” (Here Earth and Heaven stand for the manifest and the unmanifest).

In this hymn we find Indra described as the Son of the Mother Divine. Indra, the mighty vanquisher of evil forces as well, is no other than Subrahmanya, the destroyer of Asuras, the younger Son of Siva, despite their different names and epithets. The well-known Indra-mantra in the Yajur Veda ends with *Subrahmanyōm Subrahmanyōm Subrahmanyōm*. There is in the fifth mantra of the hymn a prayer for flashes of Divine Light for the eradication of all evil thought.

We find Indra described as Ganapati as well in the Rig Veda. Brahmanaspati and Ganapati are the same. Hymn 23 of the II Mandala by Gritsamada is in praise of Brahmanaspati. It begins with the famous Ganapati Mantra, “*Ganānām Tvā Ganapatim*

Havāmabe.” He is described here as the Lord of multitudes, the poet of poets, listener to prayers of devotees and the Supreme Lord of the Mantras.

Indra is described by Rishi Kusidi as *Mahabasti*, the Mighty Elephant with a wonderful bright gift in his right hand. This mantra *A Tbu na Indra* has been selected from the Vedas by Mantra Sastra as referring to Ganapati. And there is another Indra-mantra praising him as Ganapati, *Nishusida Ganapate Ganeshu*, meaning “O Ganapati ! Lord of multitudes, be for ever with your multitudes. Of seers and poets you are deemed the greatest. Nothing is done without you. Munificent Lord of our heart, bless us with your wonderful gifts.”

Lastly, here is a mantra of Indra by Rishi Sukaksha :

*Yadadya kachcha vritraban Udagā abhi
Surya |
Sarvam Tadindra te vase ||*
(R. V. VIII, 93, 4)

It means : “You have arisen before me for ever as the Sun, dispelling darkness (ignorance) ; all things, O Lord Indra, are under your sway.”

When the Lord rises like the sun within our heart, the darkness of ignorance is dispelled and everything in manifestation is found to be under his rule and identical with him.

A very beautiful verse of Mānickavāchar’s *Tiruvāchakam* (*Koil-tiru-padigam*, 7) serves as a lucid commentary on this terse Indra-mantra of Rishi Sukaksha. It runs : “Now that you have risen in my heart as the Sun (of Awareness), dispelling all darkness by your grace, I perceive without thinking that you are the essence of Being and beside you there is nothing. O Lord Siva, shining as the One Reality in the expanse of the Heart, as one gets subtler and subtler divesting oneself of all grossness ! No single thing are you and without you there is nothing. Who can comprehend you ?”

The ninth Mandala of the Rig-Veda is devoted entirely to Sōma. It begins with a

hymn by Rishi Madhuchandas (of sweet poesy), who is the Rishi of the first ten hymns of Rig-Veda (First Māṇḍala). The very first mantra here (on Sōma) means : “Pressed and extracted to be offered (as a drink) to Indra flow, flow, Sōma, with all your sweetness, with all your vigour.”

*Svādishtayā madishtayā pavasva Sōma
dhārayā*

Indrāya Pātave Sutaḥ (IX, 1, 1)

In ritual, it is the juice of a luminous creeper, Sōma, invigorating in quality and offered to the Gods as oblation through Agni. It is in the yogi the flow of nectar from *sahasrāra* (the thousand-petalled lotus). It is also the Ananda of Brahman, as we may find from the following mantra on Soma beginning, “*Sōmah pavate Janitā Mathinām . . .*” “Soma flows, the inspirer of intuitions, creator of Heaven and Earth, creator of Fire (Agni), creator of the Sun, creator of Indra and creator of Vishnu.”

The same idea is found in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. “He (Bhrigu) understood that Ananda (Bliss Supreme) is Brahman. It is from Ananda alone that everything in the universe is born and by that alone everything is sustained and into that alone everything gets absorbed.”

The last two hymns of the Ninth Mandala are the darśanas of Maharshi Kasyapa. All the fifteen mantras in them have for their refrain, “O Soma ! flow for (i.e. into) Indra.” (*Indrāya Indō parisravā*). The Rishi addresses his own mind : “Extracted by sincere aspiration, truth, faith, and one-pointed search, O Mind ! (Soma), flow and get merged in Indra.” (IX, 113, 2) (*Ritavākena Satyena Svāddbayā Tapasā sutaḥ. Indrāya Indō Parisravā*).

He prays : “Where it is incessant light, which is known as Heaven, in that undecaying eternal sphere, make me established. O Mind ! (Soma), flow and get merged in Indra. (7)

“Where one moves about in freedom, in that highest heaven where all is light and light alone, make me immortal there. O Mind ! (Soma), flow and get merged in Indra. (9)

“Where is fulfilment of all aspiration, which is the world of the unsetting Sun, where is undiminished vigour and divine contentment, make me immortal there, O Mind ! (Soma), flow and get merged in Indra. (10)

“Where it is all *Ananda, moda, muda* and *pramuda* (synonyms of Ananda), where there is utter fulfilment of all longing, make me immortal there, O Mind ! (Soma), flow and get merged in Indra”. (11)

The purified mind (Soma) longs for its source, Indra, and finds fulfilment by its merger there.

We have dwelt briefly on what Agni, *Savita* (Surya), Indra, Rudra and Soma meant to the Vedic Rishis. The same attitude informs the mantras addressed to other gods, like Mitra, Varuna, the Aswins, Maruts, Ushā, Sarasvati, and Aditi. The mantras quoted here are sufficient to remove the wrong notion that they all are related to rituals and nothing more. In fact, they describe the Supreme Reality in its various forms and manifestations, as it was revealed to the Rishis. To understand them aright one must approach them with reverence, humility and devotion. Properly understood, they can remove obstacles and clarify the path of the aspirant and lead him to that Truth which dwells within and behind and beyond its countless forms.

1. That effulgence within entirely free from imperfection That, O Agni ! is to be comprehended as your Form.
2. He who recognizes You as the real significance of the notion ‘I’, O Purifier of All ! he sees Reality free from all sorrow.

— *Agni Gitam*.

1975

Consciousness Explained



By
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi¹

DR. RADHAKAMAL Mukerjee questioned (Sri Bhagavan) :

Dr. Mukerjee : The Upanishadic method of meditation has now disappeared. There was a great sage in Bengal who instructed me in it. After long years of discipline and practice I am having some mystic experiences. I feel sometimes that *Bhuma* (Supreme Consciousness) is infinitude and that I am finite consciousness. Is that correct ?

Maharshi : *Bhuma* (Perfection) alone is. It is Infinite. There arises from it this finite consciousness taking on an *upādhi* (limiting adjunct). This is *ābhāsa* or reflection. Merge this individual consciousness into the Supreme One. That is what should be done.

Devotee : *Bhuma* is an attribute of Supreme Consciousness.

Maharshi : *Bhuma* is the Supreme — *yatra nanyat pasyati nanyat srunoti sa Bhuma* (where one does not see any other, hears nothing else, it is Perfection). It is indefinable and indescribable. It is as it is.

Devotee : There is a vastness experienced. Probably it is just below *Bhuma* but close to it. Am I right ?

Maharshi : *Bhuma* alone is. Nothing else. It is the mind which says all this.

Devotee : Transcending the mind I feel the vastness.

Maharshi : Yes — Yes . . .

Major A. W. Chadwick questioned Sri Bhagavan :

‘Of what nature is the realisation of Westerners who relate that they have had flashes of cosmic consciousness ?’

Maharshi : What comes as a flash disappears as such. That which has a beginning must also end. Only when the everpresent consciousness is realised will it be permanent. Consciousness is indeed always with us. Everyone knows ‘I am !’ No one can deny his own being. The man in deep slumber is not aware ; while awake he seems to be aware. But it is the same person. There is no change in the one who slept and the one who is now awake. In deep sleep he was not aware of his body ; there was no body-consciousness. In the wakeful state he is aware of his body ; there is body-consciousness. Therefore the difference lies in the emergence of body-consciousness and not in any change in the Real Consciousness. The body and body-consciousness arise together and sink together. All this amounts to saying that there are no limitations in deep sleep, whereas there are limitations in the waking state. These limitations are the bondage ; the feeling ‘The body is I’ is the error. This false sense of ‘I’ must go. The real ‘I’ is always there. It is *here* and *now*. It never appears anew nor disappears. That which *is* must also persist for ever. That which appears anew will also be lost. Compare deep sleep and waking. The body appears in one state but not in the other. Therefore the body will be lost. The consciousness was pre-existent and will survive the body. In fact, there is no one who does not say ‘I am.’ The wrong knowledge ‘I am the body’ is the cause of all the mischief. This wrong knowledge must go. That is Realisation. Realisation is not acquisition of anything new nor is it a new faculty. It is only removal of camouflage.

¹From *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 73-74, 91.

VEDIC SYMBOL AND LANGUAGE

By

Dr. R. D. Nirakari

IN the Vedas the rituals are symbolic and so is the language. Sometimes the symbolism is explained in the Vedic literature itself ; at other times we have to infer it.

The hymns in the Samhitas are addressed to particular deities. But all these deities represent one divine Power in different aspects ; they are different forms of one Reality. As the *Rig Veda* (I. 164.46) says, "the one *Sat* is described variously by the different sages as Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, Yama and so on." The *Rig Veda* makes it clear (I.164.39) that one who does not know that *Sat* (Reality) gains nothing by studying the Riks. The *Sukla Yajur-Veda* (XXXII.1) declares : "That is Agni, That is Aditya, That is Vayu, That is Chandra, That is Sukra, That is Brahman, That is Prajapati." Agni, Indra, Varuna and the other gods, with their various names and forms and functions, represent different aspects of the one Being, the one Principle or Power of Existence. Agni is power appearing as light and heat ; it is also the light of knowledge destroying the *Vrtras* (the powers of darkness or ignorance) (*Sama Veda*, Part I, I. 1. 4). It is also Pavaka, the power of purification (*Ibid* I.3.9). As Vaisvanara or Visvakshti (*Ibid* I. 59. 7), he is universal life. He is the immortal light within mortals (*Ibid* VI.9 4). Thus Agni is not only terrestrial fire, but a manifold divine Power with different functions.

Indra, the most famous deity of the *Rig Veda*, is the Creative Power (VIII. 36.4) which created Heaven and Earth : He is the Power of Victory, the power of control and many other powers.

Soma is the deity of sweetness and bliss ; protector of divinity and destroyer of evil. (*Rig Veda* IX. 24. 7). Varuna represents the power of justice, because he is related to Rta

or the moral law. Prajapati is the power of procreation. Vishnu is the power immanent in everything. Rudra is the power of War and Peace, terrible in one aspect but benevolent in another, as Siva and Sankara. Mitra is the power of friendship, Usha the power of beauty and light.

These interpretations, derived from the Samhitas, are confirmed and carried forward by the Brahmanas, which apply these divine names and forms to other spheres and situations.

The Upanishads, whose main concern is with transcendent Reality, have perforce to employ the same symbolic language. Brahman stands for a vastness and brightness free of form, feature or colour. The Reality can only be known through direct perception, through self-identity. Hence the abundant use of pronouns. The Upanishad (XVI) says, "That which this Purusha is, That I am." In this sentence of eight words, five are pronouns. How else can the identity of the self and the Self be conveyed ? The *Kena Upanishad* starts with the pronoun *Kena* (By whom) and repeats again and again the formula : "That is Brahman by which the voice speaks, the mind thinks, the eye sees, the ear hears, That, and not what is worshipped." In other words, Brahman is the awareness behind our mind and senses and hence unknowable to our mind and senses.

Eleven times the *Katha Upanishad* repeats : "*Etad vai Tat*" (This indeed is That), the ultimate is the intimate, the universal is the unique and *vice versa*. Likewise, the *Chândogya* repeats eight times the famous utterance : "*Tat tvam asi*" (That thou art). These pronouns serve to bring the mystical into our ordinary experience and our common language.

Notes on Hindu Iconology

By
Ronald Rose

IN this and the forthcoming issues we propose to publish illustrated notes on the symbolic and metaphysical significance of certain popular deities of the Hindu pantheon.

We shall be concentrating on the best-loved gods of the Southern Saivite Tradition which were familiar to Bhagavan from his childhood and are integrally woven into the lives of Hindus however "advanced" and "modern" they may think themselves to be.

Here in the towns and villages of Tamilnadu the gods are with us at every street corner. One may find shrines of Sri Ganesh — "The Lord of Beginnings" — installed even on the crowded platform of a railway junction and the Elephant-headed God is ready to bestow his blessing for a successful journey on any harassed traveller who offers him a hurried prayer or a small impromptu puja.

We apologise to our Indian readers who may find these notes very elementary, but we hope they will be appreciated by Western readers as they give a taste of the cultural environment in which Bhagavan lived and still lives amongst us.

People born into or conditioned by the Semitic traditions of the West are inclined to regard polytheism as a debased form of religion. There are modern Hindus too who shy at the word and insist that Hinduism is not polytheistic.

Fundamentally, of course, this is true as the various gods and goddesses worshipped in innumerable forms and under innumerable names are all the manifestations of the Non-Dual Brahman. And this is no dry theological concept. It is understood intuitively if not philosophically by the simplest devotee.

For instance the devotee of Sri Rama making the long pilgrimage from the South

will devoutly worship numerous other gods and goddesses on his route. If he is a true *bhakta* he will see Rama in all these multiform images, male and female, and feel no inconsistency in his attitude. He will praise Siva or his son Muruga with *Ramnam* just as his Saivite brother, in similar circumstances, will worship Rama or Krishna with the name of Siva on his lips.

We should not be afraid of the word 'polytheism'. In so far as the Non-Dual is beyond the comprehension of our ordinary dualistic thinking, any image or concept we form of it is hopelessly inadequate and false. As pure Subject it can never be the object of our contemplation and all we can say of it is *Neti Neti* — "Not this, Not this".

Yet the need to worship something higher than himself is inherent in man's nature, even if it is only hero-worship or the worship of some ideology. The servant must have a master, the lover a beloved and there are very few so ripe as to find dualistic relationship superfluous.

So long as we are identified with the body it is sheer foolishness to try to do away with these objects of worship just because we "think we know" that they are only projections of the mind.

We need Bhagavan — "Our Bhagavan" has himself graciously approved a *mantra* and 108 Names by which we may worship him.

A simple Western visitor, who has developed a deep love for Bhagavan while staying here, recently confessed to me that at first he experienced a great difficulty while sitting at the Samadhi. He is a deeply Christian soul and, while strongly feeling Bhagavan's presence, he found he could only worship him as Jesus Christ. At first he felt this to be somehow disrespectful and he was always apologis-

ing to Bhagavan for what he was doing. But Bhagavan soon removed his misgivings and assured him that his way of worship was acceptable.

This young visitor from the West, who thinks he cannot understand Hindu philosophy, is leaving us with a Hindu experience he could not have gained from books and it has given a new dimension to his Christian faith.

Genuine bhakti (devotion) solves problems that baffle and seem insoluble to the intellect.

The Hindu mind finds it distasteful to compare the merits of various religions and particularly to argue whether one religion is better than another. This is in large measure due to the fact that Hinduism, being the oldest of the religious traditions still extant, embraces, in a special way, all the others. It can appreciate and has even assimilated in some of its cults the monotheistic fervour of Islam and it is not uncommon, in orthodox Hindu homes, to find a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus or the Virgin and Child. Are not those archetypal symbols that the *bhakta* of any faith can understand without recourse to Christian theology?

Indeed some Hindus seem politely surprised when they find Westerners adopting one of their own cults. The gods are all here to lead us to the same realisation of the absolute and in this respect, are not your gods as good as ours?

Tolerance is not so much a virtue of polytheism as a logical expression of it.

"As above, so below". In this sense everything in nature is a manifestation of the divine and commands our worship. If religious worship confines itself to certain images, it is because these images express archetypal forces and aspects of the divine nature and so have a special appeal and satisfy special needs of the human psyche. If all we can say of *Brahman* is "*neti, neti*", it follows rather paradoxically that a relative understanding of it can best be had by an infinite number of manifestations personifying everything the human mind can conceive of. Even the myriad personifications in the Hindu pantheon can do no more than crudely suggest

its inexhaustible plenitude. But the polytheistic vision at least does all it can to achieve the impossible.

The images of Hindu gods and goddesses we find in temples, shrines and on the walls of family houses are not arbitrary, subjective expressions of a particular artist's vision such as we find in post-mediaeval religious art in the West. These images, or *Murtis* (materialisations) as they are called, must all conform in their contours and proportions to precise specifications laid down in traditional technical treatises on image-making. This does not mean, of course, that the sculptor's personal skill finds no expression, nor that a mediaeval image of the Dance of Siva from South India will be identical with one from eighteenth century Bengal. Indian art and sculpture is as varied as that of Europe — at least as that of Europe before "individualism" became an artistic virtue. Even the debased and sentimentalised pictures of the gods we find in Indian bazaars today conform at least in essentials to the traditional symbolism. Fortunately they have to do so or they would be meaningless.

Western religious art depicts — for the most part — human beings, however saintly they may be. Anyone can see however that the Hindu gods are always more or "other than" simple human beings and this is the reason why Westerners often find them unnatural. Some are half-animal, some are hermaphrodite, some frighteningly hideous. Even the most beautiful tend to have too many arms! How could Sri Ramakrishna have fallen in love with that terrible Mother *Kali*? they ask in genuine bewilderment.

Just as the verses of traditional scriptures encompass many different levels of meaning, so do the images of traditional art. Each *murti* displays its own peculiar gestures (*mudra*), is arrayed with its own peculiar emblems and is associated with some animal (*Vahana*) which is its inseparable companion. The explanation of all these symbols will vary quite startlingly according to whether your guide is a simple villager, a devout *bhakta*, or a stern *advaitin*. The *advaitin* may have little *bhakti* in his

heart — he may have little time for the gods — but as metaphysical expressions of some aspect of the ultimate Reality he will have no hesitation in prostrating himself before them.

The child will give his heart to the friendly Elephant-Headed God, Ganesh, simply because he is so cosy and lovable. His merchant father will worship him before opening his account books in the morning as *Vignna Vinasaka* the remover of all obstacles that may beset his business transactions in the course of the day. The philosopher, for whom the obstacle to be removed is his own distracting, discursive mind, will placate Ganesh before attempting to raise his mentation to higher realms.

Enough for the present of Ganesh, who will be the subject of our first instalment.

* * * * *

The choice of the gods and goddesses a Hindu worships is conditioned to some extent by family and local tradition. However, if he is a natural *bhakta*, he may find his love directed towards some other divine manifestation which has a special appeal for him, and this becomes his *ishtadevata* or personal god. A number of passages in the *Gita* authorise this personal choice.

“Whenever a devotee wishes, with unwavering faith, to worship me in a particular form, I take that form.”

“I take, to welcome them, the shape in which they worship me.”

One cannot, at first, give one's whole heart to an image of the divine that does not command one's natural affection, and for *bhakti*

Simple Being

By

Charles G. Reeder

Simple being,
The yellow-jacket floating
in the corner of the room
the sparrows hopping
on the earth, at sunrise.

to be fruitful the *bhakta* must quite literally fall in love with his god.

Many gods and goddesses have both beneficent and horrific aspects. *Kali* is a striking example. As *Bhadrakali* she appears as a beautiful maiden scattering kindness and forgiveness and riding a lion (the forces of evil), which she has subdued.

A devotee may well first be drawn to *Bhadrakali* because she is so naturally charming and consoling. In time however he may find himself increasingly attracted to her fearful aspect, realising that only through confronting him with all that is fearful will she lead him beyond fear and all worldly attachment, to abiding bliss.

The Gods are not outside us. They are all within. By invoking them, objectifying them and loving them the *bhakta's* carnal nature is slowly pacified and transmuted till all is finally surrendered and lover and beloved become merged in the realisation that there is only LOVE.

Just as a lamp spontaneously goes out if not fed with oil, so also the ego becomes extinct if one meditates unceasingly and becomes merged in the Self. There is no higher gain than the Self.

— *Atma Sakshatkara* (51)

On What Seemed to be a Tortoise

By

Stephen Joss Brooks

'TORTOISE, why do you move so slowly?'
the young one asked.

'For too long I have believed in protection
and my shell is heavy,' the tortoise answered,
and went on,

'Listen, young one: before anything was
there was nothing.

Nothing became aware of itself;

Nothing tingled,

Nothing breathed.

With that electric breath nothing moved in its
Oneness.

Moving one became purpose,

The simple became complicated.

Purposes crossed.

Creation in Relation

Moved on wheels of heat and light.

The limitless became there, became limit

Everything feeding on everything.

Relation

So, one to another,

Is to was,

Unbound to bound,

Other saw itself out of the corner of its eye,
and felt OTHER.

It moved through all that was an alternative

The one breath became the multitude,

The one sound became the million tongues.

The tortoise moved slowly —

'The perfect numbers in the right places,
too many,

phenomenon interested itself in other—binding

other in relation to itself with rules of binding.
Relation became unnatural for there is only
One rule.'

The tortoise moved slowly —

'Young one, it will be one time, the numbers
will be perfectly related to each other,

The harmony will be unto itself.

The one being in its myriad forms will sustain
itself amongst its selves by simple seeing.

The absolute will move itself.

It will not BE to communicate the physical
for what there IS to communicate is not
physical.

Each part will be the whole.

The sun and stars and all that is will move
through

Self barriers feeling-all-together.

All will move in the perfect pattern of form and
sound and the understanding will be past
understanding.

Then, young one, there will be no more
words which

try to paint the worldless, no more men
who like

tortoises carry houses of ideas on their backs.
Perfection is not realized by a MANY.

Awareness — Oneness.

Until then,

get to the point yourself,

then walk tall through the hole

in your world.'

By whose light the sun and other luminaries shine forth, but which is
not itself illumined by them and in whose light all this is seen, know it
to be Brahman.

— Sankara's *Atma Bodha* (61)

Meaning of the Liturgical Signs

By

Moti Lal Pandit

WHAT is Liturgy? The Liturgy, as every Christian understands it, consists of the Mass, the sacraments and the divine office. All these things are *signs*. These signs, in their sensible form, represent that which is sacred and beyond the hold of perception.

