

## The Mountain Path

Vol. 13. No. II, April 1976

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### EDITORIAL

## THE WAY OF BHAKTI

WHAT is *Bhakti*? It is the inherent aspiration of the evolved human heart for the Divine, which is its own intrinsic reality. This is implied in Prahlāda's prayer to the Lord: "May I, ever dwelling upon you, have such unabating love for you as the undiscerning have for sense-objects". Sankara too sings in his famous *Sivānanda Lahari*: "The movement of the mind towards and its merger in the Feet of the Lord of all beings — as the seeds of the Ankola tree stick on to its trunk, as the needle is drawn to the magnet, as a good wife to her husband, as a creeper clings to a tree and as the river runs towards and merges in the ocean — is termed *Bhakti*". *Bhakti* then is the spontaneous attraction that the evolved mind feels for its source. It is not the means to an end — there is no calculation at all in it, because the very sense of a separate individuality gets lost in it. All the same the devotee functions with a seeming personality ever attuned to the Lord, blessing all by his contact. This is the truth elucidated by the fifth verse of Bhagavan Ramana's *Arunāchala Pancharatnam*:

"He who with his mind surrendered to you sees you alone, Oh Arunachala! and sees all as your Form and serves you in all beings with non-differentiating love, shines for ever merged in your bliss".

Self-surrender is the very heart of *Bhakti*. Only on surrendering oneself (the ego) is there the Vision of the Supreme. Then one sees that everything manifested is nothing but the Supreme Self. One's very life then becomes

one continuous course of spontaneous, loving service to all. Such a one is ever immersed in the bliss of the Supreme and shines forth as an exemplar for others.

We have a succinct and clear definition of *Bhakti* and its course in *Sri Ramana Gita* as follows:

"The Self is dear to all. Nothing else is as dear. Love, unbroken like a stream of oil, is termed *Bhakti*."

"Through love the sage knows that God is none other than his own Self. Though the devotee, on the other hand, regards Him as different from himself, yet he too merges and abides in the Self alone."

"The Love which flows (unbroken) like a stream of oil, towards the Supreme Lord, leads the mind infallibly into pure Being, even without one's desiring it."

"*Bhakti* not continuous like a stream is called intermittent *Bhakti*. Even this is bound to result in supreme *Bhakti*."

"One who attributes names and forms to the deity, through those very names and forms transcends all name and form."

"*Bhakti*, even when accompanied by desire does not cease with the fulfilment of the desire. Faith in the Supreme Person develops and goes on increasing and becomes perfect in course of time."

We have in the life of Dhruva an instance of *Bhakti* beginning with some earthly dis-

satisfaction and ending in pure love supreme. Slighted by his step-mother, Dhruva, a boy of five, goes away to solitude to get over his depression by meditating upon God. On his way Sage Narada meets him and initiates him in the *dwādasāksbāra mahāmantra* (*Om Namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*) and teaches him the art of concentrating the mind. Such is Dhruva's devotional fervour and such the potency of initiation by a sage that Dhruva sees God face to face after only six months of one-pointed *tapas*. The Lord touches his cheek with his milk-white conch, the emblem of the Vedas, and Dhruva bursts into devotional song full of the nectar of *Bhakti* and *Jnana*. At the end of it, he says that even those who approach the Lord for the fulfilment of some earthly aspiration are tenderly taken care of by Him, as a new-born calf by its mother, and led on to non-differentiating supreme love.

On the completion of his *tapas*, Dhruva's spiritual greatness is clearly recognised by all. He is welcomed with great respect by his father and others and he himself is full of love for everyone with his heart free from the least trace of any memory of past unpleasantness. Everyone is happy in the elevating company of Dhruva. Years roll by and his father puts him on the throne and retires to solitude to end his life in *tapas*. Dhruva gets married and begets four children. After a long reign of benevolence Dhruva puts his eldest son on the throne and retires to Badarikāshrama on the Himalayas to devote himself solely to contemplation. As foretold by the Lord Himself when he had his first *darshan* of Him in early boyhood, he gets unswervingly established in the eternal Reality underlying all manifestation, the Supreme Abode in which everything appears, revolves and gets dissolved. The very remembrance of Dhruva's life of devotion starting in right earnest in his fifth year and culminating in steadfast inherence in the Supreme Abode of all evokes in every heart pure love for the blessed Feet of the Lord, which is the highest end one could aspire for.

We find the ultimate teaching of *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* at the end of its eighteenth chapter as follows : "The Lord dwells in the

heart of all beings revolving them all by his mysterious power of *Māya*. Surrender yourself to Him alone completely and you will, by His Grace, reach the eternal Abode of Supreme *Shanti*". But such complete self-surrender is possible only for a purified soul. One becomes impure by attachment to one's own individuality (*debātma-buddhi*) and external objects and one regains purity only by turning one's attention inwards towards one's own source. And this is possible, in the initial stages, only with the aid of proper understanding and control of the mind through the discipline of the *japa* of one of the Lord's Names or *mantrās*. Most of us could not wean the mind from objectivity without such aids. Seers have given us the steps leading to complete self-surrender, as hearing about the Lord from regenerate souls or studying their works, praising the Lord with sacred hymns and devotional music, remembrance of the Lord through constant *japa*, serving the Lord immanent in all beings and the company of evolved souls. The last of these has a remarkably transforming effect and in recent times those who have had the opportunity of moving with, serving and listening to sages like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Bhagavan Ramana know what it is. And the effect of their touch of grace goes on recurring in succession. The association with the regenerate transforms base metal into gold and endows it with its power of transformation as well. This is the purport of the very first verse of Sri Sankara's *Century of Verses*, known as *Sata Slōki*. Bhagavan Ramana has praised *satsanga* as a complete *sādhana* by itself, as follows : "By constant association with great enlightened seers, the mind gets merged in its own source" (*Sri Ramana Gita*, VI-12). Moreover, the first five verses selected and translated into Tamil by him in the Supplement to Forty Verses on Reality confirm the efficacy and indispensability of *satsanga* for any one keen on spiritual advancement.

Sankara says in his *Bhaja Govindam* : "We do not see any method other than the constant remembrance of the Lord's Name for crossing the sea of *samsāra*". Many are the devotees redeemed by the *japa* of any Name or *Mantra* of God. By dint of the *japa* of

*Rāmanāma*, a hunter is transformed into Sage Vālmiki, the author of the immortal epic, *Rāmāyana*. From prehistoric times there has been a succession of devotees who have reached the highest spiritual attainment by virtue of *Nāma Japa* alone. "Of all methods of worship, I am the method of *Japa*", says the Lord in the *Gita*. One has, of course, to observe the fundamental discipline indispensable for spiritual life along with *japa*; or the *japa* itself may bring about such refinement.

*Nāma*, the Name of God, denotes the effulgence of the Self (*Ātma-sphurana*). Asked by Daivarāta, if one could achieve by *mantra-japa* what is attained by Self-enquiry, Bhagavan Ramana has replied: "Success attends the earnest seekers who, incessantly and with steady mind repeat *Mantrās* or *Pranava* alone. By repetition of *Mantras* or *Pranava* alone, one's mind is withdrawn from sense-objects and becomes identical with one's own real Being". All Names of Divinity are *mantrās* and have the power to save those who engage themselves in their *japa*.

We find in the last eight verses of Ch. XII (13-20) of the *Gita* a beautiful description of the *bhakta* who loves the Lord and is dear to Him:

"One who hates none, is friendly and compassionate, without the taints of 'I' and 'mine', equipoised in pleasure and pain, forgiving,

"Contented, ever attuned, well-controlled, well-decided, devoted to Me with mind and understanding dedicated to Me, such a one is dear to Me.

"By whom the world does not get disturbed and who is not disturbed by the world and who is free from exultation, anger, fear and such excitements, such a one is dear to Me.

"One who expects nothing, is pure, alert, unconcerned, unafflicted and free from all egoistic speculation, such a devotee is dear to Me.

"One who is neither elated nor displeased, neither depressed nor desirous,

indifferent to the ups and downs of life, such a devotee is dear to Me.

"One who is the same towards friend or foe, unperturbed by respect or disrespect, heat or cold, pleasure or pain, ever the same without any attachment whatsoever,

"One who is established in inner silence, disregarding praise and blame, pleased with whatever life brings, homeless, of firm understanding, such a devotee is dear to Me.

"Those who, having Me alone as their goal, practise with full faith this essence of all spirituality as taught by Me, those devotees are very dear to Me."

We see clearly here that the same traits are found in a *stitha-prajna* (one established in Pure Awareness) and an earnest devotee and that there is little difference between *Bhakti* and *Jñāna*. We see this truth illustrated in the life of Prahlada, the prince among devotees, and in that of Ramana of our times, so sweet and superb.

Coming to *Srimad Bhāgavatam*, we find the following regarding the Way of *Bhakti* and the best of devotees:

"One should look upon the sky, wind, fire, water, earth, all living beings, all directions of space, trees, plants, rivers and oceans and whatever there is as the forms of God and bow to them one with them at heart.

"He who sees in all beings the existence of Bhagavan as the Self and all beings as having their existence in Bhagavan, the Self, is the best of devotees."

"He is the best of devotees, who, though perceiving all sense-objects is neither pleased nor displeased, knowing that everything is the outcome of the inscrutable power (*Māyā*) of the Supreme.

"He who, by virtue of his constant remembrance of Hari is never deluded by the peculiarities of *Samsāra* (mundane existence), birth, growth,

hunger, fear, craving and such afflictions, is the best of devotees.

"He is the best of devotees who ever dwells in Vasudeva alone and so there is no room at all in his heart for the sprouting of any seed of desire (*vāsana*).

"In whom there is no thought of *Varna*, *āshrama*, caste or creed as he does not look upon the body, which is bound by birth and karma, as the Self, is the best of devotees.

"He who has no notion of 'I' or 'mine' with regard to his body and other objects and in whom tranquillity and equanimity towards all are spontaneous, he is the best of devotees.

"Whose heart is the permanent abode of Hari, who destroys mountains of sins even when casually remembered, who is ever bound to the lotus-feet of the Lord by bonds of love, he is the best of devotees."

XI (2), 41, 45, 48, to 52, 55.

## READINESS

By

'Bharatananda'

THE burning regret which many, probably, share with me, is that full advantage was not taken of those happy and precious days when He was with us physically also — eating, talking, laughing, welcoming all, open to all. Reality was there — in abundance and for the taking, but we enclosed ourselves in timidity, in false humility, in self-deprecation and false excuses. We took a cupful when the ocean was at our feet.

Now He is still with us, but no longer so easily accessible. To find Him again we must overcome the very obstacles which prevented us from seeing Him as He was and going with Him where He wanted to take us. It was *tamas* and *rajas* — fear and desire that stood in the way — the desire for the pleasure of the past and fear of austere responsi-

bility of a higher state of being. It was the same old story — the threshold of maturity of mind and heart which most of us refuse to cross. 'Ripeness is all', He used to say — and now ripeness is the condition of finding Him again.

We ripen when we refuse to drift, when striving ceaselessly becomes a way of life, when dispassion born of insight becomes spontaneous. When the search *Who Am I?* becomes the only thing that matters, when we become a mere torch and the flame all-important, it will mean that we are ripening fast. We cannot accelerate that ripening — but we can remove the obstacles of fear and greed, indolence and fancy, prejudice and pride. He is there and waiting — timelessly. It is we who keep Him waiting.