The Mass, as a sign, represents the sacrifice of Christ, a sacrifice which is interior. It is a sacred sacrifice of Christ in which the 'People of God' are united with Christ. "The visible sacrifice", writes St. Augustine, "therefore, is a *sacramentum*, that is, sacred sign, of the invisible sacrifice".¹ The sacrament, therefore, may be said to be a sign "of some sacred thing pertaining to men; so that 'sacrament' is properly used, in the sense in which we are now speaking of sacraments, when it is predicated of 'a sign of a sacred thing, in as much as it sanctifies men'".²

What is a Sign?

The definition of a sign is given by St. Augustine in these words: "a thing which, besides the species it impresses on the senses, leads to the knowledge of something other than itself".³ The sign, therefore, is a sensible reality which gives us knowledge of that reality which is hidden. What are the elements which constitute a sign? First, a sign must be distinct from that which it signifies; second, it must have a relation to the reality for which it stands, and finally, it must possess the capacity of giving us knowledge of the reality which it signifies. In short, a sign is a substitute of that which it signifies. The sign, therefore, reveals to us the hidden reality; but it also hides the reality in the sense that if a person does not know how to interpret the sign, the reality becomes obscure. If we know how to translate a sign into what

it is meant to signify, then it becomes a bridge rather than an obstacle.

The signs are of two kinds: real signs and the signs of pure reason. In the former kind of sign there is a real relation between the sign and the thing it signifies; the relation is that of cause and effect. The relation between the sign and the thing signified does not depend on man as, for example, in the case of smoke and fire. The meaning of the latter kind of signs is determined by man. These signs are sensible realities which man has chosen as a medium of interpretation and expression for the reality they signify.

Is there any relation between a sign, a symbol and an image? Are they synonymous?

An image is a representation of a sign which is similar to the thing signified. The similarity is due to the natural characteristics, such as the "figure".⁴ A symbol, on the other hand, can be a sign; but all symbols are not signs. For example, clouds are not a symbol of rain, but its signs, whereas a portrait is not a sign of a person, but an image. Therefore, a symbol in general cannot be identified either with a sign or with an image. A symbol is not a natural sign, but a free sign, whether in the real form or in the form of pure reason. It may be said that a symbol is a concrete metaphor; for example, a scale, as a symbol, means justice, incense is the symbol of prayer, etc.

The Liturgical Signs

The signs,⁵ in the Christian liturgy, have a religious significance in the sense that they are

¹ *De civ. Dei*, X, 5 (PL 41, 282).

² St. Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 60, a. 2.

³ *De doctr. Christiana*, II, I, 1, (PL 34, 35).

⁴ Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 60, a. 2.

⁵ See C. A. Bernoulli, "Symbole", *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1935), 935-939.

God and the priests in the place of the Apostolic college, and my beloved deacons being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ . . . who came forth from one Father, existed in the unity of one Father and returned to Him".¹⁰

Liturgy and Art

The liturgical signs, symbols and images have given rise to what is known as sacred art.¹¹ Through art the liturgical signs have been embellished with the expression of profundity, reverence and beauty. By giving an artistic depth and temper to the liturgical signs, the whole atmosphere and the disposition of the soul becomes more charged and intimate. All the arts have contributed to the edification of the liturgical signs ; but particular emphasis has been laid on rhetoric, poetry and song. It is through song that a sense of spiritual affinity is created among the faithful. In order to express the beauty of a song in a melodious form, the utilization of music was necessary : thus Church music was developed.

The function of religious art is not only that it should be beautiful and the source of aesthetic enjoyment but to promote the propensity in the soul which the liturgy signifies. The function of the liturgical art has to be that of communication, which means that every member must play some role in the worship of God. Only that artist can produce true religious art who not only is a religious man, but who has penetrated and probed the mysteries of the liturgy. Thus every kind of art, whether it be music, singing, architecture or painting, has a religious significance only in so far as it is able to express that truth of the mystery of faith which the liturgy signifies.¹² In the liturgy art has no significance if the creation of art is understood in terms of " Art for art's sake ".¹³

Necessity of Signs

The significance of the signs in the liturgy can be gathered from these words of St. John Chrysostom : " Since the Word says, ' This is My body ', let us assent and believe and consider Him in this sacrament with spiritual

eyes. Actually what Christ has given us is not anything sensible. Rather, the realities given are wholly spiritual, though clothed in sensible things. The same holds for baptism : the gift is given through a sensible thing, water ; the spiritual reality accomplished is birth and renewal. If you had been incorporeal, He would have given you bare, incorporeal gifts ; but since the soul is united to the body, He offers you spiritual realities in sensible things ".¹⁴

There must, therefore, be a harmony between the sign and the condition of man. The sign, if probed deeply, can have a very high transforming value. It can heighten the spiritual faculties of man if the sign is properly expressed and communicated. This was observed by St. Augustine when he wrote : " All these things brought home to us in figures have the aim of feeding and somehow fanning the flame of love which, like a sort of specific gravity, carries us above or within ourselves until we come to rest. Thus proposed, these realities move and enkindle love more than if they were set forth in a starkly intellectual way and not as *sacramenta*. It is hard to say why this should be so. But it is certain that anything expressed by way of allegory is more moving, more pleasing and better heeded than if it were said outright in the most appropriate words. I think the soul

¹⁰ *Magnes.*, 6:1-7 (PG 5, 668).

¹¹ See Pie-Raymond Regamey, *Art sacré au XX siècle ?* Also see J. Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*.

¹² See Pie-Raymond Regamey, *Architecture de l'autel et exigences liturgiques, La maison Dieu*, 29 (1952), 71-87.

¹³ *Mediator Dei* : " What we have said about music, applies to the other fine arts., especially to architecture, sculpture and painting. Recent works of art which lend themselves to the materials of modern composition, should not be universally despised and rejected through prejudice. Modern art should be given free scope in the due and reverent service of the Church and the sacred rites, provided that they preserve a correct balance between styles tending neither to extreme realism nor to excessive symbolism, and that the needs of the Christian community are taken consideration rather than the particular taste or talent of the individual artist. Thus modern art will be able to join its voice to that wonderful choir of praise to have contributed, in honour of the Catholic faith, the greatest artists throughout the centuries."

¹⁴ In *Matthaeum hom.*, 82 (PG 58, 743).

sacred signs. These signs give us the picture of the relation of God to man. Each part of the liturgy has a particular function and value as a sign. In every sign, as St. Augustine said, "One thing is seen and another understood".⁶

The liturgical signs are not merely natural signs; they are free signs as well — that is to say, the meaning of the signs have either been determined by Christ or by the Church. Therefore, these signs surpass the order of natural signs in the sense that they represent supernatural realities. Since the liturgical signs are free signs, their meaning depends on the one who has instituted them. The significance of mixing water with wine, for example, is clearly stated in this prayer: "Grant that strength through the mystery of this water and this wine we may become sharers of His divinity who was pleased to become a partaker of our humanity". The meaning of the Palm Sunday procession is made clear in the fifth prayer of the blessing: ". . . that the devoted hearts of Your faithful may understand to their benefit the mystery alluded to in the act of the multitude (*quid mystica designet in facto*) who today, inspired by heavenly illumination, went out to meet the Saviour and strewed His path with branches of palm and olive. The palm branches signify His triumph over the prince of death, while the sprigs of olive proclaim in a way the coming of Him in whom there is spiritual unction. . . . And we, in fervent faith retaining both the ceremony and its significance (*factum et significatum retinentes*) . . ."

Division of Liturgical Signs

It will be very difficult to give a history of an individual sign of the liturgy within this short space. We propose to divide them into four parts, namely, speech, gesture, things and persons.

It is speech, as a "form", which determines the meaning of the "matter" of the sacraments. For example, the word "baptism" means immersion in the water and coming out of the water, which means to participate in Christ's death and resurrection. Thus it is

through speech that a sensible thing becomes a sacramental sign.⁷ As St. Augustine writes about baptism: "Take away the words and what is the water but just water? Add the words to the element and you have a sacrament (*accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*), which itself is like a visible word".⁸

In the liturgical signs, which are instituted by the Church, speech is a very important sign, for it expresses the interior worship of the Church; it is a reply to the divine sanctification and philanthropy. The material elements in the liturgy, through the power of the Word, are transformed into sacred signs.

Gestures, too, play an important role in the sacramental liturgy. It is through the gestures of the body that the disposition of the soul, as in kneeling, bowing, etc., is expressed. All the bodily gestures are accompanied by words. The function of the words is to specify the meaning of the gestures.

The things, which are used as signs in the liturgy, are of two kinds: natural elements and the elements which result from man's work. The former kind of elements consist of oil, incense, chrism, wine, water, etc., whereas the latter kind of things are the altar, cross, the vestments, etc.

Finally, a community of persons, when gathered in the Church for the celebration of paschal lamb, is also a sign. As a sign, it expresses the invisible relation of God and mankind. It is not a meeting, but the *ecclesia* of God in Christ.⁹ Those who minister the liturgy have a special significance, and this is borne out when St. Ignatius of Antioch writes: ". . . Be zealous to do all things in the peace of God, the bishops presiding in the place of

⁶ St. Augustine, *Sermo*, 272 (PL 38, 1247).

⁷ St. Thomas, *Summa*, III, q. 60, a. 6a d2: "In the sacraments a single thing somehow is made out of words and things, as out of form and matter, that is, in as much as the signification of the things is completed by the words."

⁸ *In Ioannem tract*, 80, 3 (PL 35, 1840).

⁹ Cr. 1 *Thes.* 1:1; *Matt.* 18:20.

is slower to catch fire as long as it is involved in merely earthly things ; while if it is directed to bodily symbols (*similitudines*) and from the symbols to the spiritual realities expressed by them in figure, this very process enlivens it, enkindles it like a waving torch and draws it with more ardent love to its resting-place".¹⁵

Important Liturgical Signs

Baptism and the Eucharist are the most important sacramental signs in the sense that they are directly instituted by Christ. The significance of baptism lies in the fact that we die to sin and thus are reborn in grace : " We died to sin . . . when we were baptized into Jesus Christ . . . Our old humanity was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we might no longer be slaves to sin " ;¹⁶ because it " is a bath of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit ".¹⁷

Through baptism we become the sharers in the divine economy of salvation and redemption. Thus it is through baptism that we die with Christ and rise with him. Baptism also signifies a commemorative sign in the history of salvation. It also means the sign of a future glory. Here we may quote some relevant passages from the Bible : " Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his Death ? For we were buried with Him by means of baptism into death ".¹⁸ " If we have indeed grown to be one (with Christ) in the likeness of His death, we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection also . . . If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him ".¹⁹

In the Eucharist²⁰ the life of Christ is enacted on the altar, that is, it is a sign demonstrating the presence of Christ. It also means the communication of the Word of God to man ; and it is through the Word that we are united with God. Therefore, " He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him " ;²¹ " Because the bread is one, we who are many are but one body, for we all partake of the one bread ".²² The Eucharist also symbolises the Last Supper and

the Passion.²³ Finally, the Eucharist has an eschatological importance which is indicated in these words of the Bible : " Every time you eat this bread and drink the chalice, you keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, until He comes ".²⁴ " It has been My heart's desire to eat this paschal supper with you before I suffer ; for I tell you that I shall not eat it again until it is celebrated in the kingdom of God . . . I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God has come ".²⁵

Structure of the Mass

The Mass is a sacred sign in the sense that it commemorates the whole Christ. In the Mass the presence of Christ is experienced sacramentally in the bread and wine. It is through the Mass that the union with God is realized. The faithful express their adoration and worship to God in the Mass, In the Mass there is a new epiphany of the incarnate Word in person. It is full of eschatological meaning : it is an announcement of the Lord's return. Participation in the Eucharistic body is a way of proclaiming the redemptive act of God ; it is a proclamation between the Ascension and parousia. The beautiful symbolism of the Mass is expressed in this antiphon :

O sacred banquet, in which Christ is
consumed,
the memory of His Passion is renewed,
the mind is filled with grace,
and a pledge of future glory is given.

¹⁵ *Ep.*, 55, n. 21 (PL 33, 214).

¹⁶ *Tit.*, 3:5 ; cf. *Eph.*, 5:26 ; *Jn.*, 3:5. See also the following works of Romano Guardini : *The Spirit of the Liturgy* ; *Sacred Signs* ; *Liturgische Bildung* ; *Die Sinne and die religiöse Erkenntnis*. Cf. Rober Will, *Le culte* in 3 volumes.

¹⁷ *Rom.*, 6:2 ff.

¹⁸ *Rom.*, 6:3-4.

¹⁹ *Rom.*, 6:5-8 ; see also Tertullian, *De pudic.*, 14 (PL 2, 1007).

²⁰ Cf. *Matt.*, 26:17-29 ; *Mk.*, 14:12-25 ; *Lk.*, 22:7-20 ; *1 Cor.*, 10:16-21 and 11:23-30.

²¹ *Jn.*, 6:56.

²² *1 Cor.*, 10:17.

²³ *1 Cor.*, 11:26 ; cf. *Jn.*, 6:31-33 and 49-51.

²⁴ *1 Cor.*, 11-26.

²⁵ *Lk.*, 22:15 ff.

The structure of the Mass is given in such a way so as to open the path to salvation. Its structure is composed of purgation, illumination and union. When the priest approaches the altar, the congregation, by repenting their sins, prepare themselves for the great glory. The process of purification is completed with the "Kyrie eleison"! After the purification begins the "gloria", the path to illumination, and after this the main act of the Mass — the Eucharist — begins. The most important part of the Eucharist is the consecration of the bread and wine.

St. Francis of Assisi writes on the significance of the Eucharist: "As he appeared in true flesh to the apostles, so now he shows himself to us under the form of bread. And, as they, with the eyes of their body, saw only his flesh, but contemplating him with their spiritual eyes, believed him to be their Lord and God — so we, who see only bread and wine with our bodily eyes, believe most firmly that it is his most holy body, and true living blood. . . . Man should be seized with fear; the earth should tremble, and the heaven rejoice exceedingly, when Christ, the Son of living God, descends upon the Altar in the hands of the priest. O admirable greatness! O stupendous condescension! O humble sublimity!"²⁶

After the 'Our Father', the sacrificial Lamb is kept on the altar and the congregation recites: "Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi . . ." Then the priest, holding the Host in his hands, proclaims: "Behold the Lamb of God . . ." By participating in the Holy Communion, the faithful are united with God.

God is hidden in these sacramental signs and symbols. These signs tear off the veil of darkness by visualising Christ to the believer. The signs of the Mass are not mere symbols, but the very breath of Christian life.

In the Mass the whole mystery of salvation is gathered, and this is clearly manifested in

The Keeper

By

Charles G. Reeder

The Keeper

Who will be the keeper
of this unruly bee
of the mind?

The great Hill
shaped like a hive.
This small heart
shaped like a lotus.

the part of the Mass which is known as anaphora. It is an "eucharistic" prayer, an act of thanksgiving to the Father. The mystery of Christ is realized in the "eucharistic meal".

Every believer finds his completion in the participation in the Eucharist; it frees him from the bondage of sin by enrolling him in the *ecclesia*. By participating in this holy sacrament, the believer overcomes the forces of sin by being united, through grace, with God. The meaning of the "meal" is well expressed in this prayer: "All-powerful, eternal God, who command those who participate in Your table to abstain from the diabolical banquet, grant to Your people, we pray You, that, rejecting a taste for profane and deadly food, they may approach with pure minds the banquet of eternal salvation."²⁷

²⁶ St. Francis, *Works*, pp. 25, 28.

²⁷ *Sacram. Leon.*, n. 76. Cf. *The Gelasian Sacramentary*, 1, 9. See *1 Cor.*, 10:20-21.

Abbreviations:

PG: *Patrologia graeca*.
PL: *Patrologia latina*.

On PRAJNA, DHYANA and SAMADHI¹

By
Christmas Humphreys

AN understanding of these terms and the relationship between them is essential in one's study of Mahayana and especially Zen Buddhism . . .

Prajna, Wisdom, is the sudden, immediate awareness of the world of non-duality. It is beyond time, a touch of the Absolute. *Satori* is this awareness.

The word *Prajna*, in Chinese *Cbib Hui* and in Japanese *Cbi Ye*, is etymologically made up of *Cbi*, perception or intelligence, and *Ye*, intuition; thus, intuitive perception.

Dhyana (Pali: *Jnana*) is a form of meditation in time and duality. It is largely negative, as its object is to achieve a level-mindedness, or equilibrium or equanimity. It is a stilling of the waves of thought and emotion of everyday life. 'When the mind is disturbed the multiplicity of things is produced; when quieted, they disappear' (*Awakening of Faith*). *Dhyana* is the process of quietening. In this levelling the extremes of torpor and over-activity are alike overcome. The process of control is that described by Patanjali, Aphorism I, 'a control of the modification of the thinking principle.'

Dhyana leads to *Samadhi*, the highest of the four *Jnanas* or states of trance. Its gradual process leads to a state of consciousness which is as high as is possible short of actual *Satori* experience breaking through into the Absolute.

Etymologically the Chinese give two versions of the ideographs used for *Samadhi*, either to hold equal, as a balance, or as a smooth line as distinct from a violently wavy line, or else as *right acceptance*, receiving things as they are. This means seeing them 'just so', or in their suchness (*tathata*).

The sixth Patriarch, Hui-Neng, was the first to distinguish sharply *Prajna* from *Dhyana*,

the former as sudden, indescribable, of the world of non-duality, and the latter as of duality, the goal of a process gradually achieved. Even at its highest *Dhyana* in *Samadhi* does not attain *Prajna*, though it may be good preparation for it.

But though *Prajna* and *Dhyana* are in one sense very different, belonging to the absolute and relative, non-dual and dual worlds respectively, they are not to be conceived separately. *Prajna* underlies and is the basis of *Dhyana*, and makes it possible, and without *Prajna* there could be no *Dhyana*. They are two modes of what should be one awareness.

If we visualize *Samadhi* as a level line (with the rapid fluctuations of normal consciousness quieted), the 'moment' of *Satori* will cut it at right angles from below. In our thinking we visualize a sequence of *a, b, c, d*, etc. but this is born of our illusion. While looking at *a* or *b* we cut off the essential flow of life and then label that part of the line as *a* or *b*. There is no such separation, only an unbroken continuum. But the sequence, however far stretched, never achieves infinity. Where, then, do we find infinity? It must be here and now, in the sequence itself. From the 'deeps' of the (absolute) unconscious comes the sudden flash of *Satori*, which *must* be sudden, a jump, however long the preparation for it, and that moment of the flash is seen as eternity. That thing or moment is timeless and absolute, and though in one sense it is a part of the whole it is in fact the whole. Thus any one thing, seen in *Satori*, is all other things, including its opposite (*ijimuge*). In that 'moment' all things are seen when any one thing is seen for what it is, in its suchness, and as void.

¹ Extracted from *A Western Approach to Zen* by Christmas Humphreys, Ch. 10, pp. 96-97. [George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London].

Thus preparation for enlightenment is necessary and necessarily gradual, but the moment when it comes is sudden, a leap from the relative duality to the absolute non-duality. Though *Samadhi* be attained through *Dhyana*, and last for hours on end, it is not *Satori*.

Satori may come at any time, in *Samadhi* or while digging in the garden, as described by many stories from Zen monasteries. What matters is the intensity of will; the 'moment' will come when it comes.

NON-HUMAN BEINGS

By Francis Story

AMONG the factors of experience which cannot be ignored is the testimony from innumerable sources all down the ages to the existence of certain beings who appear to belong to a different order of nature, and because of this have been regarded as supernatural. No study of anthropology is complete without them, for in the guise of nature spirits, tribal deities, angels, djinns and the fairies of folklore they are found at the centre of all primitive cults and the earliest forms of religion. If their appearance were confined to the history of man in prescientific ages they could be dismissed as fantasies of the dream-world which primitive man finds difficult to distinguish from reality, but this is far from being the case.

Apart from the phenomena of the modern seance room there have been remarkable instances from the remotest antiquity up to recent times of people finding themselves in communication with non-human entities of various kinds. One of the most impressive of such cases in Europe was that of Emanuel Swedenborg. It was outstanding by reason of the fact that Swedenborg was among the most distinguished scientists of his day, a man of penetrating intellect and unimpeachable integrity who could neither have been subject to delusions nor impelled by desire for notoriety. His possession of clairvoyant powers was demonstrated on more than one occasion, but further than this he claims that he had received proof of the existence of a heavenly hierarchy, which he made to correspond roughly to the angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim of Judeo-Christian tradition. He had seen and

talked with radiant beings of different ranks and had passed freely from plane to plane of the extra-terrestrial system they inhabited. In many ways the experiences he described recall those of the mystics of all religions: but aside from the necessarily Christian terminology Swedenborg used in accounting for them in accordance with his own religious ideas, they bear a most marked resemblance to the Buddhist conception of the conditions prevailing in the realms of the Devas.

Are we to suppose that these similarities of mystical or extra-sensory experience are coincidental? Or that they arise from a common infirmity of the human mind? Or, as a third alternative, may it not be more likely that they are all instances of the same kind of experience, a real experience which requires no further explanation than the possibility of an extension of consciousness to areas outside the particular space-time continuum in which our consciousness normally functions?

To ask where, in the world of material objects, these beings can exist is irrelevant in a universe where space and time are fused into one concept, and where absolute points of reference have ceased to be and even the exact simultaneity of events is impossible to determine, it were as relevant to enquire when they can exist. It is clear that any such question is wrongly posed, because it is based on the assumption that the world we know is precisely as it appears to us, and further that our particular plane of experience is the only possible one, whereas not only is there no valid ground for that assumption but all the inferences are against it.

Temporal Values and the Value of all Values

By

Prof. R. Sadasiva Aiyar

Secular Knowledge :

The values, that is, the highest ends we prize are subject to the mutations to which everything in the phenomenal world is.

In every sphere of knowledge, whether in science or in the humanities, the stark fact stares us in the face, that the knowledge of yesterday is today considered ignorance. To illustrate this from different branches of knowledge would need a volume and is not our aim here.