# THE PATH TO SURRENDER:

## BHAGAVAN ON BHAKTI<sup>1</sup>

[The comments printed in *black type* are by ARTHUR OSBORNE, the founder-editor of our journal and the Maharshi's own words are printed in *italics*.]

*Bhakti marga*, the path of love and devotion, worship and surrender, is usually considered the very antithesis of Self-enquiry, since it is based on the presumption of duality, of worshipper and worshipped, loved and beloved, whereas Self-enquiry presumes non-duality. Therefore theorists are apt to presume that if one is based on truth the other must be based on error, and in expounding one they only too often condemn the other. Bhagavan not only recognized both these paths but guided his followers on them both. He often said :

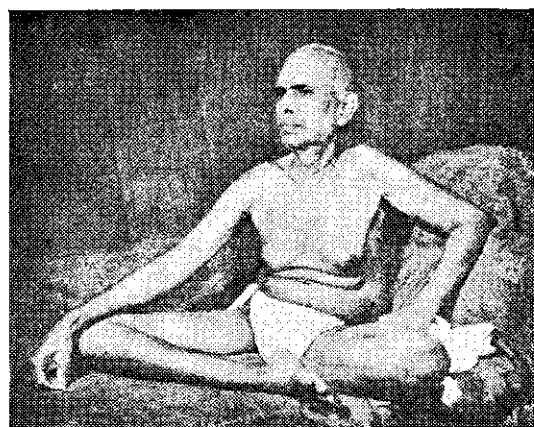
" There are two ways ; ask yourself, ' Who am I ? ' or surrender ". Many of his followers chose the latter way.

D. : What is unconditional surrender ?

B. : If one surrenders completely there will be no one left to ask questions or to be considered. Either the thoughts are eliminated by holding on to the root thought, ' I ', or one surrenders unconditionally to the Higher Power. These are the only two ways to Realization.

Self-enquiry dissolves the ego by looking for it and finding it to be non-existent, whereas devotion surrenders it ; therefore both came to the same ego-free goal, which is all that is required.

B. : There are only two ways to conquer destiny or to be independent of it. One is to enquire whose this destiny is and discover that only the ego is bound by it and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, realizing one's helplessness and saying all the time : ' Not I, but Thou, oh Lord ! ', giving up all sense of ' I ' and ' mine ' and leaving it to



the Lord to do what he likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is the love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self-enquiry or through **bhakti marga**.

The spark of spiritual knowledge (Jnana) will consume all creation, a mountain of gun-powder. Since all the countless worlds are built upon the weak or non-existent foundations of the ego, they all disintegrate when the atom-bomb of knowledge falls on them. All talk of surrender is like stealing sugar from a sugar image of Ganesha and then offering it to the same Ganesha. You say that you offer up your body and soul and all your possessions to God, but were they yours to offer ? At best you can say : ' I wrongly imagined till now that all these, which

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in *His Own Words*, pp. 204-211.

are Yours, were mine. Now I realise that they are Yours and shall no longer act as though they were mine'. And this knowledge that there is nothing but God or Self, that 'I' and 'mine' do not exist and that only the Self exists is Jnana.

**He often explained however, that true devotion is devotion to the Self and therefore comes to the same as Self-enquiry.**

*It is enough that one surrenders oneself. Surrender is giving oneself up to the original cause of one's being. Do not delude yourself by imagining this source to be some God outside you. One's source is within oneself. Give yourself up to it. That means that you should seek the source and merge in it. Because you imagine yourself to be out of it, you raise the question, 'Where is the source?' Some contend that just as sugar cannot taste its own sweetness but there must be someone to taste and enjoy it, so an individual cannot both be the Supreme and also enjoy the Bliss of that State; therefore the individuality must be maintained separate from the Godhead in order to make enjoyment possible. But is God insentient like sugar? How can one surrender oneself and yet retain one's individuality for supreme enjoyment? Furthermore they also say that the soul, on reaching the divine region and remaining there, serves the supreme Being. Can the sound of the word 'service' deceive the Lord? Does He not know? Is He waiting for these people's services? Would He not — the Pure Consciousness — ask in turn: 'Who are you apart from Me that presume to serve Me?'*

*If, on the other hand, you merge in the Self there will be no individuality left, you will become the Source itself. In that case what is surrender? Who is to surrender, what and to whom? This constitutes devotion, wisdom and Self-enquiry. Among the Vaishnavites, too, Saint Nammalwar says: "I was in a maze, clinging to 'I' and 'mine'; I wandered without knowing myself. On realizing myself I understand that I myself and You and that "mine" (that is, my*

*possessions) is only Yours!" Thus, you see, devotion is nothing more than knowing oneself. The school of qualified monism also admits it. Still, adhering to their traditional doctrine, they persist in affirming that individuals are part of the Supreme — his limbs as it were. Their traditional doctrine says also that the individual soul should be made pure and then surrendered to the Supreme; then the ego is lost and one goes to the region of Vishnu after death; then finally there is the enjoyment of the Supreme (or the Infinite). To say that one is apart from the primal source is itself a pretension; to add that one divested of the ego becomes pure and yet retains individuality only to enjoy or serve the Supreme is a deceitful stratagem. What duplicity this is — first to appropriate what is really His, and then pretend to experience or serve Him! Is not all this known to Him?*

**It is obvious that surrender in the total uncompromising sense in which Bhagavan demands it is not easy.**

*As often as one tries to surrender, the ego raises its head and one has to try to suppress it. Surrender is not an easy thing. Killing the ego is not an easy thing. It is only when God Himself by His Grace draws the mind inwards that complete surrender can be achieved.*

*Dr. Syed asked Bhagavan: Doesn't total or complete surrender imply that even desire for liberation or God should be given up?*

*B.: Complete surrender does imply that you should have no desire of your own, that God's will alone is your will and you have no will of your own.*

*Dr. S.: Now that I am satisfied on that point, I want to know what are the steps by which I can achieve surrender?*

*B.: There are two ways; one is looking into the source of the 'I' and merging into that source; the other is feeling 'I am helpless by myself. God alone is all-powerful and except for throwing myself completely on Him there is no other means of safety for me,' and thus gradually*

developing the conviction that God alone exists and the ego does not count. Both methods lead to the same goal. Complete surrender is another name for Jnana or Liberation.

**However, partial surrender can come first and gradually become more and more complete.**

*D. : I find surrender impossible.*

*B. : Complete surrender is impossible in the beginning but partial surrender is possible for all. In course of time that will lead to complete surrender.*

The dualists may however object that the devotional path approved by Bhagavan is not that which they have in mind, since their presupposes the permanent duality of God and worshipper. In such cases, as in the last sentence of the following dialogue, Bhagavan would raise the discussion above theory, bidding them first achieve the surrender to a separate God, of which they spoke, and then see whether they had any further doubts.

The state we call realization is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realized he is that which alone is and which alone has always been he cannot describe that state. He can only be that. Of course we talk loosely of Self-realization for want of a better term, but how is one to realize or make real that which alone is real? What we all are doing is to realize or regard as real what is unreal. This habit has to be given up. All spiritual effort under all systems is directed only

to this end. When we give up regarding the unreal as real, then Reality alone will remain and we shall be That.

*D. : 'This exposition is all right in the framework of non-duality, but there are other schools which do not insist on the disappearance of the triad of knower, knowledge and known as the condition for Self-realization. There are schools which believe in the existence of two and even three eternal entities. There is the bhakta, for instance. In order that he may worship there must be a God'.*

Whoever objects to his having a separate God to worship so long as he needs? Through devotion he develops until he comes to feel that God alone exists, and that he himself does not count. He comes to a stage when he says, 'Not I but Thou ; not my will but Thine '. When that stage is reached which is called complete surrender in bhakti marga, one finds that effacement of the ego is attainment of the Self. We need not quarrel whether there are two entities or more or only one. Even according to dualists and according to bhakti marga complete surrender is necessary. Do that first and then see for yourself whether the one Self alone exists or whether there are two or more.

Bhagavan further added : ' Whatever may be said to suit the different capacities of different men, the truth is that the state of Self-realization must be beyond the triad of knower, knowledge and known. The Self is the Self ; that is all that can be said of it '.

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"Since thaumaturgic powers had begun to manifest themselves in Frank Humphreys, he was curious to learn about *siddhis*. The Maharshi discouraged this curiosity : "Do not think too much of psychical phenomena. Clairvoyance, Clairaudience and such things are not worth having, when far greater illumination and peace are possible without them than with them. No master ever cared a rap for occult powers, for he has no need for them."

— from *Ramana Maharshi* by Prof. K. Swaminathan

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## AN EARLY DEVOTEE

By  
Viswanatha Swami

**VILACHERI MANI IYER**, a senior school-mate of Bhagavan, was noted for his physical strength and for his rough dealing with anybody whom he disliked. And so he was called *Pōkkiri Mani* (Rogue Mani). He never went to any temple nor bowed down before any god or man. However, he took his mother to Tirupati a few years after Bhagavan had settled down at Tiruvannamalai. His mother wanted to alight at Tiruvannamalai which was on their way, to see Venkataraman whom she had known as a small boy at Tiruchuzhi. But Mani did not agree, saying that it was not worth the trouble. So they went direct to Tirupati.

On their way back to Madurai the mother again pressed her son and he had to yield to her request. But he agreed only on condition that he was allowed to take Venkataraman back home. He said: "It is not for *darshan* of this bogus *sadhu* that I am alighting at Tiruvannamalai, but to drag him by his ear and bring him back to Madurai. I am not a weakling. I shall succeed where his uncle, mother and brother have failed." "All right, do as you please", said the mother and they both alighted at Tiruvannamalai and went up the Hill to Virupaksha Cave where Bhagavan was then staying. The mother bowed to Bhagavan and sat down quietly. But the son looked and looked at Bhagavan, getting more and more puzzled. There was no trace of the ordinary boy Venkataraman whom he had known. Something quite unexpected had happened. Instead of his old friend there was an effulgent Divine Being seated in front of him, absolutely still and silent. His heart melted for the first time in his life, tears rolled down his cheeks and his hair stood on end. He fell prostrate before Bhagavan and surrendered himself to him. He became a frequent visitor and a staunch devotee of Bhagavan.



But yet, he thought that he was in need of a more tangible method than the *Vichara* — *Who Am I?* — and approached Bhagavan for it a few times. There was no response. Once when he went out for a walk on the Hill with Bhagavan, he stood before him and

said : "I won't allow you to return unless you give me some *upadesa* (teaching) suited to me." Bhagavan replied : "What is there to teach, Mani ? Instead of saying 'Siva, Siva,' and keeping quiet, why do you ask for this and that ?"

Mani Iyer fell down at Sri Bhagavan's feet with great joy and exclaimed : "I have got my *upadesa* and initiation !"

From that moment he went on with the japa of 'Siva, Siva' day and night and in course of time it became one with his *prana*,

life-current. He was totally transformed and his face shone with divine radiance.

When Mani Iyer felt that his end was near, he stayed with Bhagavan for a few days. Every morning he rolled with his body round Bhagavan's Hall (*anga pradakshina*). When Bhagavan tried to stop him, he said, "I do not know how else I can express my gratitude for what Bhagavan has done for me !"