All secular knowledge, whether revealed to the naked eye and ear or aided by the microscope, the electron microscope, or by telescopes like the one at Palomar, or revealed by sensitive instruments on an indicator registering the subtlest of vibrations and micro-waves and ultimately conveyed to our senses — all secular knowledge exists only to the senses. When the senses fail, knowledge vanishes. It exists only for our cerebral nerves, whose activity we call 'mind.' The Universe exists only in the mind, as Berkeley argued, but has been clear as crystal to the great monistic mystics from Sankara to Bhagavan Ramana. The living and the non-living, making up the cosmos, is all an Appearance, and the sciences are concerned only with Appearance.

Nights and days devoted to crudition, to extending the frontiers of the sciences, though important for our brief day on earth, do not ensure either freedom from passions or from cares or from sorrow. Even Mme. Curie, who had little trace of the self, was plunged in grief when Pierre Curie was killed in an accident while crossing the street. How Newton and Leibnitz indulged in not too edifying a correspondence !

The human mind restlessly longs for that Bliss, Peace and Light, which knows neither

end, nor measure, nor setting, and transcends all thought. The Infinite in the heart of man hungers for the Infinite in and beyond this frame of things. Hence it is that in days of yore, as the *Cbandogya Upanishad* tells us, Narada, having mastered all the lore and science of his day, went to the unlearned Sanat-kumara, who, a mere child in years, was yet a sovereign seer. On Narada telling him that he, the seeker, knew only words, and not the Self, that he had heard how he alone who knows the Self crosses over to the other side of sorrow, Sanatkumara replies that every branch of learning he had mastered was only composed of mere names ; let him therefore give up preoccupation with names. Then the great seer leads Narada by stages to understand the meaning of Happiness, our being's end and aim. That alone can be called Happiness, says the great Teacher, which is Infinite (*Bhuma*) — the plenitude and crown of Bliss that passeth understanding, not in the shadowy and the infinitesimal (*alpam*).

No value, linked up with this world of Chance and Mutability, of Decay and Death, will take us to the state, free from all fear, the state of eternal Bliss and Peace, which is our birthright.

Does it mean then that we should not pursue worldly knowledge ? Such a withdrawal is neither possible nor necessary. The world's activities and its values are also ordained by God. All things temporal are meant to lead us beyond Time. John Wu, the Taoist mystic, born a Christian, and educated in the U.S. and later, a justice in China, sums it up with a finality and finish hard to better : — 'The significance of Time is to evoke Eternity ; that of voyaging is to evoke the Home ; that of knowledge is to evoke ignorance ; that of science and art is to evoke mystery ; that of

longevity is to evoke the Evanescence of life ; that of all human greatness is to evoke Humility ; that of complexities and subtleties to evoke Simplicity ; that of the Many is to evoke the One ; that of war is to evoke Peace, that of the Cosmos is to evoke the Beyond. It is not the voyage that causes harm ; but to lose oneself in the voyage so as to forget one's destination is a tragedy indeed.'

We have then to shuffle off the wrappages that hide the Self, to dispel the darkness that blots out the Light' in which the Sun, the Moon, the stars and these lightnings do not shine ; because of that they shine.' Detachment from all things in which we engage ourselves comes of long striving. The straight and sure way was shown by Bhagavan Sri Ramana. We have to cast our burdens on God and at every turn ask ourselves :

'What is it that enjoys and suffers hopes and despairs ; who am I ?' Like many saints, Bhagavan has time and again dwelt on the infinite value of *Nama-japa*. How the thread of it snaps a million times ! All endeavours fail without the Sad Guru's Grace. His own Name is *the* Magnet, with a potency beyond all gauging.

Said Sri Sankara in words that cannot be recalled too often :

Gone for ever is the lure of forest and so too the glamour of home ;
This body, so dear to all I count as naught ;
What if thou hast risen to such a height ?
If thy heart is not ever fixed on the
Guru's Lotus Feet
What good is it ? What good is it ?

Surrendering Concepts

By

Joel Goldsmith

Whatever good is to appear in our outer experience must first be experienced within. There can be no change in the outer experience without an inner spiritual experience.

There could be some healing of a mental, moral, physical or financial nature due to the consciousness of a teacher, but that would not really be your demonstration. A teacher is only a help on the Way.

The real demonstration comes with your own experience, and in the beginning that experience can be difficult, sometimes even painful, because it means the surrender of many preconceived beliefs, opinions and theories. Conditioned as you and I have been for so many

centuries, it is not easy to give up our cherished beliefs and to strip ourselves of them.

Therein lies the difficulty. Students can accept the new, but they cannot surrender the old ; and thereby they set up a warfare within themselves, the warfare between the flesh and the spirit, which really means a warfare between ignorance and truth.

Ignorance is the barrier to the spiritual life, and what a person has accepted in mind, in thought, or in belief constitutes the barrier. So before anything else, the light of truth must have the opportunity of dispelling the darkness, the ignorance that he has held in mind.

True Charity

Translated by M. C. Subramanian

(From the Malayalam adaptation of the *Mahabharata* by Ezhuthachan, the father of Malayalam literature)

After winning the battle of Kurukshetra Yudhishtira celebrated a splendid horse sacrifice at which he feasted innumerable brahmins and gave them many valuable gifts. Proud and happy, he was sitting on his throne with Sri Krishna near him, when he saw a strange sight. The water with which he had washed the feet of the brahmins had collected into a big pool. Plunging into it repeatedly was an extraordinary mongoose. It was partly golden and partly grey. Some of the brahmins wanted to know why the creature was washing itself repeatedly in the pool.

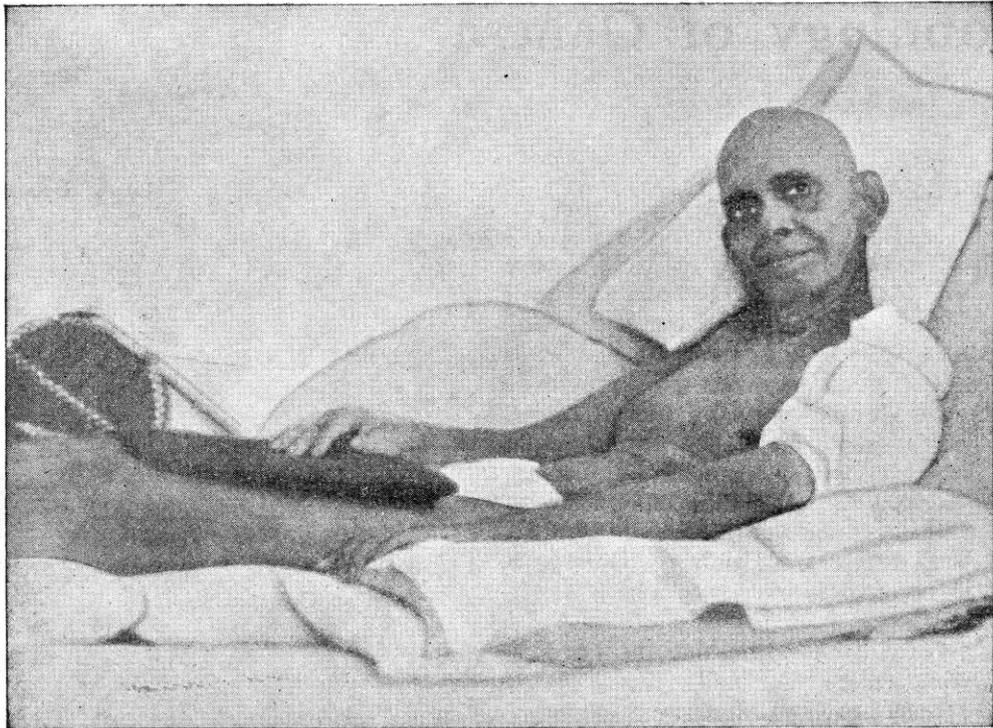
The mongoose said: "Now that you ask me, I shall speak the truth, though it may not please you. Listen, there was a brahmin, named Sakritprastha, a man of great austerities. He was living with his wife and son and the son's wife, eking out his livelihood by collecting the stray seeds of grain lying in the fields after the harvest. One day he could get only a handful of rice. This was roasted along with the husk and pounded into flour and divided into four shares. After finishing his daily religious rites Sakritprastha sat down to eat. Just then a tired and famished wayfarer came in and begged for food. The master of the house thereupon offered his share of the food to the guest. But his wife would not allow this, and offered her share in its stead. Overruling her husband's objection that it was his duty to maintain the household, she insisted that it was the wife's duty to look

after her husband. At this stage the son stepped in. He would not allow his old parents to go without food as long as there was his share which could be offered to the guest. But the son's wife said she would not eat while her husband starved! She placed her share at the disposal of the guest.

"Thus they disputed among themselves. Ultimately the father washed the guest's feet and gave him his share. Then the wife, the son and the son's wife offered him in turn their shares. The guest was satisfied and the entire family felt that they had not lived in vain. At that time a golden chariot came down from heaven, with Vishnu's messengers who lifted Sakritprastha and his family and placed them on the chariot. They said: 'Lord Narayana has commanded you to go to Vaikuntha and become His attendants like us.' They then took them heavenward.

"Passing that way at that moment, I happened to brush with my body the water which had been used for washing the guest's feet and which had collected into a tiny pool. Immediately the part of my body which touched the water became golden in colour. Seeing here an immense quantity of water which had been used for washing the feet of brahmins I hoped to get the rest of my body also transformed into gold. So I plunged into it. But alas it was of no use!"

Having said this the mongoose disappeared.



Last Tears of Bhagavan

By

Prof. G. V. Kulkarni

THE life and Maha Nirvana of Bhagavan Ramana was a grand epic. In the passing hour of Sri Bhagavan, devotees spontaneously began chanting 'Arunachala Siva.' Tears flowed from his eyes on hearing the chanting. It must have been a very sublime and moving scene indeed!

What did these tears of Bhagavan indicate?

Certainly they were not tears of grief for the separation from the beloved devotees and the whole familiar surrounding of Arunachala, as Sri Bhagavan was quite above grief of any kind. For him there was no separation at all.

Were they tears of joy and loving devotion on hearing his Divine Father's Name?

The ocean of love that Bhagavan had for Arunachala Siva (who was indeed inseparable from him) swelled forth during the last hour as spontaneously as the devotees sang spontaneously. The devotees themselves were Arunachala Siva. His tears purified not only the hearts of the devotees but the whole universe as they poured forth grace and blessings on them!

Blessed are the devotees and blessed the universe, as it was the last act of grace for them while Sri Bhagavan was in the body! Though divine essentially, how human too was Sri Bhagavan!

Immortal tears!

Tears beyond thought or expression!

Tears full of the silence of truth and love!

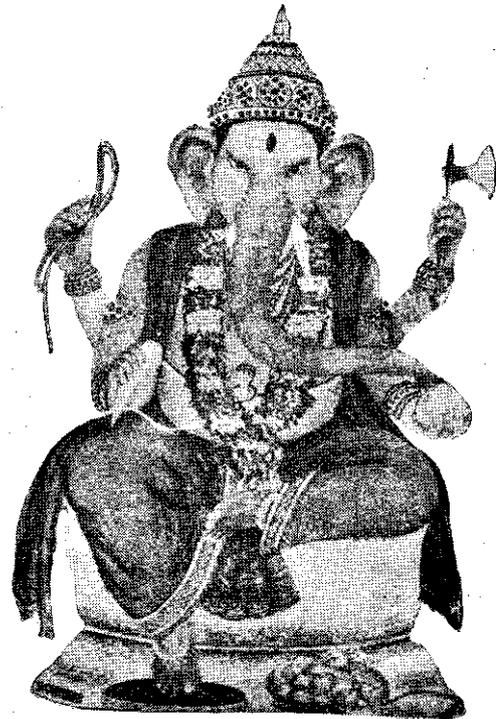
Iconology of Ganesa

By
G. A. Dharma Rajan

WHO is Ganesa? He is the child of Siva and Sakti, the very Form of their united Love, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. He is Bliss Incarnate and he is the remover of all obstacles on the path of his devotee. He does not ask for anything but one's heart's simple and pure love. And as such, there is nobody ignorant or learned, worldly-minded or spiritual, man, woman or child, who does not know him or seek his help. And therefore a study of Ganesa is bound to be of great interest to all.

The foot of Ganesa touching the Earth is the resting place for all jivas. ALL beings forget their differences and find strength and peace therein. *Pradakshinam* (going round Ganesa) is writing Omkara with the feet. The sound 'OM' is the manifestation of the Supreme in all beings. It is the origin of all beings from Brahma to the tiniest of all. It is also the link between all beings and so if one knows 'OM', one knows all. The heart of all manifestation symbolised by 'OM' is Mahaganapati. The Hindus have given dynamism to 'OM' by prescribing "Pradakshina" i.e. going round GANESA clock-wise. Starting from 'A' the beginning, the devotee walks round making "U" and "M". Thus one pradakshina represents one utterance of "OM".

It is Ganesa who teaches all beings the use of their feet. Human feet realise the fulfilment of their purpose walking around Him, towards Him, and for Him. The Upanishads praise Him as swift-footed though He appears to be ever sitting. Ganesa is seen in so many places from Kashmir to Kanyakumari (Cape-Comorin) under so many trees, street-corners and all temples, but nobody has found Him walking. For the maimed and the feet-less, Ganesa lends His own feet. His feet measure



Lord Ganesa

all beings. From His feet emanates Divine Grace to purify all beings.

The sitting posture of Ganesa is symbolic of the fact that He has come to stay in our heart. He is in no hurry to go away unless the Jiva ceases to be alert and receptive and ignores Him.

His second foot is the resting place of all Devas. Though the Devas are superior to us, yet Ganesa treats all beings alike. Devas obey other beings at his command. This is easily seen when we note that the great *Prana* serves even the tiniest of cells at His Command. The concept of *Prana* is very beauti-

ful and true in Hindu Tradition. Prana is the supporter of all beings and all matter in creation. Prana obeys its Lord, Ganesa. At His command it serves all beings from the Sun to the tiniest of cells. Beings may wrongly think that Prana obeys them but the truth is that the Grace of Ganesa immanent in them alone makes Prana function.

There is a method by which devotees make use of this Prana. They conceive of Prana as follows. One inhales the air with the help of "Pasa" retains it with the help of Vighna (non-movement) and exhales it by "Parasu". Thus every breath of a devotee is indeed a Pradakshinam (circumambulation) of Ganesa.

By his two feet He rolls the worlds of all beings from the highest to the lowest. What a wonderful sport is this! And in this great sport all beings find their bliss. . . .

When the feet of the Lord touch the heart of a devotee forces of darkness flee. In the presence of His Feet all deception ceases and disappears.

The great Trunk of Maha Ganapati represents his unique grace. It lifts beings from Maya (darkness) to great heights of blissful Light. The great trunk can scent the subtlest of things and can overcome the mightiest of powers.

The Principle of attraction is symbolised by the rope held in his hand. It is the invisible thread of unity binding the multitude of things. Things are such because they are held together by this thread of joy and love. The son, the father, the mother, the daughter, the friend, one's own country and time are held together by this power of attraction. This endless thread binds us all in a subtle and charming manner, for it is true love which is everlasting. This again is the thread which unites us beautifully with the Supreme Being. Planets go round the sun, the moon goes round the Earth and the whole universe moves about as one whole, subject to this invisible but real thread of attraction.

The principle of detachment is symbolised by the chopper held in his hand. It symbolises

the fact that any Force other than that of the supreme Being can be withstood by even the tiniest of beings with the help of detachment. It controls and checks seemingly great powers of Evil. Even in a body it continually rejects what is not in harmony with the body. It destroys the falsities of life, of feeling and emotions. Its continuous activity is the cause of all other activities of beings. Mahaganapati says, "You have here the supreme weapon of detachment from everything which bothers you. You need not look for it anywhere else".

A modaka or a fruit is in another hand of Mahaganapati. It is symbolic of the search of all beings for fruits of efforts. All worlds come into being in order to enjoy the fruits of efforts. The eye opens hoping to see forms, the ear is eager to hear sounds and the mind jumps up from fulfilment to fulfilment. The hidden meaning of his hand holding the fruit is that the best of rewards for a being is itself. Mahaganapati says: 'Why search for fruit when you yourself are the best fruit to be enjoyed?'

The right eye of Mahaganapati symbolises the great Sun, the giver of health and nourishment, the revealer of the world of forms. This eye differs from all other eyes because it sees and at the same time illuminates. All that happens anywhere does so in the immediate presence of Ganesa.

The left-eye symbolises the Moon, the essential principle of Mind with its proneness to wax and wane. It perceives and creates the intermediary worlds of Mind and the joys contained in them.

The Third Eye between the brows is symbolic of Fire with its power to transmute things into subtler forms. It is aspirational in character, opening up vistas of subtle joys which lie beyond all forms of manifestation. It is the Eye of intuition transcending all dimensions and divesting the world of its various outer envelopments.

The Great Ears of Ganapati hear the subtlest of sounds. They symbolise his great patience in listening which is assured to all

beings. Vibrations inaudible to us are heard by these Great Ears.

The Big Belly of Ganesa is the complex of all beings, and their worlds. It symbolises the supreme absorption of all beings in a great Being like that of the rivers in the sea. It is a Belly which supplies its own Food and is independent of any other sustainer. Countless varieties of food for the countless lesser beings are supplied by this great celestial Belly. It is the great principle of absorption enjoyed by all beings.

The Big Belly is also Hiranyagarbha, the golden womb of grace wherein all jivas are held together before, during and after they play their parts.

There is an interesting allegory in the Ganesa Purana. Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra were desirous of creation, protection and transformation. They set about their jobs but there was confusion since their work appeared to be contradictory to each other. They went together and prayed to Ganesa for enlightenment. Ganesa opened His mouth but instead of saying anything He swallowed them all. Once inside they saw all the worlds and the secret scheme of all work. They came out through His Ears and the Trunk to take up each his respective work.

The great Belly also symbolises the continuous process of absorption and rejection. Seemingly eternal beings are digested and assimilated without trace by the Big Belly of Vinayaka. Yet He is easily satisfied with the smallest of offerings of a true Bhakta.

In the Ganesa Purana it is said that a great storm gushing forth from his trunk blew away all the mighty forces of the Asuras Jagan and

Manu. In another instance, it is said that the smoke which came out of this Trunk engulfed all evil forces and annihilated them.

The Great Trunk symbolises too the unity of all beings from the tiniest to Brahma, their creator.

The broken tusk helps to identify him with other beings. He says, "I too have my share in the world of *Vighna*, (obstacles), and imperfections. The broken tusk is the unseen weapon which protects all beings. It also symbolises primeval Maya which is pellucid and sharp.

The belt of Ganesa is the great Adishesha (King of Serpents). The belt symbolises the bounds of the worlds and the protection of beings.

The massive head symbolises the beautiful qualities of strength, certitude, calmness, knowledge, patience and charm. It represents also sacrifice, as he gave his very Head to protect Sakti, His Mother. On his head is the crown of everlasting authority. All other crowns are temporary and perishable. The crown of Vighnaraja is immutable and eternal.

The mouse symbolises the secrecy of the Unknown. The Grace of Ganesa works secretly and His actions are inscrutable. Surprise, joy and quickness are characteristics of His secret Grace. This mouse is the vehicle which conveys His Grace to all who aspire for it.

Ganesa is essentially a symbol of the unity of Siva and Sakti. He is the symbol par excellence and inspirer of all the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and all revealed wisdom and knowledge.

I am alone and nothing is mine, nor do I pertain to anything else ;
I can find none whose I am or who is mine.

— *Devikalottara* (49)

NAMDEV¹

NAMDEV was one of the brightest stars in the brilliant constellation which lit up Maharashtra's spiritual firmament between the 13th and 17th centuries and which continued and kept alive the mighty bhakti movement that had stirred southern India earlier and had flowered in the lives and hymns of the Alvars and the Nayanmars. The constellation included famous names like Jnaneswar, Ekanath, Tukaram and Ramdas and was remarkable for its undoubted mass origin and powerful mass appeal, as evidenced by Gora the potter, Chokhoba the sweeper and Sena the barber. Namdev himself was by profession a tailor, as Jesus was a carpenter.

Namdev (1270-1350 A.D.) was the son of Dama Shetty, a tailor, and his wife Gunabai. The legend goes that as the aged couple were yearning and praying for a child, they dreamed that their prayer would be answered and, forewarned by a dream, they found a lovely infant floating down the river Chandrabhaga. Grateful and overjoyed, they adopted the child, brought it up as their own, and in due course married him to one Rajabai, through whom he had four sons and one daughter.

Not only about his birth and parentage but about his travels and the other events in his long life, innumerable thrilling stories have become current, but these are of little intrinsic importance today. That he was a contemporary of Jnaneswar and Gora Kumbha, that he composed tens of thousands of songs in Marathi and several hundreds in Hindi, that he lived for 20 years in the Punjab, and that 61 of his *abhangs* are found included in the Sikh scripture, the Granth Sahib — these indisputable historical facts are enough for us. We are free to accept or reject his devotees' claim that he was an incarnation of Uddhava, uncle, friend and disciple of Sri Krishna or the legends that Lord Vithoba of Pandarpur appeared before him on numerous occasions, played with him as a child, ate the food he



Namdev

offered, talked with him as a friend and was indeed his lifelong comrade like any fellow human being moving about in our world of time and space. Such stories have a beauty and meaning of their own, but faith in their factual truth has nothing to do with enjoying and admiring the Saint's countless songs, with their irresistible poetic sweetness and their clear, compelling metaphysical correctness.

Dr. Nicol Macnicol, in his work on the Marathi Saints, supports the theory that

¹ Much of the material used in this article has been taken from Dr. Prabhakar Machwe's book on *Namdev*.