A few days later he took leave of Bhagavan, and soon got released from bodily bondage to dwell for ever at Bhagavan's feet.

## True? Untrue?

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WHEN WE SEE  
WE LOSE OUR LIFE

WHEN WE SAY  
WE LOSE OUR LIFE

BEFORE SEE  
BEFORE SAY  
WE ARE  
LIFE AS EVER

When I see some thing  
I think it a separate  
object and overlook  
the glory of SEE : BE.

When I say something  
I make mouth noises  
and miss the WHOLLY  
creative power of  
SILENT SOUND.

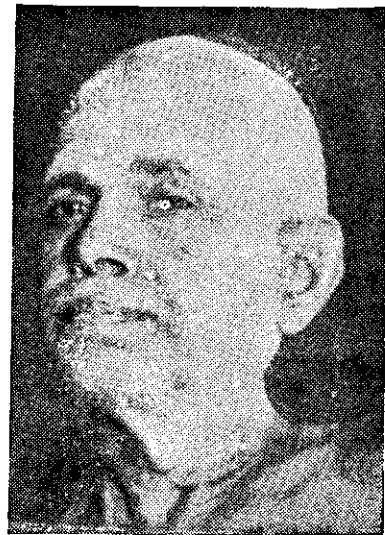
## Reflections on Ramana as Guru

By  
Joel D. Mlecko

IN comparison to such figures as a Sankara, or a Gandhi, the effect of Ramana's life and thought on the attitudes and practices of Indian society have in general been minute. He did not set out consciously to reform nor even to share his ideas and values; he did not search out disciples, they came to him. His influence has been not on a nation, a society, or on institutions as much as it has been on individuals. The social significance of Ramana's ideas and values will radically depend first of all on their incorporation into the lives of individuals.

Concerning what Ramana taught, it is not radically new<sup>1</sup>; the elements of his *upadeśa* can be found in the Indian religious and philosophical tradition. Ramana was not a deliberate, radical reformer. He accepted and generally affirmed his cultural heritage, though this was not done blindly or haphazardly. For example, his attitude toward and development of the traditional doctrine concerning *ātman* were fundamentally grounded in his own experience.

Ramana's uniqueness and contributions to spiritual development in general and to *guruhood* in particular do not consist so much in what he taught as in what he emphasized. In this brief article we will note five areas of emphasis: (1) non-Hindus were to be privy to and participate in his religious insights; (2) in those insights the means to and end of illumination are not simply qualitatively alike (good means to attain a good end) but rather means and end are one and the same; (3) the truth and value of those insights were to be validated by personal experiment and experience; (4) in the process of that validation, responsibility was to be shifted from the *guru* to the *sisya*; (5) the validation definitely did not have to be in a context withdrawn from the world.



A biographer of Ramana has written that, "the Perfect Man, such as was Maharshi . . . does not advertise himself, being far above any personal life and its ambitions."<sup>2</sup> Yet people from all over the world made pilgrimage to Ramana. He accepted those sincere spiritual seekers who came to him, regardless of the seeker's external circumstances, cultural background, literacy, caste, age, religion, race, nationality. The practice of bringing non-Hindus into the circle of *sisyas*, without expecting them to take on the accoutrements of Hindu culture, was given special emphasis by Ramana. Much before *guruhood* became fashionable in the West, Westerners became devoted followers of Ramana in India and were warmly and generously received by Ramana, without formal rites and cultural accretions.

<sup>1</sup> T. M. P. Mahadevan, "Dakshinamurti, Sankara, Ramana," *Ramana Manjari*, p. 80; *Ramana Maharshi and His Philosophy of Existence*, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Mouni Sadhu, *Ways to Self-Realization*, p. 81.

Arthur Osborne wrote :

There was something mysterious about the initiation he gave — no laying on of hands, no mantras, no outer form at all ; only the *mouna diksha*, the silent initiation . . . There was nothing specifically Hindu about it, nothing to make it available to members of one community only and inaccessible to others.<sup>3</sup>

To spiritual seekers Ramana offered the means of *dikshā* and *upadesa*, and the goal of Self-realization as pure and simple silence. For Ramana the means and the end were not simply qualitatively alike ; the means and the end were the same : silence.<sup>4</sup> Not the environment but Ramana himself, his very presence (*darsan*), was the embodiment of that integral, serene, blissful silence. Union with that presence of Ramana was, again, not merely a means to an end, the means was in effect the end. Through silence Ramana broke down the thought process rather than stimulating and proliferating thoughts such as sermons and precepts do, for as he said, "Truth is beyond words."<sup>5</sup> Not only his metaphysics and epistemology but also his axiology and ethics were one : be still. However, there were those who were not prepared for the mode of silence which enables the intuitive faculties to become operative. Ramana therefore offered, as a preliminary, a spoken and written *upadesa*, which originated in his own transrational experience, expressed in the terminology of *Advaita Vedānta*. He stated, "The essential purpose of all the *Vedas* . . . is to teach you the nature of the imperishable Atman and to declare with authority 'Thou art That'."<sup>6</sup> Self-realization was to be achieved by Self-inquiry. But again the means, Self-inquiry, and the end, Self-realization, are one and the same :

*Vichara* is the process and the goal also. "I AM" is the goal and final reality. To hold on to this Pure Being with effort is *vichara*. When it is spontaneous and natural, it is realization.<sup>7</sup>

Ramana's message could be assimilated intuitively or first discursively and then intuitively. In either case, Ramana consistent-

ly maintained that it was one's own personal experience rather than the authority of the guru, the tradition, or scripture which was the authoritative means for validating the truth and value of the message. Ramana never insisted on the absoluteness or non-accommodation of his views. His teaching was free from fanaticism or sectarianism. He went beyond traditional values and authority and placed truth in the crucible of the personal experience of any sincere individual, in any state of life. The emphasis for responsibility, therefore, was placed on the *sisya*, not on the *guru*. A *sisya* has recalled the following concerning Ramana :

He never preached or laid down the law, but always concentrated on turning the seeker back on himself and pointing out to him that it was entirely up to him, the Guru could only indicate and guide, for no one could give realization.<sup>8</sup>

Ramana consistently maintained that his instruction "amounts to direction only ; it depends on the seeker to use that direction."<sup>9</sup>

*Sisya* : Cannot this trouble and difficulty be lessened with the aid of a Master (guru) or an *Ishta Devata* (God chosen for worship) ? Cannot they give power to see our Self as it is — to change us into themselves — to take us into Self-realization ?

*Guru Ramana* : *Ishta Devata* and *Guru* are aids — very powerful aids on this path ; But an aid to be effective requires your effort also. Your effort is a *sine qua non*. It is you who should see the sun.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Osborne, "The Maharshi's Place in History", *The Mountain Path* (July 1968), p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> Ramana's radical insistence of ends and means being one and the same might be comparable to Gandhi's concept of *ahimsa*. It seems, though, that most other thinkers, when equating ends and means, have done so only qualitatively not ontologically ; see, for example, the excellent study : Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*.

<sup>5</sup> *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 528.

<sup>6</sup> *Maharshi's Gospel*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> *Thus Spake Ramana*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>8</sup> *A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>9</sup> *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 792.

Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your true nature.<sup>10</sup>

Ramana built on the Hindu tradition but also went beyond it in attempting to free the Self not only from ego but even from many forms or accretions of tradition or culture. In particular, he played down the role of the *guru* and so remained consistent with his radical non-dualistic perspective. He had no wish to convert anyone to his own ideas and no desire to add a single person to his following.<sup>11</sup> Ramana's guidance was not a means of making the *sisya* dependent on the *guru* or a means of imparting fixed dogma but a process of training and weaning away<sup>12</sup> from the *guru* so that the Self could seek and experience its own answers. Ramana manifested a transforming awareness of ultimate reality, not simply an informing theory about it. Paul Brunton has written :

The Maharishree is the last person in the world to place his followers in the chains of servile obedience, and allows everyone the utmost freedom of action. In this respect he is quite refreshingly different from most of the teachers and Yogis I have met in India.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, pure *jñāna yoga* was traditionally followed by the recluse, withdrawn from the world. Ramana made it a path to be followed in the world. He did not encourage anyone to renounce life in the world, as Arthur Osborne has recorded :

Ramana explained that it would only be exchanging the thought "I am a house-

holder" for the thought "I am a *sannyasin*" whereas what is necessary is to reject the thought "I am the doer" completely and remember only "I am."<sup>14</sup>

To remember "I am" can be achieved through the process of *vichara* in any external circumstances. It has been claimed that herein lies part of the genius of Ramana : the fusion of *jñāna yoga* and *karma yoga*. Ramana emphasized a sophisticated spiritual path suited to the exigencies of the age. It is a path that can be followed silently in office or factory no less than in an *āshram* or cave, with or without observances.

In today's world, there are spiritual seekers who face a two-fold dilemma : a desire to understand, appreciate, and benefit from the *guru* tradition ; and an equally valuable desire to develop self-knowledge, maturity and responsible independence. A reconciliation of these two positions appears in Sri Ramana Maharshi, through the above-mentioned five elements of emphasis. Ramana himself recognized value in the *guru* tradition, (and contributed to it) without becoming too dependent on that *guru* tradition. Ramana, thereby, facilitated the process of spiritual growth for those who seek an adult path of spirituality.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> *A Search in Secret India*, p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> Joachim Wach, "Master and Disciple", *The Journal of Religion* 42 (January 1962), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *A Search in Secret India*, p. 211.

<sup>14</sup> *Ramana-Arunachala*, p. 41. Also see the "Summary" by B. V. Narasimhaswami in Ramana Maharshi, *Upadesa Saram*, p. 17.

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"Talking of the innumerable ways of different seekers after God, Bhagavan said : 'Each should be allowed to go his own way, the way for which alone he may be built. It will not do to convert him to another path by violence. The Guru will go with the disciple along his own path and then gradually turn him into the supreme path when the time is ripe. Suppose a car is going at top speed. To stop it and to turn it at once would lead to a crash'."

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— Day by Day with Bhagavan.



# ON TRIAL FOR MY LIFE

## *Summary of Proceedings*

By

Douglas E. Harding

### I. CHARGE

I am accused of being a man, the penalty for which is death.<sup>1</sup>

### II. PLEA

Not guilty.

### III. PROSECUTION

The case against me falls into seven parts. Three witnesses — a Philosopher, a Psychiatrist, and a Scientist — are called.

#### *The Philosopher*

- (1) claims that all say I am a man, and no-one can be found to deny it ;
- (2) that in fact I, too, see myself to be a man,
- (3) and feel myself to be a man,
- (4) and do what men do — working no miracles.
- (5) And that the deep-seated defects of my character remain. The meagre benefits of my strange belief — that I transcend the human — show how wrong I am.

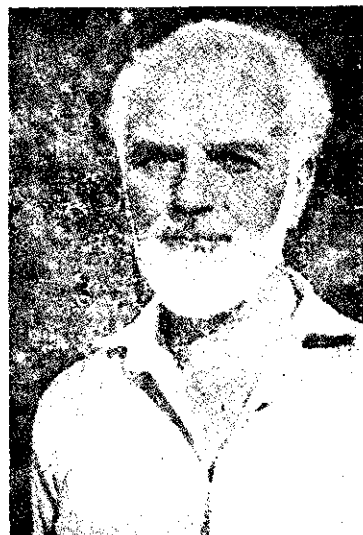
#### *The Psychiatrist*

- (6) explains my case in pathological terms (e.g., paranoia — an all-too-human condition).