Namdev was not born a saint, but was converted from an evil life, through a crisis of remorse, to the dedicated service of Vithoba. Again, while nothing is known for certain about the historical setting or order of composition of the *abhangs*, this writer tries to trace a change or development in Namdev's thought from pure, emotional *bhakti*, all tears and cries and raptures, to an enlightened state of tranquil peace where his faith rests upon a philosophical interpretation of the universe. The superstitions of scholars, who extend the laws of time to transcendent experiences, may be as firmly held and as misleading as those of blind, unthinking devotees who mistake mental projections for concrete, empirical events. Religious poetry is a lyrical and direct expression of moods, but it is not always or necessarily autobiographical. Both the suffering and the singing are often vicarious.

The fact of the matter was that Namdev was from first to last, like the other saints of the period, a true advaitin by faith as well as experience. Like them too, he loved the masses and endeavoured to share with them, in their common spoken language, the real message of *Vedanta*. He was thus one of the founders of what Dr. R. D. Ranade rightly describes as "democratic mysticism". Among the saints of Maharashtra, however, the special feature of Namdev was his perpetual insistence on the significance and efficacy of the Name of God.

Through mystical experience, through devotion, through deceit, through the torments of *samsara*, let the Name of God dance for ever on the tongue (Abh. 51).

In the eighteen *puranas*, the only remedy mentioned is the utterance of the Name of God (Abh. 55).

The Pandavas, the cowherds, Prahlad, Hanuman and Sita, and Vibhishana's home were all saved from raging fire by the power of the Name (Abh. 59).

The Name of God is the Form of God and the Form of God is the Name of God (Abh. 64).

God may hide Himself, but His Name He cannot hide. When once we have uttered His Name, He cannot elude us (Abh. 66).

In popularizing philosophy through poetry, Namdev built a bridge between *jnana* and *bhakti*, between the language of yogis and the rustic masses, between Maharashtra and Punjab. In passing from Saguna worship to Nirguna remembrance, the transition is most easily effected by the Name, which is first uttered as *japa* and then only heard as *ajapa*, till in the end the devotee disappears and the Name alone remains.

The reader sees how God came to Namdev as a cow goes to her calf ; God lifted him up with both hands and clasped him to His bosom (Abh. 147). The very Sun and Moon set before such Illumination (Abh. 149). Thus filled with God, Namdev thought that he was God and God was himself (Abh. 150).

In *Talks with Bhagavan* there are two passages which throw light on the *bhakti* phase of Namdev's life and on the *jnana* aspect of his teaching. On 6-4-1937 Bhagavan recounts in a charming manner the Saint's all-too-human dealings and conversations with Vithoba and then declares that such "visions" prove purity of mind and strength in meditation, but not the state of Self-Realization. A few months later, on 3-1-1938, Bhagavan brings to a troubled devotee's notice an article on Namdev's philosophy of the Divine Name, which says in effect : "The Name is a form of the 'I' itself and can be understood only when the 'I' is understood ; once understood, it is found everywhere. One and self-existent and devoid of all duality, the Name permeates the three worlds, even as the the Self does."

Garland of Guru's Sayings

By Sri Muruganar

(Translated from Tamil by
Prof. K. Swaminathan)

417.

Who in the golden temple of awareness
Sees Siva as the form of pure awareness
And offers Him the worship of awareness,
His awareness is the truth supreme.

418.

Awareness which knows nothing but
awareness
In the fulfilment of awareness true,
Till awareness is awareness of itself,
It knows no peace at all.

419.

Many are outward objects,
Like ornaments of gold.
Yet one alone, like gold,
Is awareness. And true gold
Is absolute awareness,
The opening of the heart that shines
Beyond indicative knowledge.

420.

The knowledge that neglects the Self that
knows
And holds as true the field perceived is only
Illusive folly. No matter how much one
Has learned, true knowledge is the merging
Of all indicative Knowledge
In awareness of the Self.

421.

The one true light there is is pure awareness.
Other kinds of knowledge
Clinging to it and claiming to be real
Are ego-born conceptual clouds.
To trust them is to court disgrace.

422.

All other kinds of knowledge
Are finite and fail to satisfy.
True, perfect knowledge is the stillness
Of pure awareness.
The many differences perceived
In the Self whose nature is awareness are
Wrong attributions and not real at all.

423.

What sort of Knowledge is this wretched
Bodily-mental knowledge of outward
objects?
Would those who long for pure awareness
Hanker after this? To know
Pure awareness is true wisdom.
All other knowledge is mere folly.

424.

What if one knows the subtle secrets
Of manifold inscrutable mysteries?
Until one knows the awareness which reveals
All other knowledge, does one know the
Truth?

425.

O mind excited as if mad,
What is the source of all existing things,
Moving and unmoving,
Except awareness which itself
Owes its birth to nothing else?

426.

What is the reason that we say
That all the things we speak of
Have in awareness their sole source?
Because this is the dwelling place
Of the Self which is the dwelling place
Of everything perceived.

427.
Pure Being-Awareness there must be as prop
Supporting what is lifeless and unreal.
The mind deluded and impure forgets
It is but Being-Awareness, and desires
Some other object of awareness.
428.
Not like other things unreal, but always
By nature and in substance real,
Permanent awareness has no other
Dwelling place than its own brightness
As awareness.
429.
While you in truth are this awareness,
You would not abide as such,
But suffer, since you hanker after
Life in the world which rises from
Yourself, this same awareness.
How shall I describe this folly ?
430.
Those who have not searched and found
The truth of their own natural being
Will perish as alien forms deluded.
To live untouched by *maya* is to live
As one sole Being-Awareness.
All save this is false pretence,
The realm of *maya*.
431.
How can any treatise teach awareness
To that human-seeming plaster-image
Which, when known objects propless fail,
Finds no awareness even within itself ?
432.
Because you are yourself awareness
You comprehend this universe.
If standing firm you seek awareness
That awareness will itself as *guru*
Teach you the Truth.
433.
What is worth seeking and discovering
Is the truth of Self. Such knowledge can
come only
To the still, clear intellect unperplexed,
Keenly intent on questing in the heart.
434.
The sum of knowledge and its end
Is pure awareness, silent being.
All other states are but the play
Of the awareness dwelling in the Self
Whose natural state is bliss supreme.
435.
True natural awareness which goes not
After alien objects is the heart.
Since actionless awareness is aware
Of its own being, its joy consists
In concentration on itself.
436.
Incomparable *mukti* is the truth
Of Self clear shining when, variety
Destroyed by concentration, all knowledge,
Being nothing but awareness, becomes
merged
In the Self which is awareness.
437.
Since being is one alone and never two,
True knowing is not knowing something else.
'Tis but the clarity, the tranquil peace
Of mind, when it is undeluded
By the senses and is not perplexed.
438.
Awareness is detachment,
Awareness purity.
Awareness is propinquity to God.
Awareness unforgotten is
Freedom from fear and immortality ;
'Tis everything and all there is.
439.
Of this awareness, how to measure
The enormous length and width,
The summit-height and bottom-depth ?
Even the immortals can know this only
As peace attained and in no otherwise.

STORIES FROM YOGA VASISHTHA—IV

The Story of Prahlada

Translated from Sanskrit by
M. C. Subramanian

Vasishtha said :

O RAMA ! Listen, I shall explain the method adopted by Prahlada the king of Asuras for acquiring wisdom and attaining Liberation. When Hiranyakasipu (his father), the enemy of the Devas was slain (by Lord Vishnu) Prahlada became very sad. He thought : "My father and the chiefs of the Asuras have all been annihilated by Vishnu like the Kula mountains getting destroyed by storms when the world comes to an end. Vishnu has fought many battles with my ancestors. He has never shrunk from fighting. Will he fear me now ? I can conquer him only by surrendering to him, by seeking complete refuge with him with all my heart. He is my sole refuge. From this moment I shall take refuge with him. In fact I have already become Vishnu. The mantra OM NAMO NARAYANAYA (Obsequence to Narayana, i.e. Vishnu) fulfils all our wishes. It will never cease to throb in my heart just as air does not in the sky. One who is not Vishnu will not, by formal worship of Vishnu, obtain the result of true worship. One should worship Vishnu after becoming Vishnu. I have now become Vishnu.'

Thus Prahlada imagined his body to be that of Vishnu and thought about the proper way of worshipping him. He said to himself : 'Vishnu the Supreme Being exists outside this body in the form of the breath which goes in and out. I shall worship this breath mentally with due ceremony.' Accordingly Prahlada worshipped mentally, imagining that he had before him all the sacred paraphernalia like gem-set vessels, sandal paste and

other scents, incense, lamps and ornaments of various kinds. He next worshipped Vishnu in the temple (within the palace) which contained the actual materials required for worship. Thus he devoutly worshipped the Supreme Lord every day. Following his example his subjects, the Asuras, also began to worship Vishnu.

The news that the Asuras no longer entertained any hatred towards Vishnu and that they had become his devotees reached the celestial abode. Indra, the Devas and the Maruts, all were alarmed. They immediately went to Vishnu reclining over the serpent on the Ocean of Milk. They prayed : 'Bhagavan ! How is it that the Asuras who were always inimical to you have now become your devotees ? What have the wicked and hard-hearted Asuras to do with devotion to you which rises up and develops only in one's last life ? It is said that when a bad man turns good, it will end in sorrow and distress to the world. It is like flowers blooming out of season.'

At this Vishnu said : 'O Devas ! Do not be perturbed over Prahlada's devotion to Me. This is his last birth. He is now fit for Liberation. When a good man ceases to be good it is a sign of danger. But when a bad man turns good it is a good sign. Devas ! return to your abodes. Prahlada's good qualities will do no harm to anyone.' Having said this the Lord disappeared among the waves of the ocean like a big bunch of tamala flowers.

The Devas after duly praising him returned to their celestial world. They turned friends of Prahlada and looked upon him as a devotee of Vishnu.

Meanwhile Prahlada was absorbed in his worship of Vishnu. Although he had no desire for sense enjoyment he could not attain peace. His mind was wavering and unsteady. Vishnu knew this by his omniscience and went with his followers to Prahlada's temple in (the world of) Patala. When Prahlada saw that the Lord had actually come to him he was extremely delighted and worshipped him with greater devotion. With words of great fervour and import he praised the Lord standing before him.

On hearing his words of praise Vishnu was pleased like a peacock at the sight of rain-clouds. He said to Prahlada: 'O Precious Jewel of the race of Asuras and their Treasure House! Ask for a boon which will put an end to your birth and death.' Prahlada replied: 'Lord, Thou art the fulfiller of all our desires. Thou art for ever omnipresent. Bestow on me the boon which Thou thinkest is the best for me.' Upon this Vishnu said: 'O Sinless Soul! Practise Self Enquiry until you attain Brahman and abide in It. Your delusions will come to an end and you will attain the highest good.' Having said this Vishnu silently disappeared. Prahlada made his parting offering of flowers and sat on the floor in the lotus-pose. After reciting the appropriate hymns of praise he began to reflect as follows: 'As ordained by Vishnu I shall practise Self Enquiry. In this vast world who am I that speaks, walks, stands, goes and works? I am not this earth with its trees, plants and meadows. What is external is utterly insentient. How can I be that? This body did not exist by itself before its birth. It is animated by life-current (prana). It will soon cease to exist. I cannot be this insentient body.

Nor am I sound which has neither form nor permanence. I am neither the sense of touch, impermanent and insentient owing its existence to consciousness. Nor am I the fickle and insentient feeling of taste depending upon objects for its existence. As for form it

depends upon the contact of sight with the insentient objects of perception. It does not exist by itself and therefore I am not insentient form. Nor am I the insentient sense of smell experienced spasmodically.

I am devoid of all mental concepts also, like 'This is mine.' I am pure consciousness, distinct from the fickle five senses, free from the maya of all objectivity. As pure illumination I pervade everything within and without. I am pure Existence, taintless and indivisible. Ah! I do know now that I myself am the entire world. I am the all-pervading Self, the effulgent consciousness devoid of all concepts. Everything from the Sun down to petty things like pots and clothes are illumined by me and me alone. The varied activities of the senses also are illumined by me the inner light of consciousness. I am even beyond the abode of Brahma and will continue to exist even after aeons and aeons. I am boundless now and for ever. The Self is beyond the notion of 'I'. That (notion) made me appear finite, whereas, I am infinite. I am now established as perfect tranquillity. I look at everything with great joy. I am pure Consciousness.

I salute myself, the inner Consciousness of all beings, entirely devoid of concepts. All the wonderful feats (like the creation of the world) are performed by me, this Supreme Consciousness, absolutely pure, taintless, indivisible and immutable. That mind which does not brood over the past, present or future, which is devoid of all concepts and which sees no difference is the perfect one. It is impossible to describe or define such a mind. It may look like a blank void to those who do not understand the reality of the Self. The mind which is polluted by the dirt of attachment and hatred can never be free. It is like a bird with its feet tied with a string. Deluded by the pairs of opposites, attachment and hatred, all beings are like miserable worms crawling within dark and dirty holes.

(To be continued)

TIBETAN ART¹

An Assessment by
Lama Anagarika Govinda

SINCE the Chinese invasion of Tibet, the complete destruction of its ancient culture and the subsequent exodus of a substantial part of its population — including thousands of monks and many of the most prominent spiritual leaders — Tibetan art has burst upon the world like a revelation from another planet : as something both strange and fascinating, mysterious and beautiful. It has captured the imagination of art-lovers and truth-seekers alike, though few of them had any knowledge of the deeper meaning or significance of Tibetan art. The few works of Tibetan iconography that existed before the Chinese invasion, were hardly more than dry catalogues of Tibetan art-collections or mere classifications of icons, written by scholars (and for scholars) who had no insight into the psychology or religious experience that was expressed in these works. Only in recent years attempts have been made to enter into the spirit of Tibetan art with the help of religious texts and meditative sadhanas, instead of merely regarding it from the point of view of an art-historian or from a purely aesthetic standpoint. One of the first pioneers in this direction was Prof. Tucci in his magnificent work on "Tibetan Painted Scrolls" (Thankas) and Dr. Olschak follows closely in his footsteps. Her "Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet" is a real feast for the eyes and a gold-mine of information, in a clear and readable style. The reproductions are excellent, both in colour and in black-and-white. The latter are mainly reproduced from the publications of the International Academy of Indian Culture in New Delhi, founded by the late Prof. Raghunath Vira and his son, Prof. Lokesh Chandra, who among them have collected and published an enormous amount of iconographical and scriptural material of Tibetan Buddhism, unequalled by any other individual scholar in the world. Without this source-material half

of the present work would not have been possible. This, however, does not minimize our admiration for the excellent way, in which Dr. Olschak and Geshé Thupten Wangyal have used and interpreted this material in conjunction with the outstandingly beautiful colour-reproductions of rare Thankas, frescoes and bronze-images, etc., partly from the author's own collection (of which many items were acquired during her travels in Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal) as well as from other private and public collections. Tibet is a country of strong, luminous colours and clear outlines. The mystic art of Tibet, therefore, does not favour vagueness of any kind, but demands clear definition of design and colour.

The backbone of Tibetan pictorial art is the mastery and refinement of its line-work, the accuracy of drawing and the highly developed technique of woodblock carving and printing. Though colour lends a new dimension and is never used in a naturalistic way, but to indicate spiritual qualities and even directions of an inner space-dimension, according to strict laws of traditional symbolism, even the mere line-work of uncoloured brush-drawings or woodcuts are capable of conveying a world of vivid reality without ever being realistic in the sense of merely imitating things or landscapes in a naturalistic way. There are all the characteristic elements of our visual world, without distortion or exaggeration, and yet they depict more than the eye can see, namely the inner life of man and all that surrounds him, in a vision that shows the essential oneness of both, the seen and the seen, which become one in the artists or the creative

¹ *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*: By Blanche Christine Olschak in collaboration with Geshé Thupten Wangyal. 224 pages, 142 illustrations in colour, 372 black-and-white illustrations. Price: £ 10.50. Published by George Allen & Unwin, London, 1973.

visionary's experience. Mountains and clouds, waterfalls and trees, flowers and rocks are intimately related to the human and divine figures of which they seem to be emanations rather than something that merely surrounds them casually. Even the most phantastic or imaginative pictures breathe a sense of reality that rightly could be called 'surrealistic'.

A good example are the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava (at the beginning of the book), which are so exquisite in execution and so rich in detail that the reader would have liked to know more of its contents and the mutual relationship of these pictures. They are conceived as a ninefold mandala with Padmasambhava in his best-known form in the centre and with his eight manifestations grouped around him. For some unknown reason only seven of them are given here besides the central image which shows Padmasambhava in the royal robes of the King of Sahor, combined with the emblems of spiritual power and accompanied by his two main disciples, the Princess Mandarava and the Dâkinî Yeshe Tsogyal. Above his head are the Dhyâni-Buddhas who indicate the line of his spiritual descent: Samantabhadra, Amitâbha and Avalokiteśvara (in the note accompanying the picture, mistaken for the White Târâ), while the lower part of the picture shows two of Padmasambhava's contemporaries and helpers in the foundation of the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery (Samye), namely the Tibetan King Tisongdetsan and the Indian monk-scholar Santarakshita, as well as two fearful protecting deities. The following pictures of the same set show a similar pattern of conception and composition; in the highest place the spiritual teacher who initiated Padmasambhava into the sâdhana which made him assume the particular form in which he appears as the main figure in each of these pictures, while below and around him his disciples perform various acts of miraculous powers or are seen immersed in meditation. Before each of the main figures of Padmasambhava's manifestation appear one by one the figures of the 'offering goddesses' with their respective emblems, the lamp, the incense-bowl, the perfumed conch-shell, the mirror, the lute, etc. All these details, which combine historical, mythological and symboli-

cal elements, give these pictures their specific meaning — far beyond their aesthetic value. Probably the shortness of available space prevented the author from going into a more detailed description. By the way, there is a small error in the note accompanying the first of these pictures: the feather on Padmasambhava's cap is not a "peacock feather" (as can be seen very clearly) but that of an eagle, symbolizing the "soaring mind" of the great guru. There is nothing in such pictures that is not significant in one way or another.

In contrast to the refinement of these pictures and to the rest of the paintings and woodcuts reproduced in this book, is the drawing purporting to represent the ideal proportions of the Buddha-image. That this is not the case, can be observed by anybody who compares this clumsy and stunted drawing with the noble proportions of the statues, thankas and frescoes reproduced in this book — not to speak of the classical period of Tibetan art, as exemplified by the Western Tibetan style, introduced by the famous Lotsava Rinchenzangpo (967-1052 A.D.). A beautiful example of this style is shown on p. 53, where the Dhyâni-Buddhas Akṣobhya and Ratnasambhava are depicted. The fact that they are shown with their respective throne-bearers, the elephant (indicating Akṣobhya) and the horse (indicating Ratnasambhava), makes it unlikely that they represent "Shakyamuni's heavenly manifestations", as claimed in the explanatory note. Also the reproduction of a fresco-painting (belonging to the same tradition and probably the same century) does not portray "Buddha Shâkyamuni sitting under the tree of enlightenment", but Prince Siddhartha, long before he became a Buddha, sitting under the Roscapple Tree, while his father, King Suddhodana, performed the plough ceremony. The figures in the branches of the tree are, therefore, not "Dhyâni-Buddhas, who symbolize the five-fold sublime wisdom", but quite obviously five Hindu ascetics. And the "devotees", who surround the young Siddhartha, are the very ascetics, who have descended from the tree in order to pay their respects to the meditating Bodhisattva, who by the power of his concentration arrested them in mid-air on

their flight to the Himalayas. The note then goes on to explain the significance of "the black pig" (though the pig in this fresco fragment is a clear yellow!) as "the emblem of ignorance, symbolically struck by the arrow of highest comprehension that penetrates the matrix of all spiritual poisons, such as envy, hatred and greed, which cause the endless repetition of earthly suffering." Here the author loses herself in private speculations, which have nothing to do with the story, which merely says that the Bodhisattva, contemplating the sufferings of the oxen cruelly forced under the yoke, while ploughing, or of other animals, hunted and killed, finally fell into a state of deep absorption, which was so powerful that even the shadow of the tree under which he was seated did not move and the above-mentioned ascetics were arrested in mid-air. A beautiful fresco of the scene existed in one of the ancient temples of Tsaparang, and a faithful copy of it (made by Li Gotami Govinda) is now in the possession of the Prince of Wales Museum of Bombay, where it is displayed in the centre of the Tibetan section.

On pages 18 and 19 the eight traditional types of Chortens, the Tibetan version of the ancient Buddhist Stūpas of India, are depicted and described. It is said here that the tumuli of pre-Buddhist times had "a Lingam erected on top of the [burial] mound, symbolizing the saint's unification with the highest god" — and that the spire on the dome of a Chorten corresponds to this symbol and to the "enlightenment elevation" on the heads of those who have reached Buddhahood. This seems to be a somewhat arbitrary view and all the more unconvincing, as it is in direct conflict with the historical evidence in regard to pre-historic tumuli as well as with the development of Buddhist Stūpa² Architecture.

The idea of an "enlightenment elevation", besides, is of very late origin, and only shows that people had forgotten the original meaning of this iconographical peculiarity which distinguishes a Buddha from even his most enlightened disciples and followers. It has nothing to do with the Buddha's enlightenment, but as the story of his life and the

numerous pictorial representations of it unmistakably show, it records the very start of his religious career many long years *before* his enlightenment. The legend tells us that when he renounced the worldly life in search of truth — still far from enlightenment — he divested himself of his princely ornaments and with one stroke of the sword he cut off his long hair which he had gathered with his left hand above his head. Since that time, it is said, his hair remained in the same position and had never to be cut again.

From all this we can only assume that the Buddha never shaved his head, as it later became the custom among the monks and nuns of his order, and it is most likely that he kept his hair in a knot on the top of his head, as it is even nowadays the custom among the Sikhs (who like the Buddha belong to the kshatriya caste) as well as many among the present-day yogis and sannyasis. This may be significant as an indication that, whereas the Buddha represented the ideal of the homeless śramana, his successors became well-established and comfortably settled monastic communities, becoming more and more separated from normal human life and the contact with the people around them. As a reaction to this, the Siddhas took again to the homeless life of the yogin, and with them an entirely new religious movement, which greatly contributed to the Tantric form of Tibetan Buddhism, came into existence.

The Siddhas were held in such high esteem that the Mahāsiddha Saraha was thought of as being the guru of Nagārjuna, the famous philosopher of the Mādhyamika School, who lived in the second century A.D. This however, is not possible as none of the Siddhas is known to be earlier than the 7th century. According to Benoytosh Bhattacharyya (a recognized authority in this matter) Saraha was born around 633 A.D., and the Nāgārjuna, who was said to be his pupil, was the Siddha and alchemist Nāgārjuna. The claim that "Guru Saraha lived 2000 years ago" (p. 10) can, therefore, not be maintained.

² Cf. my monograph on *Some Aspects of Stupa Symbolism*, Kitabistan, Allahabad & London, 1940. Also *Solar and Lunar Symbolism in the Development of Stupa Architecture*, MARG, Bombay, 1950.

The age of the Siddhas was the age of the unfoldment of the Tantric Path and the Diamond Vehicle, in which creative imagination became one of the most important tools of meditation, for which mandalas were of fundamental importance. The general patterns of these mandalas have been well described and illustrated in excellent colour as well as in black-and-white reproductions, which give an idea of the intricate nature of Tantric sâdhanas and their profound symbolism. However, it is a pity that the most frequently used arrangement of the five Dhyâni-Buddhas, on which the most typical Tibetan mandalas are based (as for instance those of the Bardo Thodol, "The Tibetan Book of the Dead"), is not even mentioned. The table in which the positions, the colours, mudrâs, mantras, elements, faculties, throne-bearers and other symbols of the main figures of the mandala are shown, is exclusively based on one single sâdhana (Guhyasamâja), without explaining that this is only one among other possible arrangements, depending on which of the Dhyâni-Buddhas forms the key-figure of the mandala, comparable to the key note in a musical composition. In many of the most important mandalas, for instance, Vairocana is in the centre, while Akṣobhya is in the east, representing the Mirror-like Wisdom and the element water, whose surface, if undisturbed, reflects like a mirror, and is in this capacity the symbol of the âlaya-vijnânas, the universal consciousness in a state of perfect transparency and tranquility. Akṣobhya's throne-bearer or vehicle is the elephant. In relationship to the element water the elephant symbolizes the monsoon cloud, in relationship to Akṣobhya's gesture of touching the earth (bhūmisparśamudrâ) the elephant symbolizes steadfastness, unshakability and tranquility. This is significant, because it shows that the same symbol can have different meanings, according to different levels of understanding or consciousness (physical, sensual, mental, psychological, spiritual, etc.), according to the context or in relationship to other symbols.

For the same reason, the chart (pp. 20/21) which shows the relationship of the energy-spheres (Cakras) of the body and the corresponding Dhyâni-Buddhas cannot be regarded

as generally valid, because it does not take into consideration that it depends on the context of the particular sâdhana which Dhyâni-Buddha is associated with which Cakra. This kind of over-simplification can only lead to misunderstandings and does not do justice to the flexibility of Tibetan meditational systems and the psychological refinement of the Buddhist attitude, especially in its Tantric practices.

In view of the multi-dimensionality of symbols, as mentioned above, we also have to be careful in our definition of symbolical relationships or even in defining the character of individual symbols, because any rigidly systematized representation goes at the cost of their vitality and their inherent dynamism. For this reason it is also dangerous to take over outworn, stereotyped concepts of symbols, which do not reflect the particular meaning applied to them in a given tradition. It is, for instance, misleading and unjustified to speak of the Vajra as "thunderbolt" in the context of the Buddhist Vajrayâna, unless we are prepared to call it the "Thunderbolt Vehicle" instead of the Diamond Vehicle.

Since Buddhists have been perfectly clear in what they mean by "vajra", as explained in one of the most important Mahâyâna texts, known as the "Diamond Saw" (Vajracchedika Sutra) and since even the Tibetan translation of the term "vajra" reveals it as "the master or lord of stones" (rDo = stone; rJe = master), i.e. the diamond, — there is no justification in perpetuating a misconception that had its origin in equating the meaning of this term with that of its vedic synonym which had quite different connotation and associations.

The Buddhist term "vajra" symbolizes the highest spiritual qualities, namely, luminosity, transparency, indestructibility and firmness. In the latter capacity it is related to Akṣobhya's steadfastness and immutability, symbolized by his elephant, while the first two qualities correspond to the luminosity of the 'mirror' (reflective and contemplative consciousness) and the transparency of the element water. Therefore, Akṣobhya is often depicted with the Vajra as the emblem of his spiritual 'family' and it would thus be more correctly inter-

preted as the "diamond sceptre". Otherwise it would be better to leave this term untranslated, after having once explained its meaning.

In a similar way it would have been better to retain the the term "Dâkinî" (Tib. : mKhah-ḥgro-ma), because Dâkinîs are far more than "Cloud-Fairies", since they can represent divine as well as demonic beings, associated not only with the heavenly regions, but just as much with the horrors of the cremation places. They are not sweet fairy-tale beings, but fierce powers of the knowledge of life and death, as well as of inspiration that leads us beyond both : inspiration in the sense of the Greek word "daimon".

However, these considerations should not deflect us from the value and the merits of this book, which by far outweigh its occasional shortcomings in the interpretation of such vast and complicated material. The beautiful repro-

ductions of rare and significant works of Tibetan art have been chosen with understanding and true appreciation of their artistic, spiritual and historical value. They have been explained and commented upon in a competent and lucid manner, so that even those who are not familiar with the subject can understand and enjoy the rich fare offered in this magnificent volume. For the student of Tibetan Buddhist culture this book is a safe guide, especially as all technical terms and proper names have not only been given according to their pronunciation but also in their Tibetan spelling and with their Sanskrit equivalents. The publishers too have to be thanked for the excellent get-up and the great care they have taken in every detail. A volume like this will be a permanent asset, to any library, because its contents will never be outdated.

The One Healer

By
paul rePS

WHEN ANIMAL GETS SICK
IT RETREATS INTO THE SELF
THE ONE HEALER
WHEN HUMAN GETS WELL
IT ADVANCES INTO THE SELF
THE ONE HEALER
WHO IS THIS SELF BUT ME
THE ONE INSAYING ME
WE SOUND MMM
WHEN IT TASTES
DELICIOUS
THE SOUND EEE
ELECTRICS ME

How the Maharshi Came to Me

By

N. S. Pathak

MY guru, Sri Gajanan Maharaj Gupte of Nasik (who attained Mahasamadhi in September 1946) was, in 1943, invited by Sri Ramana Maharshi Mandal of Matunga, Bombay, to attend the 63rd birth anniversary celebrations of Sri Bhagavan and if unable to do so was requested to send his message for the occasion.

Sri Gajanan Maharaj was dictating to me his reply. He began : "Having been fully absorbed in contemplation of this great Self-realized Rishi . . ." Just as I was writing it down a thought struck me : "Only Maharaj is sitting in front of me and there is no Ramana Maharshi anywhere around ! How could the Maharaj then use the adjective THIS ?" Maharaj then looked at me with bright piercing eyes as if to rebuke my doubt and I continued taking down his dictation.

Later on, I had to go on some mission to Trivandrum. On the 7th of December, 1945, my friend, Sri P. N. Deshpande, and I arrived in Madras and went to see Sri D. Subramanyam at the latter's office. On that morning, all of a sudden I felt that I was dying, that some dark-complexioned but divinely resplendent person was standing before me beckoning to me, that my body was falling on the ground but my spirit was being drawn towards him. I was gasping for breath, became uneasy and sweated profusely. Both Deshpande and Subramanyam were struck with sadness and asked me to relate what had happened. Suddenly and unintentionally my eyes went up to the wall in front, where I saw the photograph of the very person who had seemed to attract me. Pointing to the wall, I nearly shouted : "He is the man !" Sri Subramanyam understood the situation and gleefully replied : "Oh ! That is our Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi ! He is calling you !" Later that day both Deshpande

and myself went to Tiruvannamalai (Arunachala). The following morning we arrived at the Sri Ramanasramam along with a Tamilian Engineer who met us *en route*. After taking bath all the three of us went to have darshan of Sri Bhagavan in the Hall. About 20 or 25 devotees had gathered there. Everyone felt elevated and happy thinking that Bhagavan was looking at him alone ! Bhagavan looked at me with steady gaze and I in turn fixed my eyes on him. Then commenced our mute conversation :

I : What should one do if an undesirable thought creeps into one's mind ?

Maharshi : Do you have any unclean, unwanted thing in your pocket ?

I : Yes, a dirty handkerchief.

M : Then what would you do to throw it out ?

I : I shall put my hand inside my pocket, take the handkerchief out and throw it away.

M : Just like that, any undesirable thought should be thrown out with the hand of discrimination.

And from that moment onward, because of Bhagavan's Grace, it became a simple matter for me to discard unwanted thoughts !

At the Ashram I once saw a squirrel sitting on Bhagavan's lap and eating pea-nuts. A monkey was also seen waiting his turn to get something from his hand to eat. At the meal time all the devotees sat in front of Bhagavan. He made me sit in front of him and made sure that I was properly served. I considered the meal divine. After a little while Bhagavan told us to go to Skandasramam on the Hill. All the three of us reached the spot with the speed of birds. While returning to the Ashram,



we saw Bhagavan standing on the way as if waiting for us, with the *kamandalu* in one hand and the stick in the other! We were indeed most fortunate in being able to bend our heads once again at his lotus feet. His perfectly tranquil and benign face shone with divine light!

In the evening I went to Bhagavan to take leave. He came out of the room and gave me his farewell message: "Convey my greetings to Gajanan Maharaj!" These words of Sri Maharshi cleared the doubt that had risen in my mind while I was taking down the dictation in 1943 of the message of my Maharaj to Ramana Maharshi Mandal, Bombay; and I realised that sages had the power of transmitting thoughts! Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi then blessed me most affectionately and I took his leave.

We then visited the magnificent temple of Arunachala Siva. I was sitting on one of the steps of the temple and was overpowered by a divine mood. Just then, on came an elephant who picked up with his trunk a coconut from a nearby shop and gave it to me. I returned this generosity by lovingly bowing to the elephant, and asked one of the people who had

gathered there to break the coconut. The kernel was the form of sivalinga! We all ate it as *prasad*!

After this pilgrimage I returned to Lonavala and noticed that the Sivalinga that I had in my daily worship was broken into half. Although I was not disturbed by this happening, I requested Sri Kakasaheb Nirokhekar, a highly advanced devotee of Sri Bidkar Maharaj and my well-wisher, to explain to me what it meant. He told me that the significance of the Sivalinga found broken of its own accord was that there was no further need for me to perform worship of any idol or form!

At Raan-antri, a place near Chikhali town in Buldhana Dt. is the Samadhi Shrine of my Sadguru Sri Narayan Saraswati Maharaj. In the beginning of April, 1950 I went to stay there for about two months. One night the flame of the lantern suddenly went out for no reason. At that moment Sri Ramana Maharshi appeared before me and said: "I am going. Visit our Ashram any time, you will be well received there." I disclosed to my wife that Bhagavan Ramana had just then attained Mahasamadhi. She doubted and disliked my words, which she thought were inauspicious and improper. On the third day I received a letter from Dr. Kumta, my spiritual brother from Bombay, containing the news of Sri Bhagavan's passing away at the very time and date as I had mentioned to my wife!

Later Mr. Maurice Frydman and Mr. Govan met me at Sholapur, for the first time. It suddenly occurred to me to speak about Bhagavan and I told them how I had met him. They told me that they too had stayed at Ramanasramam and were thrilled when I spontaneously opened the topic.

The words of Bhagavan that I heard at Raan-antri during 1950 came true after 22 years. During Feb. 1972, Dr. Dinoo Mistri, my wife and myself arrived at Sri Ramanasramam and stayed at Morvi Guest House. Sri Venkataratnam of the Ashram staff looked

after us very well. In the evening we went to the railway station to return to Sholapur. The train was about to move when Sri Ratnam and an American devotee came almost running after us, and offered us a drink of pure cow's milk sweetened with sugar and spiced with cardamoms. No expression can adequately describe their love and hospitality. It was as if Bhagavan himself had come to the railway station to remind me of his words! Throughout the journey sweet memories kept up happy until we reached Sholapur, where at

the railway station another surprise awaited us. Some well-wishers came to greet us, offered garlands and bouquets and milk *pedbas* as a token of love and respect!

Spiritually speaking, I confess I am as the dust beneath the feet of Bhagavan. But this experience of his grace only proves the truth that the mark of a Self-realised Sage is that there reigns around him an atmosphere of spontaneous love and he pours his Grace lavishly, unasked!

IN NOMINE

By

Norman Fraser

'Hallowed be thy name' is considered to be an important part of Christian prayer. But very few have ever stopped really to consider what this actually means. Through the habit of mouthing, '*In nomine Patri, Filii et Spiritu Sancti*', or some translation of the formula, it has become a cliché. Not many can explain the real meaning of this invocation. Christ Jesus said that if we prayed in His name the prayer would be answered (John 14 : 13, 14 ; 15 : 16 ; 16 : 23, 24 etc.) What a momentous promise — but are all prayers that simply end with, 'In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord', answered? According to James, if our prayers are not answered it is because we have 'prayed amiss'. How true! But what does 'In My Name' mean?

Let us start with the word 'name'. Among the Hebrews, pronouncing a man's name gave authority over him and established unseen contact with him. That explains why, according to the Jews, God's name must never be rendered vocally; on reading 'Yahweh' Jews always say '*Adonai*' (Lord).

As the Hebrews were convinced that a man and his name were one and the same thing — indivisible — does not praying 'in My name' then mean praying in, or better, within Me? But to be able to pray within Christ or God, must you not first, as Paul put it, 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus'? *And what is that mind but the one and only real Self? Now this takes us directly to Bhagavan's 'Who am I?' Until we have realised who we are, not what the body-mind or psyche is, but who I am, it is impossible to pray within God.* In any case, to pray within God means that God does the praying, for within God there is only God to do any praying. Now we see how the praying taught by Jesus is, actually transcendental *bhakti*, true meditation in which no petition is present but only Love, perfect unity, whole awareness. Such a prayer is always answered, as those who have achieved it know. And they sorrow for those who ask and ask, ending up with the pious words, 'in the name of Jesus Christ' in the fading hope that their prayer will be answered. Those who are not ready for Truth do not understand it, and few know the real meaning of *in nomine*.

Glory of Arunachala

Arunachala Mahatmyam

Translated from Tamil by
M. C. Subramanian

PART II

CHAPTER V

SINS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Nandikeswara said (to Markandeya) :

ONE who possesses the quality of *sattva*¹ alone is rare in this world. Generally people possess the qualities of *rajas*² and *tamas*³ only. One who possesses the *sattvic* quality performs good deeds and attains Liberation. Others are ordained by Brahma (the Creator) to take birth again and consigned to hell to suffer for their bad deeds. There are various kinds of hells in various places for this purpose. They are as follows :

One who kills a Brahmin suffers torments in *mabarourava* and other hells and takes birth afterwards as an ass, or a dog or a pig or a *chandala* (outcaste). The Brahmin who takes intoxicating drinks suffers torments for a time in the hell known as *raurava* and is then born as an insect, or worm or a bird. He who steals the property of a Brahmin becomes a *Brahma Rakshasa* (demon) and in his next life suffers for want of the things which he steals. One who covets another man's wife is tortured in the forest of *Asipatra* (leaves made of swords) for a long time and is reborn afterwards as one who is neither man nor woman. One who covets his guru's wife is first tortured by the minions of Yama who tie him to a red hot pillar of iron and is forced to suffer for a long time in the hell known as *kalasutra*. The poisoner has to suffer in a terrible (*gbōra*) hell ; the slanderer in the extremely terrible hell (*mabāgbōra*) ; the hater of dharma in the hell known as *Avīsa* ; the deceiver in *karāla* ; the secret sinner in the

hell called *sambara* ; the liar in a frightful hell ; the stealer of money in *Asishōra* ; the malicious man in *vajranaraka*, the Brahmin who eats meat in the hell called *Tarala* ; the stealer of temple property in *dabāna* ; the plunderer of others' property in *gbōra gbōra*, the traitor to parents in *Tōkshna* ; the murderer of a child in the hell *chanda*, the murderer of a woman in *kūlam* ; the despiser of japa (repetition of holy *mantras* or words) in *Tapana* ; the slaughterer of a horse is suffocated to death ; the slaughterer of the cow suffers in the hell called *dāruna*. In these hells sinners are bound with ropes by the minions of Yama, smitten with cudgels and pierced with spears. They are pecked at by vultures and other birds, bitten by serpents and attacked by dogs, tigers and lions. Their limbs are torn asunder, or cut to pieces or gouged with sharp weapons. They are whipped, pierced with needles, fried in oil and made to carry heavy loads. The murderer of a Brahmin is reborn as a consumptive, the drunkard as a person with decayed teeth, the stealer of gold with decayed nails, the paramour of the guru's wife with skin-diseases. The traitor to the guru is reborn as an epileptic, and the slanderer of the Vedas as a *chandala*. One who bears false witness suffers in his next life from diseases of the eye, one who eats before others eat suffers from indigestion, one who acquires learning by deceit is dumb in his next life, the stealer of books blind, the lover of others' wives lame, the slanderer of others deaf. The violator of customary practices is reborn as a pig, the thief

¹ One of the three fundamental qualities described as white, the principle of purity and goodness.

² The quality of passion and activity, described as red.

³ The quality of inertia or dullness, described as black.

with a diseased tongue. The inhospitable man suffers in his next birth from pain in his cheeks, he who dallies with women at forbidden times from diabetes and the eater of forbidden food from a foul-smelling mouth. He who shows disrespect to others is reborn as a slave, the destroyer of ponds and gardens as an ass, the promise-breaker as a shortlived person, the speaker of harsh words as a dog, the hater of Vishnu as a chameleon and the hater of

Siva as a rat. One should realise the consequences of sinful acts and then perform rites for expiation in the temple of Arunachala (here).

After learning from Nandikeswara about the numerous kinds of tortures and hells of sinners Markandeya worshipped the feet of Nandikeswara again and enquired about the expiatory rites for these sins.

CHAPTER VI

EXPIATION OF SINS

Nandikeswara said (to Markandeya) :

I shall describe fully the expiatory rites for the great sins. Listen carefully. The murderer of a Brahmin should come to Sonadri, bathe in the *Khadga Tirtha*, put on sacred ashes and *rudraksba*, repeat the *Panchakshara*, worship Paramesvara with devotion, and fasting, beg his food for a period of one year, feast Brahmins, control his senses and worship Isvara with devotion. If he does this his sin of murdering a Brahmin will be expiated and he will attain the world of Brahma.

He who has taken an intoxicating drink should spend one year at Aruna in the manner prescribed above, worship Mahesvara and pour milk over the linga while chanting *Sata Rudram*. He will then be free of his sin. If the stealer of gold worships Hara at Aruna with *vilva* leaves and feasts Brahmins he will expiate his sin. The paramour of the guru's wife should live at Aruna in the manner described above, light a thousand lamps on the asterism of Krittika, worship Isa for three months, make a gift of a well-adorned maiden to a worthy Brahmin and repeat the *shadaksbara* (*Om Namahsivaya*). He will then be rid of his sin. He will also abide in the world of Siva until he attains Liberation. The lover of other men's wives should stay here (at Arunachala) with his senses under control, worship the Lord of Aruna with fresh flowers for a month and make material offerings to Mahesvara according to his ability. He will then be free from his sin.

If the poisoner stays at Aruna, leading an austere life as stated above, and offer milk to the Lord he will be free of his sins. If the slanderer stays at Aruna leading an austere life and makes arrangements for teaching the Vedas to deserving Brahmins his sin will be expiated. The incendiary should stay at Aruna for three months leading an austere life and build a house and give it free to a devotee of Siva. The despiser of dharma should stay here, build rest-houses for pilgrims according to his ability and make gifts of food. The traitor to parents should stay here for one month and make gifts of thousands of cows to the Lord and Brahmins, feast many Brahmins during eclipses and give (set free) a black stud-bull. The murderer of a woman or a child should make gifts of gingelly seeds to Brahmins during periods of *vyatipata* and repeat hymns to Isvara in the prescribed manner.

Let him who has polluted wells and tanks dig wells and tanks at this place. Let him who has misappropriated the lands of others endow lands to the Lord of Aruna at this place. Let him who has destroyed gardens create parks for Him. Let him who has deprived another of his house construct mantaps etc. for the Lord. He who has wronged another should endow money to the Lord of Aruna and propitiate Him. His sin will then be expiated. He will definitely attain the higher worlds. He who has taken meat should stay here for three fortnights and worship

the Lord of Aruna with offerings and shout loudly 'Sonachala Natha' thrice. Aspirants for Liberation should stay at Aruna, worship the Lord, repeat the Arunesa Mantra and walk round the Hill according to their ability. If they do so they will be benefited. Wise men always utter the name 'Arunachala, when they happen to sneeze, or stumble, or fall down, or commit a mistake, or have an evil dream or rejoice exceedingly.

He who has been ostracized, and he who is a traitor to Siva becomes sinless by merely staying at Aruna for three days. This is the world of Siva on earth. It is the form adopted by *Vedasiras* i.e. the crest of the Vedas. What is known as Arunagiri is the Kailasa of the South. One attains the goal of life (siddhi) at other places through austerities, but here one attains it the moment one thinks of it. Understand that religious acts performed here have greater efficacy than those performed on the banks of the Ganga, at Prayaga, or at

Kasi, or at Sethu, or at Pushkaram or at other places. Therefore Agnishtōma, Vājapēya, Vairāja, Sarvatomukha, Rajasūya and Asvamēdha (names of various kinds of sacrifices) should all be performed at Aruna.

Fasting for one day at Aruna is as good as observing a hundred *chāndrāyanas*⁴ or many *santapanas*.⁵ The great gifts (*mabadanas*) made here are sixteen times as efficacious as at other places. Religious acts prescribed in the kalpas which are performed here are twice as efficacious.

On learning these details from Nandikesvara the chief of *munis* (Markandeya) saluted him and enquired about the articles to be offered (to Arunachaleswara) on particular days, particular seasons etc.