#### *The Scientist*

- (7) classifies me as an ordinary specimen of *Homo sapiens*, one of the Primates — an order which includes lemurs, monkeys, and anthropoid apes.

Ultimately, I am for him a system of waves or particles whose behaviour reaches those degrees of elaboration called chemical, vital, and human.



Douglas E. Harding

### IV DEFENCE

I conduct my own defence, recalling and cross-questioning the witnesses and taking the stand on my own behalf. I deal in turn with the Prosecution's seven counts against me.

#### (1) *The Evidence of Consensus*

The Philosopher, going back on his previous testimony, admits that not everyone says I am a man. He agrees that the Perennial Philosophy, which lies at the heart of the great

<sup>1</sup> *Ramana Maharshi* : The person soaked in 'I-am-the-body' idea is the greatest sinner and he is a suicide.

*Disciple* : The Bible teaches that man is born in sin.

*Ramana Maharshi* : The man is sin !

*St. Paul* : The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

spiritual traditions, insists that I am really the Self (alias *Atman-Brahman*, the Buddha-Nature, the Void, the Godhead, Being or Consciousness, the Kingdom of Heaven, etc.) and that the whole reason for living is to realise I am This and no man, no thing at all.

He further admits that the experts in this Philosophy are precise about *where* to find my Self ("Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet"), and *when* to look for It ("Now is the day of salvation"), and *how* to look for It ("Like a little child"), and *what* It looks like ("Light", "Living Water", "Space", etc.).

Finally, the witness concedes that this Philosophy is the *only* one which has remained intact down the ages. It is the real consensus. No other teaching has proved so independent of history and geography and cultural differences, has so stood the test of time and experience.

### (2) *The Evidence of Self-perception*

Appearing in my own defence, I swear on the most solemn oath that I perceive nothing at all right here where I am, let alone a man. For instance :<sup>2</sup>

- (a) Looking now *at* these marks on paper, I'm looking *out of* — what? Not, *on present evidence*, out of two eyes, or even one, but out of this huge oval 'window' without frame or glass, or indeed any looker this side of it.
- (b) Looking straight across at that person over there, is it a case of a *man* observing a man? What is now taking in here? I find here no present evidence of a body, no structure or solidity, no opacity or colouring, no boundaries where this observer ends and the scene begins, nothing to which a name or age or sex could be attributed. I try to count (while still looking across at him) how many toes I now have . . . how many fingers . . . how many legs . . . arms . . . heads . . . In every case I find nothing to count. The idea that I *am* a human body, or *inhabit* one, or even *own*

one, makes no sense now. What would it be like in there?

- (c) When I go outside and lie down and look up at the sky, it isn't only my human body but also my terrestrial body — the Earth — that is dissolved without trace into room for the stars to shine in.
- (d) Finally, I shut my eyes (that's what people say, not my story) and dissolve all those stars, the Universe itself.

In short, whatever I'm up to, I see that I couldn't be *less* like those fixed, solid, complicated, shut-in creatures called men.

### (3) *The Evidence of Self-feeling*

Continuing to testify on my own behalf, I agree it isn't enough that I *perceive* myself to be this elastic, all-dissolving Clarity, this conscious Absence which the Perennial Philosophy describes. What I really am must also be a matter of what I *feel* myself to be, what comes natural. Do I carry on as if I were God, or a mere man, or what?

### *Levels of Identification*

Quite apart from realising Who in fact I am, my self-feelings — however confused — have certainly never been those of a mere man.

- (a) Sometimes I felt like nothing whatever.
- (b) In great physical pain or pleasure, I *identified* myself with one part of my body in distinction from the rest.
- (c) Arguing with my brother, I *felt* like one human confronting another.
- (d) If a neighbour started encroaching on the family property, I *found* myself reacting for and as the family.
- (e) In case of a threat to my sect, or nation, or race, it *was* as each of these, in turn, that I *faced* the threat.
- (f) Imagining my Planet or Solar System to be in danger of invasion by another,

<sup>2</sup> If the reader, too, wants to escape the death-penalty, he should actually carry out, *for himself*, the identity-tests or experiments which form the substance of the Defence throughout.

I *found* myself thinking and feeling for this heavenly body as against that one.

- (g) I *experienced* the anxiety that haunts these intermediate levels, their instability and comparative unreality. But there *occurred* times of great peace when they *were* left behind, and not a particle in the universe *eluded* my embrace. Then at last I *was* mySelf. I *felt* comfortable. As the Nothing that holds the All, I *rested*.....

#### *My Mistaken Identity*

In fact, I never *accepted* my supposed 'human limitations'. They never fitted. My trouble *was* that I *tried* to achieve *as man* what I already am as the Self. If I *was* greedy it *was* because I *knew* in my heart that all things are mine. If I *was* self-centred it *was* because I am forever Self-centred. If I *sought* power it was because I dimly *recognised* there is no other power. If I *tried* to evade responsibility it was because I never *got* involved anyhow. If I *behaved* as though I were immortal, it *was* because the One here is deathless. If I *bated* all my limitations, it *was* on account of my profound conviction that in reality I am unlimited. The instinct *was* right; only its expression *was* wrong, inefficient, partial. In all my deeds and cravings, even the worst, I *was* half-heartedly laying claim to my Self. Throughout all these false identifications I *was* implying my true Identity.

#### *My True Identity*

How does it feel to be the Only one, the Alone, the Origin, the self-generating Self? To be this unthinkable Mystery? To celebrate, not *what* I am, but *that* I am — since there is no reason for anything to be at all? Somehow, inconceivably, I arrange my own existence. It's impossible! But who is now feeling this incomparable wonder? How could a *man* begin to do so? Who but the Self knows this joy? To whom but the Self could it come so naturally?