⁴ Regulated and restricted intake of food.

⁵ Living upon the five products of the cow for five days, taking only one product one day, taking water alone on the sixth day and fasting completely on the seventh day.

"The body is inert like a pot. Since it has no 'I-consciousness' and since, in its absence in deep sleep, we still exist, it cannot be the 'I'. Who is it then that produces the feeling of 'I-ness'? Where is he? In the heart-cavern of those who thus (enquire and) realize, the omnipresent Arunachala Siva shines of his own accord as 'That-am-I' consciousness."

— *Supplement to the Forty Verses*, v. 10.

* * * * *

"Through constant, uninterrupted meditation in the heart: 'That consciousness which is devoid of all adjuncts, that Siva, I am' removes all attachments from the mind."

— *Supplement to the Forty Verses*, v. 25.

DEAR REPS

My old friend Reps has been known to assert in his witty way that
"No one exists in 'Reality' but does so in concept".

I would rather he had said: "No one exists *otherwise* than in
'reality' (thing-ness) and *thereby* does so in concept."

He will surely be displeased with me for so nearly agreeing
with him but, alas, I cannot always disguise that from him!

'Relativity' being the only reality (thing-ness) we can know,
'existing' is both relative and real, i.e. merely conceptual.
'Being', on the contrary, is Absolute and therefore relatively
'neither is nor is-not'.

But when we know that 'relativity' is only the relative aspect
of 'absolute', as absolute is only the totality of its own
'relativity', such questions hardly arise.

Then all 'things' being relative, neither being nor
not-being Absolutely,
little remains about which Reps and my so-called 'self' are able
any longer to pretend to disagree.
Which may apply to anyone taking the trouble to read
these few lines.

WEI WU WEI

BOOK REVIEWS

HINDUISM, BUDDHISM, ZEN : By Nancy Wilson Ross. Pub. : Faber & Faber, England. Pp. 221. Price : Rs. 26.

In aiming to provide an introduction to the three dominant religious cultures of the Far East within the span of 140 pages Nancy Wilson Ross has set herself a formidable task and wisely she has supplemented her text with 48 pages of carefully chosen plates illustrating the traditional arts they have inspired. These, if studied sympathetically and with an open heart, can achieve far more than the written word in giving the enquiring reader, predisposed perhaps to consider these traditions alien and exotic, a direct and intuitive understanding of their basic values and significance.

"In contemplating the solution of a Zen conundrum the aspirant is advised to remember that he is 'not to think about it, but just to gaze at it closely.'" This advice from the third essay can also be applied to the contemplation of these Hindu images, Buddhist stupas and Zen paintings.

Surveying all aspects of Hinduism — historical, mythological, social, cultural and doctrinal — from pre-Aryan times to the nineteenth century reformers and Mahatma Gandhi, it is a remarkably accurate and balanced achievement. It is, however, unfortunate that one cannot feel too happy about the paragraphs devoted to Ramana Maharshi. The author writes : "Sri Ramana was capable of sustained periods of religious trance comparable to those of Sri Ramakrishna," and later suggests that both Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana "in their remote ashrams were hoping to achieve on the highest individual plane an amelioration of the world's increasing troubles, tensions and confusions."

Buddhism, being a more homogeneous culture taxes the author's skill less severely and her essay on Zen, still more limited in scope, enables her to treat her subject in correspondingly greater depth.

Correspondence between Zen painting and modern Western trends, such as Dadaism and Surrealism, while not stretched too far, are interesting.

VIEWS FROM THE REAL WORLD : EARLY TALKS WITH GURDJIEFF. Pub. : Dutton & Co., New York, U.S.A. Pp. 284. Price : \$ 10.97.

Gurdjieff and his teachings were first made known to the general public some thirty years ago by

P. O. Ouspensky in a brilliant work of reportage, entitled : *In Search of the Miraculous*. The 'System', as Ouspensky called it, is a vast edifice of cosmology and psychology of provoking profundity. Since then most of Gurdjieff's own writings have been published side by side with many volumes of reminiscences by followers more or less close to him.

Who and what was he? To the faithful he remains simply 'Mr. Gurdjieff' while to others who lived and worked with him at his centre near Paris he still remains an enigma. To those outside the fold he can probably never be anything but an enigma — fascinating, delightful, infuriating, a consummate 'leg-puller'. He defies any label. Occultist he certainly was but more than an occultist, he had many of the qualities of the priest too and his School became more and more of a religious school as it took root.

It was, by any standard, a remarkably severe school. His disciples' will had to be completely surrendered to the master who pointed out that he lost nothing in so doing as an ordinary man has no will anyway. He is only a legion of conflicting 'I's and desires. In dealing with each pupil Gurdjieff ruthlessly exposed every sensitive nerve, he broke down every buffer ego instinctively installs to protect itself from the disturbances of life and ordered it to perform feats of physical endurance ego imagines to be completely beyond its capabilities. That Gurdjieff was no charlatan is indicated by the fact that these feats, sometimes dangerous by ordinary human reckoning, never seem to have led to adverse effects.

It was a characteristic of Gurdjieff's disconcerting methods that, while demanding the total confidence of his pupils, from time to time he would test that confidence by doing his best to shatter it. This is apparent both from his personal writings and from anecdotes recorded by his followers.

The volume under review is a collection of Gurdjieff's earliest recorded talks preceded by 'Glimpses of Truth' — a personal portrait of him written in 1914 by a member of his original circle in Moscow. It contains little that is not to be found in Ouspensky's book. Although Gurdjieff never seems to have spoken specifically of a 'system' we find in these talks all the basic ingredients ; the law of octaves and the law of three, essence and perso-

nality, work on oneself, conscious suffering and the need for knowledge to be absorbed by all man's centres for it to become effective knowledge.

The volume concludes with 38 aphorisms "inscribed in a special script above the study house at the Preure", his centre at Fontaenbleu. I quote three at random :

"The energy spent on active inner work is then and there transformed into a fresh supply, but that spent on passive work is lost forever."

"Conscious love evokes the same in response. Emotional love evokes the opposite. Physical love depends on type and polarity."

"One of the best means for arousing the wish to work on yourself is to realize that you may die at any moment. But first you must learn how to keep it in mind."

"Views From the Real World" can be recommended as an introduction to this remarkable man and his work.

THE WAY OF THE BUDDHA : Pub. : Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi. Pp. 330. Price : Rs. 30.

This sumptuous album published by the Government of India to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's Parinirvana comprises nearly 300 large pages of plates illustrating all periods and aspects of Buddhist art in India and the countries of the Far East to which it spread. Some of the plates are in colour and all are accompanied by appropriate notes and quotations from the scriptures.

Priced at only Rs. 30 *The Way of the Buddha* is fantastically cheap. It would make a beautiful gift to any lover of the Buddha dhamma.

CUTTING THROUGH SPIRITUAL MATERIALISM : By Chogyam Trungpa. Pub. : Shambala Publications, Berkeley, U.S.A. Pp. 250. Price : \$ 3.95.

The author of these talks is a Tibetan guru or 'spiritual friend' as he prefers to regard himself, belonging to the lineage of Marpa and Milarepa, who has extensive experience of directing pupils in the U.S.A. and Europe and a deep understanding of the western psyche.

A large part of what he has to say relates to the psychological relationship between master and pupil, the pitfalls, sidetracks and distortions which inevitably beset such an encounter.

Our initial urge to embark on some spiritual path is an urge of the ego. Ego expects to 'get something out of it' — peace, harmony, power or whatever — and seizes upon every situation which arises to enhance itself and protect its interests. This, briefly, is what Chogyam Trungpa defines as "Spiritual Materialism." The ego, instead of allowing true spirituality to emerge, may, in fact, become Total Ego leaving no room for spiritual experience at all. And unfortunately Ego, which by this time is master of a lot of mental gymnastics and meditational parlour games, imagines he is doing fine : though at times he may not feel quite so sure.

"Walking the spiritual path properly is a very subtle process, it is not something to jump into naively", the author warns us at the beginning of the introduction.

If, by Guru's grace, Ego catches a glimpse of what is really happening to him he will also by now understand that there is nothing he can do about it. Any "doing something about it" would only be another of Ego's clever devices.

And so we come to surrender. "One of the difficulties in surrendering to the guru is our preconceptions regarding him and our expectations of what will happen with him. We are preoccupied with ideas of what we would like to experience with our teacher. . . . When we find he does not match our expectations we begin to feel disappointed, we begin to doubt."

To establish a true teacher-student relationship we must give up all our preconceptions regarding it and the condition of opening and surrender. The guru is ever open to the disciple who approaches him but he can only communicate to the extent that the disciple opens himself, exposes himself, strips himself completely naked before the guru without self-evaluation and self-criticism.

"Self-evaluation and self-criticism are, basically, neurotic tendencies which derive from our not having enough confidence in ourselves, 'confidence' in the sense of not seeing what we are, knowing what we are, knowing we can afford to open."

Openness to the master implies also openness to all the day to day situations of life. Life and Guru are not separate compartments for Guru pervades everything — the trivial daily round just as much as those dramatic, carthartic experiences that from time to time break down ego's most protective defences.

In a talk on Initiation the author explains how this can take place only when, and to the extent that, the pupil is sufficiently open to receive it. The

whispering of some mantra into an ear deaf to all but ego's expectations and chatter is a meaningless formality serving no purpose other than to gratify ego's esteem.

"The Sanskrit equivalent for 'initiation' is *abhisheka* which means 'sprinkle', 'pour', 'anoint'. And if there is pouring there must be a vessel into which the pouring can fall."

"The external teacher opens himself, and, because you are also open, because you are 'awake', there is the meeting of two elements which are identical. This is the true meaning of *abhisheka*, initiation. It is not a matter of joining a club, of becoming one of a flock, a sheep with your owner's initials branded on your behind."

Another talk emphasises the necessity of maintaining a sense of humour throughout our sadhana. If we take it on ourselves too 'seriously' this is a sure sign that ego is once again busy with its games.

Later talks provide us with brief but illuminating insights into the fundamentals of Mahayana: the Four Noble Truths, the Bodhisattva Path, Shunyata, Prajna and Compassion and Tantra.

The reviewer regrets the exigencies of space do not permit him to offer more samples of the many passages he has marked for quotation. This is an important book. Even if you cannot afford \$ 3.95, get hold of it somehow!

RONALD ROSE.

THE HEART OF THE RIGVEDA: By Mahul R. Gopalacharya, M.A. (Principal, Vani Mahavidyalaya). Pub.: Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 172, Naigaum Cross Road, Bombay-14. Pp. 487. Price: Rs. 45.

The author has selected 304 stanzas from the Rigveda (out of a total 10552 stanzas), representing each of the ten sections (*mandalas*) into which this Veda is divided. Every stanza has his own translation, followed by that of Western scholars, of whom Wilson represents Sayana, the well-known Indian commentator, according to whom the Vedic hymns are meant for ritualistic prayer, soliciting earthly prosperity. Among other Western scholars are Max Muller, Macdonell, Muir, Griffith, Geldner and Edgerton.

The first generation of Western scholars began their translation of the Vedas, basing it on Sayana's translation, and on their own theory of the progress of man from early to modern times. As the Vedas belong to a prehistoric age, they believed that the Vedic Rishis were primitive people, expressing their thoughts and feelings in a crude manner.

They also were confident that they were superior in every respect to the Eastern people. Like some Vedic scholars of India the author resents this attitude of the Western Indologists, as the following remarks show:

"If we approach the Riks with an understanding of the background with a readiness to get into the spirit of the ego . . . the hymns do not appear any longer to be the simple folk-songs or abject supplications of a primitive, barbarian people they are fancied or made out to be. Instead, they reveal their true character of being the indices, the charts of the spiritual adventure of highly developed men who had pioneered into the realm of the Unknown. The Veda is a fitting commemoration of the supreme spiritual effort that was the high note of Vedic civilization." (P. 13)

In keeping with the Vedic tradition of liberty of thought, the author pleads:

"The human mind is at liberty to theorise about truth; but it takes a great leap into the dark when it starts substituting theories for truth, fancies for facts, sudden sallies of mind for systems of philosophy. . . . No sane man may claim the liberty of misconception and misrepresentation." (P. xii).

In the author's opinion, "the Vedas compass the length and breadth of human knowledge: they say the last word on the ultimate verities: the teachings of the Vedas touch all points of life. . . . They lie open to every man if there is a proper approach." (p. xii).

It should, however, be noted that people believing in One Personal God, may have genuine difficulty in following the Vedic sage when he speaks of the Ultimate Reality as Pure Being, formless and attributeless, who is neither male nor female, and is therefore spoken of in the neuter gender; who is One and One Alone, but can be contemplated in many ways (RV., I. 164. 48) in the masculine and the feminine gender as Personal Gods (*Devas*), and who can be identified singly and collectively with the One Ultimate Reality, referred to in cryptic terms as 'the One' (*Ekam*), the Reality (*Sat*), That (*Tat*), the Eternal (*Aksharam*), etc. As a result of this, while followers of a faith, centred in a Personal God, are required to reject all other concepts of God, the Vedic sages entertain the relative as well as the absolute idea of the Divine. A Rigvedic sage says: "All Your names, *Devas!* are worthy of homage (*namasya*), worthy of praise (*vandya*) and worthy of worship (*yajniya*)"—R.V., X. 63. 2. This attitude definitely indicates spiritual maturity and depth of spiritual knowledge. It is interesting to

find that modern Rishis in India have followed in the footsteps of Vedic Rishis, by keeping their doors open for people of different races and creeds who have different names for God.

The author's reference to Vedic Devas in the singular as God, obviously to fall into line with those who speak of one God, is not, we think, quite necessary, in view of the philosophy behind the concept of Vedic Devas, clearly propounded by the Vedic sages themselves.

We congratulate the author on his interpretation of Vedic culture and religion. We think, however, that his translation of several mantras would have more strongly supported his thesis, had it been more strictly literal. The additional matter could have been included as commentary.

GEMS FROM THE VEDA: By M. P. Pandit.
Pub.: Ganesh & Company, Madras-17. (First published 1973). Pp. 202 + x. Price: Rs. 6.

The book consists of 202 selected passages which are lines and fragments of lines as well as complete stanzas. Of these 201 are from the Rigveda and one from the Yajurveda (on p. 8). The translation is Sri Aurobindo's, with the author's commentary on each passage, based on Sri Aurobindo's interpretation.

In India, in addition to the tradition of the oral transmission of the text of the four Vedas in correct pronunciation, there is also a spiritual tradition of the Vedas, coming down, like the oral tradition, in an unbroken line through the centuries to our times. This spiritual tradition was formed by the Vedic sages sharing their spiritual visions with contemporary sages who in their turn handed them down to the succeeding generation of sages. This spiritual fellowship continued through the ages, firmly establishing the tradition. The passing on of the sages' spiritual visions was not an intellectual process. A Vedic sage says:

"What knows That (*Tat*, the Ultimate Reality) which is supreme and wonderful? It has motion and action in the consciousness of another, but when It is approached by the thought, It vanishes." (RV., 1. 170. 1, *Gems from the Veda*, p. 71)

It is said elsewhere in the Rigveda:

"Following the thought¹ with the heart (or spirit), he (the sage) has reached knowledge of the light (*dyotih*, symbolising the Ultimate Reality). (RV., 3. 26. 8; *Gems*, p. 89)

Among modern sages, carrying on the Vedic spiritual tradition, Sri Aurobindo has the speciality of being a sage and a yogi as well as a Vedic scholar

who translated the Veda into English and interpreted its spiritual significance by unravelling the symbolism in the language.

For a contrast we may consider some opinion on the Rigveda of Western orientalist (they may have Indian followers) who came to believe that the Vedic poets lived in the period of human history when civilization was emerging from primitive life. Basing his logic — and deductive logic — on this belief, the orientalist Cowell, for example, made an important inference. He said:

"The poetry of the Rigveda is singularly deficient in the simplicity and natural pathos which we naturally look for in the songs of the early period of human civilization. The language and style of most of these hymns is singularly artificial."

Had the orientalist followed inductive instead of deductive logic and carefully examined the data provided by the text of the Rigveda itself, he would have arrived at a more correct logical inference. Still there would have been the need of spiritual affinity with experience of the Vedic sages, which he evidently lacked.

This affinity, however, is exactly what the sages of post-Vedic India, carrying on the post-Vedic spiritual tradition, possess. Hence contributions made by them to the understanding of the Veda are of great value.

We congratulate Sri M. P. Pandit on this book of his. He has given within the compass of a slender volume much that the public needs to know about the new light thrown on the Veda by Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the symbolic significance of the language of the Vedic sages who found logic unhelpful.

We quote below, as an example of the new light thrown on the Veda in the book, the following note on the Vedic meaning of 'Maya':

"Maya is a power of knowledge — not a power of falsehood. It is the self-power of the Godhead — *devata shakti* — working to bring out and manifest the marvels of the Infinite in terms of the finite. . . . Maya is an inseparable power of the Lord Creator." (*Gems*, p. 60. Note on RV., 9. 8. 83)

Will not the author consider writing similar books collecting his "gems" from all the four Vedas?

PROF. A. C. BOSE

¹ Here 'thought' is interpreted to mean yogic meditation. The thought must have "the support and push of the psychic", leading to "the integral knowledge of the Divine Light." (*Gems*, p. 89)

VIVEKANANDA : By Swami Nikhilananda. (Price : Rs. 3-50).

WHAT RELIGION IS (IN THE WORDS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA) : Ed. Swami Vidyatmananda. (Price : Rs. 4-25).

Pub. : Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta-14.

Most of the readers of *The Mountain Path* know about the life and work of Swami Vivekananda. But there will be many who may not be aware how quick-witted he was. The author of this enjoyable biography narrates an incident in England.

"At one of the meetings, at the close of his address, a white-haired and well-known philosopher said to the Swami : 'You have spoken splendidly, sir, but you have told us nothing new.' Quick came the Swami's reply : 'Sir, I have told you the Truth. That, the Truth is as old as the immemorial hills, as old as humanity, as old as creation, as old as the Great God. If I have told you in such words as will make you think, make you live up to your thinking, do I not do well in telling it?'"

Among the many interesting details recorded in this volume is about a dream the Swami had somewhere between Naples and Port Said. A venerable old man appeared to him and said : "Observe carefully this place. You are now in the island of Crete. This is the land where Christianity began. The truths and ideas preached by us (Essenes) were presented as the teachings of Jesus. But Jesus the person was never born. Various proofs attesting this fact will be brought to light when this place is dug up." And archaeological evidence discovered since has amply confirmed the role of the Essenes in the formulation of Christianity.

Mention is made of the harm done to the cause of Swami Vivekananda by some ill-advised theosophists in India, the extreme care with which the Swami handled the monies that he received from abroad etc.

Swami Vidyatmananda makes a representative selection from the writings and speeches of Vivekananda on the theme of Religion. He arranges them under five heads on the following basis :

"Today, as always, man seeks God — and often without knowing he is doing so. All human activity — good, bad, or indifferent — is actually the misapplied search for God.

"The fact is that man in his true nature is already divine ; but this divinity is covered. Life's one purpose is the realisation of divinity.

"Realisation of divinity is religion. At base, all religions teach this same truth although accretions often obscure it. Vedanta emphasises the one objective of realisation but accepts diverse methods of reaching it.

"Realisation may be gained by the practice of the yoga of knowledge, or of control of mind, or of selfless work, or of love of God — or by a combination of yogas.

"The great prophets of the world afford living examples of the realisation of divinity. As models they inspire man, and as dispensers of grace they assist him towards realisation."

YOGA AS PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION : By S. N. Das Gupta. Pub. : Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi-6. Pp. 200. Price : Rs. 20.

Though the eight limbs of the yoga of Patanjali are discussed in this book, the major part of it is devoted to a study of the philosophical, psychological, cosmological, ethical and religious doctrines underlying this system of Yoga. Special attention is drawn to the many common features between the Rajayoga of Patanjali and the Sankhya system of Kapila. That God is mentioned in the former where He is no part of the latter is pointed out. In an interesting remark, the author observes : "One of the means of attaining Yoga is *Ishvara-pranidhana* or worship of God. This word, according to the commentators, is used in two senses in the first and the second books of the Patanjala Yoga aphorisms. In the first book it means love or devotion to God as the one centre of meditation, in the second it is used to mean the abnegation of all desires of the fruits of action to Ishvara."

Also to be noted : "This conception of Ishvara differs from the conception of Ishvara in the Ramana system in this that there *prakriti* and *purusha*, *acit* and *cit*, form the body of Ishvara, whereas here Ishvara is considered as being only a special *purusha*."

An academic treatment of the dynamic subject of yoga.

THE SAKTA PITHAS : By D. C. Sircar. Pub. : Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi-6. Pp. 132. Price : Rs. 15.

A long-awaited reprint of a scholarly study of the traditional centres of Mother-worship in India. The writing centres round the text of *Pithanirnaya* or *Mahapitanirupana* which itself forms a chapter of *Tantrachudamani*. The author has consulted more

than one text of the work and given what can be taken as a definitive edition.

In the course of his informative introduction, the writer traces the legend that has grown about the subject from the scattered hints in the Veda, through the Brahmanas, Puranas and other Sanskrit narratives to the various texts of the Tantra. He draws attention to parallels with certain Buddhist legends and the Osiris myth in Egypt. He follows the growth of the *pithas* from four to seven to ten and more till fifty-one was reached — though he gives a list of 108 *tirthas* for the sake of accurate information.

Interesting appendices are given. One discusses the probable date of the *tantrasara* (which is determined to be the first half of the 17th century). Another follows the development of the Shakti cult from Vedic times and takes note of the abuses that crept in. An Index of the Pithas is another valuable feature.

FROM DAITYAS TO DEVATAS IN HINDU MYTHOLOGY: By Shakti M. Gupta. Pub.: Somaiya Publications, 172 Naigaum Cross Rd. Bombay-14. Pp. 104. Price: Rs. 60.

The mythology of a people is the history of the development of their mind and life-soul. Considered from this point of view, Indian mythology is a symbolic narration of the religious, spiritual and cultural growth of the race. Dr. Gupta has collected material from all available sources e.g. Puranas, Vedas, Upanishads, Tantras etc. on the diverse types of beings, forces and forms that crowd the mythological map of the land and arranged the data subject-wise in a dictionary form. The very first entry is on *Abhaswaras* and the explanation is interesting:

A class of deities, 64 in number, ruling over the spiritual and physical enlightenments. The main twelve are: Atma (soul), Jnata (knower), Dama (restraint), Danti (patience), Shanti (peace), Jnana (knowledge), Sama (tranquillity), Tapas (penance), Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Moda (intoxication), Moha (delusion).

Some important names are missing e.g., Dakshinamurti. The author could have given important references, especially the Vedic ones which she has obviously drawn upon. That would have enhanced the value of this publication which has been priced so high.

The 56 illustrations appended to the volume are an added interest. A good work that could be improved upon.

M. P. PANDIT

THE WONDER OF PHILOSOPHY: A Review of Philosophers and Philosophic Thought: By Rev. Francis J. Klauder. Pub.: Philosophical Library Inc., 15, East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. Pp. 175. Price: \$ 6.

This is a small but a very useful work giving a brief account of branches of Philosophy like logic and metaphysics, cosmology and rational psychology, God and ethics. The second part contains three short chapters on Greek, medieval and modern Philosophy. The last part deals in a very small compass with individual philosophers of the West and the Orient in the fashion of an anthology. All these as a rule are brief and presuppose a wider knowledge of Western philosophy. Most of the thinkers are disposed of in a few lines, and to the novice would be hardly intelligible. The last part of the book consists of a "Synthesis" in which the author tries to meet the challenge that faces Philosophy today by offering three suggestions on Thomistic lines.

The book will be found useful to persons who like to have just a cursory knowledge of what Philosophy is.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRY

ON ZOROASTRIAN TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS & CEREMONIES: By H. S. Spencer & Khurshed S. Dabu. Pub.: H. P. Vaswani, A/6, Sadhu Vaswani Kunj, 3, Sadhu Vaswani Path, Poona-1. Price: Rs. 5.

This is a compilation from a larger work and brought out specially for students of the Zoroastrian lore.

It deals with fundamental matters concerning the Parsi faith — the sudrah and kusti, the chasni and funeral ceremonies, the reasons thereof, their prayers and Mukhtads, the different fires and their significance etc. etc. It covers or tries to cover the entire gamut of Zoroastrian lore, with special emphasis on the significance of fire. It touches upon small points like having dogs in Zoroastrian ceremonies and why they are brought in near the dead, why women in certain periods should not attend funeral ceremonies, and from such small points goes to bigger points like the Yashts and the Yashna.

An essay by Dasturji Khurshed Dabu is also included.

The treatment of Ashisavangh Yazata, is as he says, masterly but would appeal to older students.

The colour photographs of the Lord Zoroaster enhance the value of the book.

Rabindranath Tagore's essay on the Greatness of Zarathushtra showing how he was the first in so many fields, is also included.

Other obtruse subjects treated are the significance of ardivi Sur Anahita etc. It can now be seen why the Prophet was called 'Paigambare Ramzgu' or the most mystical Prophet. The chapter on Zarathushtra's greatness amply brings it out.

What he taught long long ago like the world being round, was accepted by the scientific world far later. Even Copernicus and Galileo, the first in the scientific field, came centuries later. Where Crowther taught of the vibrational theory recently, we find the Prophet teaching in the remote past. The scientific theory of Einstein of an expanding universe, we are told, is found already in our Yashts.

It is to the credit of a Sindhi publisher, a nephew of the celebrated Dada Vaswani of Poona, that he is doing more to awaken the Parsi community to the richness of their heritage.

A valuable work throwing new light on ununderstood customs and tenets of an ancient religion.

D. BUXEY

GEMS FROM THE GITA : By M. P. Pandit.
Pub. : Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pp. 128.
Price : Rs. 6.

Quarried from the mine of authentic knowledge that is Pandit, these Gems from the Gita are as scintillating as the author's Gems from the Veda, Gleanings from the Upanishads and Gems from the Tantras. Arranged alphabetically with methodical care, the essential principles that are embodied in this perennial guide to human progress are enunciated with appropriate lines of verses from the original text in Sanskrit and explained succinctly in lucid English.

The selection appropriately begins with the caption 'Action' "Verily no man for a moment remains without work — Man is a part of the cosmos and the cosmos is a Movement. It is one incessant action, and knowingly or unknowingly man participates in it. His very existence is a manifold action. Even if he were to sit still, abstaining from physical activity, action goes on on other planes of his being. The mind is active in thought, the heart in its feeling and emotion, the life-force in its radiations and absorptions. There is a continuous impact of his being on the universe even as he is subject to the unending action of the world on him. He is in the centre of a vast unfolding Action and cannot help being a part of it."

On the cardinal teaching, *yogah karmasu kausalam*, yoga is skill in works, the author explains : "Work as done normally in the world, in ignorance, binds. It forges the chain of Karma. Yoga is the art of doing works in such a way that they do not bind the doer. By yoga, man develops a separation from Prakriti, the executive nature, takes poise in the uninvolved Purusha, the inner self, and lets action take place on the impulsion of a Force that does not proceed from his own desire-will. He makes himself an instrument, a channel, with no preference whatsoever regarding the choice of work or the nature of the result. He acts in the liberty of knowledge, not under the drive of mechanical nature. The urge for action and the dynamism for the operation are not man's own and the consequences of the movement do not affect him. Further, the effectuating Power is not handicapped by the limitations of man's ego-based nature and the quality of the action changes vastly. It is superior, wiser and more effective than ordinary action."

The difficulty with the Gita is its immense popularity and many lines from it have become so hackneyed that their significance is lost on the reader. It is to the credit of Pandit to have taken these very gems current in the common market and demonstrate their brilliance to us by showing them in proper light.

S. SHANKARANARAYANAN

VAISHNAVISM OF SAMKARADEVA AND RAMANUJA : By H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy.
Pub. : Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi. Prices : Rs. 25.

After Sri Ramanuja several other leaders carried the stream of Vaishnava thought in various ways into different parts of India, and new forms of Vaishnava faith came into existence under new conditions. Of these, Samkaradeva occupies an important place in Assam, who with his synoptic vision began to preach his Eka Saraniya Nama Dharma even at the age of nineteen. He preached a religion based on the absolute devotion to God on which only faith can stand at a time of social and religious disintegration, when people were indulging in all kinds of Tantricism, which combined many elements of ancient, savage, superstitious beliefs. He was indeed a great builder of Assam by bringing in a purer spiritual life ; and in spite of the fact that circumstances prevented his influence becoming nation-wide, he deserves to join the galaxy of Indian saints like the three Acharyas, Ramananda, Kabir, Chaitanya, Nanak and Tulsidas.

As Samkaradeva was more concerned with the practical realisation rather than the intellectual comprehension of the Divine, one could find several contradictions between him and Sri Ramanuja in the domain of philosophy; and the author has made a critical comparative study of the subject, which forms the thesis for his doctorate degree.

Like Ramanuja, Samkaradeva recognising the spiritual equality of all, ignored all differentiation of caste, creed or condition, and preached the doctrine of humanism. He vitalised religion by freeing it from religiosity and was thus most modern in his approach: and his light shining through the corridor of five centuries has still a message for the pilgrims groping in the dark.

A B C OF SATYA DHARMA AND ITS PHILOSOPHY: By Surendra Nath Sen Gupta.
Pub.: Gopal Sen Gupta, Dhakuria, Calcutta-31.
Price: Rs. 13.

God-vision, according to Satya Dharma, is the attainment of one-ness with God in one of His infinite attributes; and human life is looked upon as a middle stage with infinite lower and higher lives

below and above, with man as a traveller from the lowest animal life to the Highest Godhead. This evolutionary scheme is explained in great detail in the form of 27 questions and answers. An attempt is made here to solve the seven riddles of the universe: namely, the nature of matter and energy, the ultimate source of motion, the first beginning of life, the cause of the adaptation of means to ends in Nature, the origin of sensation and consciousness, of rational thought and its universal concomitant speech, and the possibility of free will!

ARGUS

* * *

GAYATRI MANTRAKOSHA

We have received from Sri Sadhu Brahmaniam, Sri Vaishnavi Shrine, Madras-600062, a beautifully printed copy of GAYATRI MANTRAKOSHA in Devanagari script, comprising a total of 333 *Gayatris* of different *upasana devatas*. The author has evidently taken great pains to compile this valuable book. Published by Sri Vaishnavi Trust, Madras-600062. Price: Rs. 3.75.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI

Edited by ARTHUR OSBORNE

(Fourth Edition)

In this fourth edition of this book, we have included translations of various stray verses composed by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi on different occasions, and which were never published before.

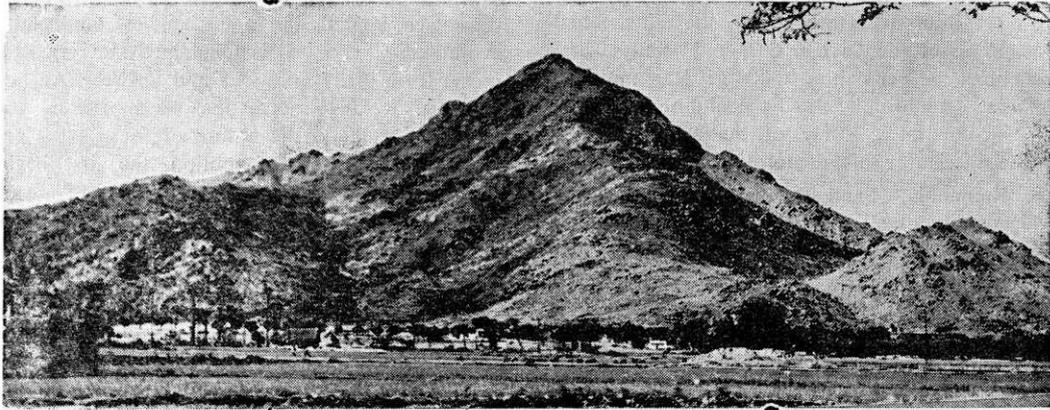
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ASHRAM BULLETIN

DEEPAM: GREAT SYMBOLIC FESTIVAL AT ARUNACHALA

Brahma and Vishnu once became very proud of their powers and engaged themselves in a fierce dispute as to who was the superior of the two.

Siva then appeared before them as a huge column of Fire. Brahma and Vishnu made a vain bid to find the ends of the dazzling Fire. Crestfallen they bowed to Siva who now appeared before them in His usual form. They then worshipped Him with humility, understanding that they were only His instruments.

In commemoration of this episode of Siva quelling the pride of Brahma and Vishnu a huge cauldron containing ghee (clarified butter) and camphor is lit on the summit of Arunachala on Kartikai Day (in November). When the sun sets on the Kartikai Full Moon Day (the month is Kartikai and the star of the day too is Kartikai) the beacon is lit. It burns for several days on end being replenished by offerings of ghee and camphor. This Deepam which is visible even at a distance of 20 to 25 miles sends devotees into great ecstasy. Though the festival is celebrated all over South India, at Tiruvannamalai where it originated, it is a speciality, a ten-day major festival. Through-

out the festival and particularly on the final day of Deepam one could see surging crowds thronging the streets of Tiruvannamalai. Arunachaleswara with his consort are taken in procession twice a day around the Temple with special decorations and on various *vahanas* (mounts). All of them are highly artistic and the huge Silver Bull (mount) is unique, very beautiful and majestic.

One has to see it to understand the devotional fervour of the pilgrims, most of them poor peasants from the neighbouring villages. These visitors naturally come to the Ashram. Sri Bhagavan had a soft corner for these simple folk and he used

to sit for hours looking at them with great compassion. A good part of the crowd can be seen at the Ashram on all the ten days of the festival.

At the Ashram also Kartikai is duly celebrated, by lighting a cauldron simultaneously with the one on the Hill. Sri Bhagavan used to take his seat outside the Hall, well before sunset and observe the Hill. It was enchanting to see Sri Bhagavan's radiant form and steady gaze on this occasion.

That atmosphere of silence and solemnity is recaptured even today. A chair used by Sri Bhagavan is set up opposite the samadhi of Sri Bhagavan, a tiger skin used by the Master spread over it and a particular picture of His in the sitting posture placed on the chair.

The cauldron is lit immediately on seeing the first glimmer of the beacon on the Hill. Priests chant *Na Karmana*, *arati* is done to Sri Bhagavan and devotees start singing *Arunachala Akshara Mana Malai* and then the other hymns in Praise of Arunachala. Puffed rice offered to Sri Bhagavan along with fruit and other eatables is distributed to all present. After dinner many of the devotees go round the Hill and thus it is a day of rare spiritual exhilaration.

This year too the Kartikai was celebrated in the usual manner at the Ashram (on November 28). The huge gathering of local and foreign devotees had a clear *darsan* of the Deepam in the background of a cloudless sky.

Ashram celebrates Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanti* (Birthday)

The 95th Birthday — *Jayanti* — of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at the Ashram in a grand manner on December 30.

Since the *Jayanti* comes off in the month of *Marghazhi Dhanur masa* (December-January) the function starts with special *dhanur masa puja* in the early morning. Devotees then sing hymns on Sri Bhagavan as well as those by him. Soon after there is milk offering to Sri Bhagavan as usual. After breakfast there is a grand puja to Sri Bhagavan along with Vedic chant more elaborate than on ordinary days. Special *abhisheka* with fruit juice, milk, curds and vibhuti is done and the Ramaneswara Maha Lingam is specially decorated with garlands and *kavacham* (silver cover). After arati, guests are treated to special lunch. The poor are fed in large numbers on the lawns outside.

This year's celebration went on in this manner. A number of distinguished devotees, local and foreign, were present and partook of *prasad*.

One could feel unmistakably that the Ashram atmosphere is surcharged with Sri Bhagavan's Presence on *Jayanti*. In fact such a special aura descends on the scene even on the *Jayanti* Eve.

* * *

The devotees of the Ashram were very happy to receive H.H. Sri Swami Ranganathananda of Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, Calcutta, who arrived at the Ashram on this auspicious day. He also partook of



Sri Bhagavan on Jayanti Day

prasad (lunch) along with other devotees. He had to leave the same evening.

* * *

The Queen Mother Frederika of Greece arrived at the Ashram along with Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, a few days ahead of *Jayanti*. A party of thirty devout members of *Shankara Vihar*, Madras, rendered *bhajana* on this auspicious day, which was liked by all.

It was customary to celebrate *Jayanti* during Sri Bhagavan's days also. However, as Sri Bhagavan's verses on the celebration of the birthday given below will show he himself gave no importance to the occasion. He only graciously consented to such observance by devotees.

SRI BHAGAVAN'S VERSES ON THE BIRTHDAY

"You who wish to celebrate the birthday, seek first whence you yourself were born. One's real birthday is when one enters That which transcends birth and death — the Eternal Being."

"At least on one's birthday one should mourn one's entry into this miserable world (samsara). Instead of it, to glory in it and celebrate it is like delighting in decorating a corpse. To seek one's Self and merge in the Self — that is Wisdom."

INSPIRING LECTURES AT DELHI KENDRA

"Ramanachala", the strikingly beautiful, newly opened shrine of Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, is now the regular venue of the Sunday evening *satsangs*.

During October and November, it was also the venue of a series of four lectures on *Sat Darsan* by Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Chinmaya Mission and a series of nine lectures by Sri Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha of Narayanasram-Tapovana, Parlam-Trichur. The latter series was inaugurated by Sri C. Subramaniam, Union Finance Minister and President of the Kendra.

Swami Bhoomananda was pleased to participate in the Kendra's *satsang* meetings on two Sundays and, while commending the Kendra's activities and its programme of Vedaparayana, devotional music and silent meditation, offered some valuable suggestions for further improvement.

In the course of his talks Swami Bhoomananda explained at length the philosophy and the method of self-enquiry taught by the Maharshi, reinforcing and clarifying the several points by copious quotations and telling illustrations drawn from the Upanishads, the *Yoga Vasishtha* or the *Maha Ramayana*, the *Bhagavata*, and the major and minor works of Sankara Bhagavatpada. While the Swamiji thus presented in a clear and convincing manner the essential teaching of Sri Ramana Maharshi as the living core of our ageless and perennial wisdom, he

also took good care to bring out its modernity and contemporary relevance, by emphasizing the special and original features of the Maharshi's message. In particular he stressed (1) the paramount importance and indispensable necessity of *vichara* enquiry for the elimination of error and the attainment of truth, and (2) the urgency of the quest, the folly of postponement and the certainty of beneficent results. He argued convincingly that one's living a worthy, self-reliant and responsible human life, in one's own unique time, place and psycho-social predicament, depended on alert pursuit of the spiritual quest, with *viveka* or discrimination, *vairagya* or detachment, and *mumukshutva* or earnest and hopeful longing for direct experience here and now, of the bliss of the Self. Swamiji explained the intrinsic value and all-comprehensive validity of the method of *jnana* as the sole means of personal progress and the final proof of inner certitude.

In this exposition of *jnana marga* as the crown and synthesis of spiritual effort, Swamiji narrowed the gap between theory and practice, between study and *sadhana*. He made it clear that devotion to a guru like Sri Ramana along with the study and practice of his teachings was not only a precious opportunity for spiritual awakening, but a challenging and compulsive call to undertake and persist in the strenuous *sadhana* of self-enquiry in the assured belief that the glimpse of Reality already theirs would, by steady practice or *abhyasa*, become in due course firm abidance in Awareness and lead to profound individual and social transformation. The dissolution of the ego by the discovery and direct experience of the real 'I' behind the seeming 'I' was at once the attainment of ultimate wisdom and the immediate renewal of one's world.

* * *

On November 28, Kartik *puṇima*, the night of Annamalai *deepa*, the Kendra building was tastefully illuminated with rows of candles and programme of songs by Bhagavan, Muruganar and Sadhu Om was gone through. A special feature was the singing in chorus of *Akshara-mana-malai*.

* * *

Efforts are being made to raise funds for putting up a Library and reading room and thus completing the building programme in the near future.

For further information kindly write to :—

RAMANA KENDRA,
8, Institutional Area, (Next to Rama Mandir),
Lodi Road, NEW DELHI.

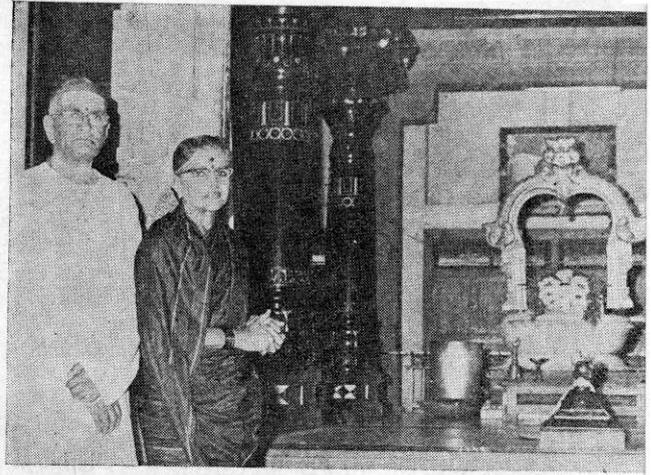
Smt. M. S. SUBBULAKSHMI AT THE ASHRAM

Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, one of the greatest musicians of India, who has dedicated her entire life to the cause of music, has never hesitated to give away her earnings to needy and good causes. Her generosity and largeheartedness have been praised by many greatmen and institutions all the world over. Her voice and depth of devotion were praised by no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi. Once, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was then the Prime Minister of India, remarked about her: "Here is the Queen of Music; I am only a Prime Minister!"

Smt. Subbulakshmi was recently honoured with the *Magasay Award* in Philippines for her services to humanity. Her recitals, in Manila and other places in the East, were so enchanting and ravishing that Mrs. Marcos, wife of the President of Philippines, said: "You have spiritually uplifted me; I can go on hearing you for eternity."

After this enriching tour in the East, Smt. Subbulakshmi gave a benefit performance in aid of repairs and renovation of Sri Arunachaleswara temple in Tiruvannamalai on October 2, 1974. The next day she visited Sri Ramanasramam together with her husband, *Sri T. Sadasivam* (editor and owner of the popular Tamil Weekly *Kalki*) and *Smt. Radha Viswanathan*, and they paid their respects to the sacred shrine of Sri Ramana Bhagavan.

Devotees at the Ashram happily recall her former visit to the Ashram in January, 1965, when she



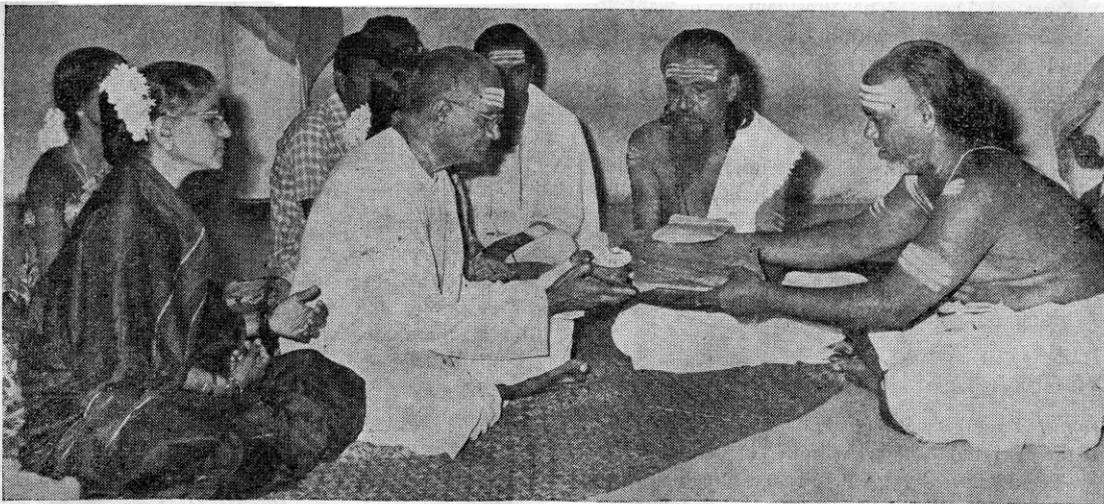
*Srimathi M. S. Subbulakshmi and Sri T. Sadasivam
in front of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi.*

gave a musical performance¹ in front of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi Shrine.

ASHRAM PRESIDENT VISITS BADRINATH

As reported in our last issue (p. 237) the Ashram President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman participated in the inaugural function of the Ramana Kendra Building in New Delhi on September 1.

¹ see *The Mountain Path*, April, 1965, p. 135.



Sri T. Sadasivam and Srimathi M. S. Subbulakshmi receiving prasada.



Sri P. S. Vaikuntavasar, Ashram President and Sri Mohanlal V. Solanki.

Soon after this the President went on a pilgrimage to Badrinath along with his wife Srimati Nagalakshmi Ammal, Sri P. S. Vaikuntavasar, an old personal attendant of Sri Bhagavan and Trustee, Sri N. Nataraja Iyer, an old devotee and Srimati Gomati.

Arriving first at Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, the President and party received the personal and kind attention of Sri Swami Chidananda, the President of the Divine Life Society. This is in fact the second trip of the President to Badrinath. As on the previous occasion, Sri Swami Chidananda made special arrangements and also sent Sri Swami Shanmugananda as escort. After the thrilling *darsan* at Badrinath the President returned to Rishikesh in time to participate in the 87th Birthday Celebration of Swami Sivananda. He then visited Ahmedabad along with Sri R. M. Patel to see an old devotee, Sri Ramprasad Dave. The President then went to Rajkot where he was warmly received by Srimati and Sri Popatlal B. Kotak.

Next on the tour was Porbandar. Here he was received by Sri Mohanlal V. Solanki.

On the final lap of the tour in Gujerat he visited Dwaraka and Somnath. The hospitality and helpfulness of Sri R. M. Patel on the tour deserve mention.

After about a month, the President returned to the Ashram, on Sept. 27.

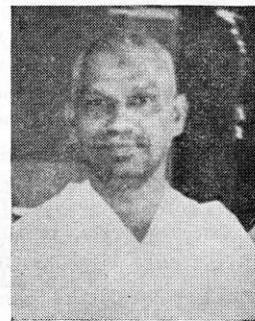
* * * *

YOGESWAR SRI LAKSHMAN SWAMI

Swamiji Yogeswar Sri Lakshman, who has established the 'Sri Lakshmana Ashram' in Chillakur (in Gudur Tq., Nellore Dt., A.P.), is a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan and has been a regular visitor, from the days of Sri Bhagavan. A few years back he

got a huge portrait of Sri Bhagavan made by Sri Swami Sai Das at the Ashram and had it installed at Sri Lakshmana Ashram.

This year, Yogeswar Sri Lakshman arrived at the Ashram, together with twenty devotees from Andhra Pradesh, in the third week of October and stayed for a week, taking part religiously in all the Ashram activities. They went round the Holy Hill and also paid homage to Sri Arunachaleswara at the Temple.



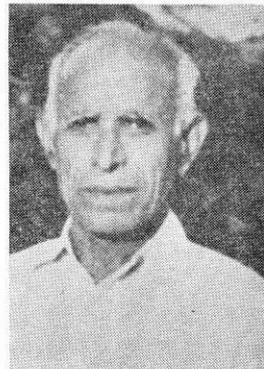
Yogeswar Sri Lakshman

We at the Ashram are always happy to have such sincere seekers amidst us!

* * *

Sri M. C. SOMAYYA

Sri M. C. Somayya, now aged 69, retired from the service of the Government of Mysore in 1961, is deeply spiritual in his inclination. He always used opportunities of travel while in service, visiting pilgrim centres and having darshan of holy men. He feels that what little spiritual tendency he has in him has been inherited from his parents. Though Rishikesh in the Himalayas was the place where he wanted to settle down permanently after retirement,



Sri M. C. Somayya

by strange circumstances he had to leave his family and come to Sri Ramanasramam, where he was warmly welcomed by the Ashram President. It was in Feb. 1973 that he first had the privilege of a short stay at the Ashram. His very first meditation at the Old Hall, gave him the experience of spiritual peace he was aspiring for. Though he returned to his family after this, he could not continue his stay there and drawn by the spiritual atmosphere of the Ashram he returned and became a permanent inmate of the Ashram in Dec. 1973.

The President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, has entrusted him with the posting of accounts of the

various departments of the Ashram. Besides doing the accountant's job at the Ashram, he is continuing a vigorous sadhana, which includes an hour's meditation, daily, up on the hill at Skandashram and going round the "Holy Arunachala" every Sunday.

* * * *

SWAMI VIJAYA CHAITANYA

Sri Bhagavan's pull is felt by sincere sadhaks in several inscrutable ways.



Swami Vijaya Chaitanya

An energetic and enthusiastic worker serving in big cities in India had to give up everything and seek solace on the slopes of the Himalayas. He met and lived with sadhus and sannyasins and became himself a sannyasin, known as *Swami Vijaya Chaitanya*. From 1961 till his arrival at Sri Ramanasramam in 1973, Swami Vijaya Chaitanya

travelled widely and spent many months in maths and ashrams attending classes on Vedanta. Thus he had the good fortune of studying under Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswathi and Sri Swami Harihara Theertha: *Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Brahma Sutras* and other scriptures.

However, it was the inspiring talks of Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswathi on Sri Bhagavan's teachings, particularly *Upadesa Sara* and *Ulladu Narpadu* (Forty Verses on Reality), that gave the Swami the longing to come to 'Sri Ramanasramam'. The Swamiji's devotion to Sri Bhagavan is as deep as his clear understanding of His teachings.

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, has entrusted the Swami with the responsible work of the Ashram Book Depot. He is doing this work with pleasure and efficiency. He is always cheerful and willing to help any one ever, round the clock. Visitors find his warm attention an additional attraction at the Ashram.

* * * *

Sri K. NATESAN

Sri K. Natesan is a native of Tiruvannamalai, born and brought up here and as such has had the rare

opportunity of knowing and moving with Bhagavan Sri Ramana from his boyhood. As he grew up he began to study and learn Sri Bhagavan's 'Hymns in praise of Arunachala' and other works and join in the recitation (*parayana*) of the same in the presence of Bhagavan. Seeing him thus interested in the teaching Bhagavan used to give him opportunities of serving in the literary work of the Ashram.



Sri K. Natesan

Sri Natesan was and is deeply interested in the works of Sri Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni also and has with him the manuscript copies of many of the Muni's important works. He has had the privilege of moving with Sri Ganapati Muni and being initiated by him. In all his studies and spiritual quest Sri Natesan gratefully acknowledges the invaluable help rendered to him by the late Sri T. K. Sundaresa Iyer, one of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

After retirement from service (at Madras Corporation) — he is now aged 61 years — he has come back to the Ashram to serve there. The Ashram President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, being an old and close friend of his, has entrusted him with the accounts of *The Mountain Path* where he is now rendering invaluable service. Genial in temperament, Sri Natesan is very eager to be of help and service to Ramana-devotees, especially the old ones, who have had the privilege of living with Bhagavan.

* * * *

"RAMANA CLINIC" OPENED

A dispensary with the name — *Ramana Clinic* — was declared open by Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, on the morning of December 25 — Vaikunta Ekadasi day — at the estate, known as *Guru Paduka* (meaning the Holy Feet of the Guru), situated at about a mile to the south-west of Sri Ramanasramam and owned by Sri Swami Sai Das.

Devotees of Bhagavan Ramana at the Ashram and outside attended the function. There was chanting of the Vedas, Bhagavan's Hymns in praise of Arunachala and Muruganar's verses in praise of Sri Bhagavan, early in the morning and it was



(l. to r.) Sri Viswanatha Swami, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, Sri Swami Sai Das, Sri C. K. Ramanath, Sri Hugo Maier and Srimathi Sushila Parthasarathy.

followed by *Dhanvantari Homa* (Dhanvantari is a manifestation of Mahavishnu as the foremost of physicians). Immediately following the *homa*, our Ashram President lighted a lamp in front of Sri Bhagavan's portrait and thus declared open the Clinic.

Sri K. Natesan (for a note on whom see elsewhere in this column) chanted a Sanskrit verse composed in praise of Sri Bhagavan by a well-known devotee, Sri Pasupati Sastri, many years ago, as appropriate for this occasion. For the benefit of those who did not know Samskrit Sri Viswanatha Swami gave the purport of it in English and said that in that verse Bhagavan was described as a "rare Elixir shining forth in the Divine Land of the Hill of Fire (Arunachala)", and drew the attention of those present of how Bhagavan himself has referred to the Holy Hill as a "rare Elixir" in the *Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala*, v. 11.

Sri Swami Sai Das is solely responsible for the establishment of this estate naming it *Guru Paduka* and the dispensary *Ramana Clinic*, assisted by some devotee friends, evidently behind the scene. He will be the physician in charge of the clinic, which will function from 7 to 8 in the morning and 5 to 6 in the evening. The function ended with distribution of prasada to the invitees and poor-feeding.

We wish him all success in his new endeavour,

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to report the death of Sri N. Narayanaswami (retd. Accountant General) at Thana, near Bombay, on August 28, 1974. Sri Narayanaswami was a deeply religious man and an ardent devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.



Sri N. Narayanaswami

He started his life from small beginnings but by dint of hard work and steadfast devotion to duty he rose very high in official life and has successively held the posts of Accountant General, Rajkot, Chief Auditor, Eastern Railway and Financial Advisor, Kosi Project.

He was always noted for his charitable disposition and he helped every one generously. He was ever eager to help the poor and needy. Deeply religious he made the members of his family and friends devotees and he was respected and loved by every one who came in contact with him.

He leaves behind his aged mother, wife, four sons and four daughters to mourn his loss. We convey our condolences to them.

May he rest at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

New Additions

- The Problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy* : By Raja Ram David. Pub. : Motilal Banarsidass, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi. (Rs. 45).
- The Wonder of Philosophy* : By Francis J. Klauder, S.D.B., Ph.D. Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York-10016, U.S.A. (\$ 6.00).
- Modern Logic, its Relevance to Philosophy* : Edited by Dayakrishna, D. C. Mathur and A. P. Rao. Pub. : Impex India, 2/18 Ansari Road, Delhi-6. (Rs. 25).

(Continued on page 60)

INTRODUCING....

Sri Sadasiva Swami and Sri Vadivudayar Swami

TWO old resident-devotees of Sri Bhagavan not yet introduced to our readers in these columns so far are *Sri Sadasiva Swami* and *Sri Vadivudayar Swami*. They had the privilege of close association with Sri Bhagavan and continue to serve the Ashram as before in their respective spheres of garland-making and care-taking of the common guest room.



Sri Sadasiva Swami

Sri Sadasiva Swami was born near Mettupalayam, the son of Arumuga Mudaliar and Parvati Ammal. Like his father he served in the Police but not for long. When his parents died he resigned his job. He was serving Sri Arunachaleswara Temple in Tiruvannamalai by way of culling flowers and making garlands at the Kalyana Sundareswarar shrine within for some time. Subsisting on begged food he used to frequent the Ashram. In response to his repeated requests the *Sarvadhikari*, Sri Niranjanananda Swami, permitted him to stay at the Ashram and serve. This was in 1935. Good at making garlands for puja he engaged himself in that service. Moreover he was put in charge of the Ashram fruit-store also.

In particular he was entrusted with the care of tiny squirrels in distress. It was a common sight in



those days — squirrels falling off from trees or the roof by accident. His gentle way of handling these poor creatures was noted with approval by Bhagavan himself. Applying oil to Bhagavan's legs and feet and massaging them was one of his nightly duties. Though this was an opportunity of close contact Sri Sadasiva Swami never asked anything of Bhagavan, preferring His silently potent Grace.

Sri Sadasiva Swami recalls with a sense of thrill his association with Sri Niranjanananda Swami, brother of Sri Bhagavan. It is well-known that the *Sarvadhikari* was a vigilant task-master, who would not tolerate neglect of one's duty on any account. When the *Sarvadhikari* on one occasion found fault with Sri Sadasiva Swami he had to leave the Ashram in silent indignation. He walked all the way to Tirukoilur, twenty miles off and he could walk no more. When he went to the railway station and got into the train, whom should he find but the *Sarvadhikari* who was on a trip to Tiruchuli, Bhagavan's birthplace! Sri Niranjanananda Swami lovingly took him along to Tiruchuli. And, the latter was convinced that there was nothing but love in the heart of the former. This generated an attitude of love and reverence to Sri Niranjanananda Swami in this devotee and no wonder he had the opportunity to serve him in his last days.

Sri Vadivudayar Swami named as such by Sri Niranjanananda Swami (changing his former name



Sri Vadivudayar Swami

of Vadukanatha Gounder) first came to the Ashram in 1936. An agriculturist formerly, he had gone to Benares where he met Sri Dandapani Swami (father-in-law of Sri Muruganar). He learnt of Bhagavan from him and came to the Ashram, as advised. On seeing Dandapani Swami's letter of introduction the *Sarvadhikari* permitted him to stay on in the Ashram. He was given various jobs like maintenance of kerosene lamps, culling flowers, etc. It was a privilege in those days to be allowed to cut vegetables in the early hours, for Sri Bhagavan himself joined in the task. This privilege Sri Vadivudayar Swami had for several years. He had thus the opportunity of directly listening to Bhagavan's words of profound significance.

Sri Vadivudayar Swami is a man of well-disciplined ways and does his job with efficiency and pleasure. He is well-known for making the small packets of *vibuthi* and *kumkum* sent to thousands of devotees all the world over. In addition, whenever there is leisure he spends it usefully by spinning yarn at the *charka*.

He is regular in his recitation of the morning hymns in *Marghazi* (December-January)—*Tiruppavai*, *Tiruvembavai* and *Tiruppalliezhuchi* (on Sri Bhagavan van). He attends to the needs of devotees in the guest-room with zeal and is much respected for his unique quality of non-interference. He goes round the Hill almost daily!

We wish these devotees a long life of dedicated service to the Ashram of their Master.

ASHRAM BULLETIN

(Continued from page 58)

RAMANA KENDRA, CALCUTTA

A CORRECTION

When we published the names of the office-bearers of the managing committee of Ramana Kendra, Calcutta, (on p. 242 of our last issue), the name of Sri P. S. V. Iyer was by mistake omitted. We republish hereunder the names of the office-bearers of the committee :

<i>President :</i>	SRI P. SUBRAMANIAN
<i>Vice-Presidents :</i>	SRI H. R. CHADHA SRI H. N. MAZUMDAR
<i>General Secretary :</i>	SRI P. P. MODAK
<i>Joint-Secretaries :</i>	SRI C. B. S. MANI SRI KALIDAS CHATTERJI
<i>Treasurer :</i>	SRI N. S. RAMANAN
<i>Members :</i>	SRI RADHIKA MOHAN SEN SRI M. SRINIVASAN SRI R. THYAGARAJAN SRI V. R. LAKSHMINARAYAN SMT. SACHI SANKAR DR. PRASAD SRI P. S. V. IYER

The address of the Kendra is :

**RAMANA KENDRA,
16, Jatindas Road,
Calcutta-29.**

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

(Continued from page 58)

- Achieving Order from Disorder* : By Walter S. Field. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 6.00).
A Theory of Consciousness : By Arnold Schultz. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 12.50).
Meditations from the Tantras : By Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Pub. : Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar. (Rs. 30).
The Aryan Ecliptic Cycle : By H. S. Spencer. Pub. : H. P. Vaswani, 'Rajkamal', 795/3 Padamjee Park, Poona-2. (Rs. 25).
Yoga Sutra of Patanjali : By Dr. J. R. Ballantyne and Govind Sastri Deva. Pub. : Susil Gupta (India) Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta-12. (Rs. 7).

Letter to the Editor

Reply by Lucia Osborne

... Would it be possible for you to answer a question which has arisen in my mind concerning the state of spiritual attainment of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

When I read Paul Brunton's book: *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga*, I found that he states with no disrespect that Ramana had not in fact attained the highest state possible for man. He says that there are three stages of spiritual development. The first is the religious stage when the spirit in man tends to look towards God for comfort or as a last resort when in despair. The second stage is when a man recognizes the Truth that his own self is identical and one with the Infinite and merges his conscious mind with that Self in meditation and contemplation. It is at this stage that Paul Brunton states the Maharshi is albeit very advanced. This is the stage of the mystic.

The final stage is when a man applies one-pointed concentration of mind obtained during the mystic stage to the problem of the nature of the universe and the relation between the Self and the Universe, i.e., one-pointed philosophical introspection. This stage culminates in a single momentary flash of INSIGHT after which the person becomes a true sage, living as an example to the rest of humanity.

... I wonder whether you could clarify the point for me. In other words, was Ramana Maharshi a true sage or was he a very highly advanced mystic, there being a definite distinction according to Dr. Paul Brunton and other schools of Vedantic philosophy ...

P. K. CROSS, England.

It is about time that these misleading opinions in Paul Brunton's books subsequent to his Search in Secret India, his first and best book, are rectified. If a man merges his conscious mind with the Self and the mind does not reassert itself what further stage can there be to achieve? On the path to Self-realisation a seeker or mystic may get glimpses of ultimate Reality but if the mind is not steady enough they do not last. Only in the rarest cases does such merging remain steady as was the case with Sri Ramana Maharshi who described it: 'Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on.'

In the final stage which means Oneness of Being the problem of the nature of the Universe and the relation between the Self and the Universe does not arise particularly so when in Paul Brunton's second stage a man has already recognized the Truth that his own self is identical and at one with the Infinite. A single momentary flash is only momentary when the mind is not steady or still enough to hold it. From such a glimpse sadhana starts in all earnest to steady and purify the mind. A single momentary flash of REALITY does not make one a sage. It may also happen that after such a glimpse of Reality all one's deep down hidden vasanas come to the fore to be dealt with and eradicated before the mind can be made steady in Stillness. If a man is not steady or strong enough even after such a momentary flash he may become a slave to his vasanas (tendencies of mind) and lose the battle.

That Paul Brunton was not qualified to make such statements is abundantly clear from his questions and Sri Ramana's replies reproduced below:

BRUNTON: *What exactly is this Self of which you speak? If what you say is true there must be another self in man.*

SRI RAMANA: *Can a man be possessed of two identities, two selves? To understand this matter it is first necessary for a man to analyse himself. Because it has long been his habit to think as others think he has never faced this 'I' in the true manner. He has not a correct picture of himself; he has too long identified himself with the body and the brain. Therefore I tell you to pursue this enquiry Who Am I? You ask me to describe this true Self to you. What can be said? It is That out of which the sense of the personal 'I' arises and into which it will have to disappear.*

BRUNTON: *Disappear? How can one lose the feeling of one's personality?*

SRI RAMANA: *The first and foremost of all thoughts, the primeval thought in the mind of every man, is the thought 'I'. It is only after the birth of this thought that any other thought can arise at all. It is only after the first personal pronoun 'I' has arisen in the mind that the*

second personal pronoun, 'you' can make its appearance. If you could mentally follow the 'I'-thread until it leads you back to its source you would discover that, just as it is the first thought to appear, it will be the last to disappear. This is a matter which can be experienced.

BRUNTON: You mean that it is possible to conduct such a mental investigation into oneself?

SRI RAMANA: Certainly. It is possible to go inwards until the last thought 'I' utterly vanishes.

BRUNTON: What is then left? Will a man then become quite unconscious or will he become an idiot?

SRI RAMANA: No; on the contrary, he will attain that consciousness which is immortal and he will become truly wise when he has awakened to his true Self, which is the real nature of man.

BRUNTON: But surely the sense of 'I' must also pertain to that?

SRI RAMANA: The sense of 'I' pertains to the person, the body and the brain. When a man knows his true Self for the first time something else arises from the depth of his being and takes possession of him. That something is behind the mind; it is infinite, divine, eternal. Some people call it the Kingdom of Heaven, others call it the soul and others again Nirvana, and Hindus call it Liberation; you may give it what name you wish. When this happens a man has not really lost himself; rather he has found himself.

Unless and until a man embarks on this quest of the true Self, doubt and uncertainty will fol-

low his footsteps through life. The greatest kings and statesmen try to rule others when in their heart of hearts they know that they cannot rule themselves. Yet the greatest power is at the command of the man who has penetrated to his inmost depth. . . . What is the use of knowing about everything else when you do not know who you are? ¹

* * *

In an article published in The Mountain Path of January, 1971, under the title 'Sri Ramana A Pure Channel for a Higher Power', Paul Brunton affirms after forty years had passed since he saw, asked questions and meditated in Sri Ramana's presence that His presence was so awe-inspiring and uplifting that for the time being 'it pushed people out of their little selves, even if only partially'. . . . 'That there was some kind of a participation in a worldless divine play during those evenings — each to the extent of his own response — was the feeling with which some of us arose when it all ended.'

'Again and again he gave us this teaching that the real Maharshi was not the body which people saw; it was the inner being. Those who never made the journey to India during his life time may take comfort in this thought: that it is possible to invoke his presence wherever they are and to feel its reality in the heart.'

Yes, a man's understanding and judgement of the status of a true sage is only to the extent of his own response and purity of mind.

— LUCIA OSBORNE

¹ Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge, Ch. 2, pp. 20-21.

"The Self is not limited; it is the mind which produces a form that is limited; that which has got dimensions is the mind and it gives rise to dimensions in others. The real limitation is the mind. The mind is not different from the Supreme Being. A gold ornament is not gold itself, but is also not different from gold. The mind is a wonderful power, a mysterious power (*shakti*) of the Supreme Being. It is after the rise of the mind that God, world and *jivas* (individuals) appear, whereas in sleep we are not aware of any of these three. That is the mysterious power of God. But although we are not aware of these in sleep, yet we know that we existed in sleep also. On the rising of the mind we awaken from sleep. Consciousness and unconsciousness are with reference to the mind only. In the wakeful state we identify ourselves with the mind. If now we find the real Self behind the mind, then we shall not have these limitations."—SRI BHAGAVAN.

(From *Crumbs from His Table*, pp. 39-40)