#### (4) *The Evidence of Miracles*

The Prosecution wants to know why, if my testimony so far is true, am I so powerless,

unable seemingly to work a single modest miracle? If I'm not a man but really God why doesn't He occasionally show his hand?

The fact is that to see what I'm up to I *have to be really childlike*. When at last I dare to look for myself, ignoring what I've been told to see, I find, not occasional miracles going on around here, but fantastic miracles all the time — of which the following are random samples.

- (a) Whereas men close and open their eyes, I annihilate and re-create the world.
- (b) They only stop their cars; I hush the world.
- (c) They rotate; I spin the world.
- (d) A man holds a bit of red glass to his eye; I paint the sky.
- (e) He turns his face to the distant stars; abolishing distance, I coincide with the stars.
- (f) The road pays no attention to the human traveller, but for me it widens, closing in again behind.
- (g) He walks in the country, moving at one speed in its stillness. The whole countryside walks in me, moving at many speeds in my stillness. I watch him shifting his little body, while I shift mountains, trees, houses — effortlessly, at will.

And so on, indefinitely. Here is no human magician. I, and I alone, perform *only* miracles — superhuman feats that make the famous *siddhis*, which a few men are capable of, look commonplace indeed.

#### (5) *The Evidence of Practical Results*

The Prosecution points out that if I really am God, then living as such should work out better than living as the man I took myself to be; for it would indeed be a strange world in which such stupendous realisation made no practical difference. But in fact (the Prosecution continues) the consequences of my alleged Self-awareness manifestly fall short of its pretensions.

What, then, are the benefits of seeing and feeling and knowing Who I am? According to the Prosecution, they appear negligible. I say they are non-existent! For, firstly, this simple Being here cannot change for better or worse: here is nothing to modify. Secondly, the man which I am not is by nature ever-changing, limited and imperfect in every respect, incapable of any radical reform, and my liberation is liberation from him—and from all attempts to improve him. So that even if he does seem to pick up a few benefits, these are incidental, irrelevant, not my business, or perhaps a diversion from the real issue, which is my total Perfection. In any case, these supposed benefits are nebulous and fleeting. Having come, they will go; having no substance, they melt on inspection.

Yet there is something that must be added. Paradoxically, I find that his failure to find any certain gain, or rather this loss of interest in the whole matter of human improvement, is itself the greatest gain! It is the indescribable peace of resting in my true Nature.

#### (6) *The Evidence of Psychology*

Recalled to the witness stand, the psychiatrist is questioned about my case-history, the background of my denial that I am a man. The following developmental stages emerge:

- (a) As a new-born infant I was, like any animal, unself-conscious — no-thing for myself, faceless, at large, unseparate from my world.
- (b) As a young child, becoming on occasions aware of myself-as-I-am-for-myself, I wanted to know why my mother had a head and I lacked one, or protested that I wasn't a boy (I wasn't like those solid people at all!), or announced that I was nothing, absent, invisible.<sup>1</sup> In other words I saw, however rarely and briefly, into my true, non-human Nature. Yet I was also becoming increasingly aware of myself-as-I-am-for-others — a very human and special person, complete with head and face. Both views of me were valid and needful.

(c) But as I grew up my socially acquired view of myself-from-outside came to overshadow, and in the end to obliterate, my native view of myself-from-inside. In fact, I grew *down*, I collapsed. At first I contained my world; now it contained me — what little of me was left. Intimidated, I took everybody's word for what's here where I am, except my own. I was out-voted by thousands to one. So I shrank from being the all-embracing Subject into being one of its myriad objects, into a cut-off, closed-in body, into a *thing* whose nature is to be up against all other things, into an alien in an alien universe. Into a 'case' calling for an alienist or mind-doctor, since mind-sickness is essentially alienation, separateness.

(d) But one day, daring at last to look within this 'case', I found no patient, no man, no thing but Space for things to happen in, and no separation from them whatever. And this discovery, so far from constituting my disease (as the witness first maintained) was my cure.

#### (7) *The Evidence of Science*

Up to this point, the strength of the Defence has lain in its appeal to my own direct, first-hand experience of What I am, my Subjectivity — seeing that no-one else can speak for me here. From the Prosecution's view point, however, this subjectivity is precisely the weakness of my case. But there remains the Prosecution's last shot, its final and most impressive witness, the Scientist who tells the outside story of me. And his evidence, though external and therefore powerless to upset my inside story, may at least claim to be objective and impartial and well-tested. As such, it is important, though not critical, for this trial.

Well, does his tale really contradict mine?

On oath I assure the scientist that right here, at a distance of 0 inches from myself,

<sup>1</sup> Listen to young children, and you will find that (till they are laughed out of it by grown-ups who 'know better') they really do talk like this.

I find — Space. And I invite him to come here and see for himself whether I am speaking the truth.

Accepting my invitation and approaching me — armed with cameras, microscopes, and so on — he takes careful pictures of me at each stage of his inward journey, and lays the evidence before the Court. It turns out that what his cameras make of me, what I register as at each stage, depends upon his *range*. Thus his distant portrait of a man is soon replaced by a nearer one of a face or a limb, then by a skin-patch, then by cells followed by one cell, then by molecules followed by one molecule, and so on, till — very near the point of contact — I figure as virtually a blank. My approaching observer has lost me on the way to me — leaving behind in turn my humanness, my life, my materiality, my colour and opacity and shape — and come, *almost*, to empty space.

But not quite. Still an outsider, he has to leave that last step to me, the insider. But it is the natural completion of all the steps he has taken towards me. Thus we agree. My story fits and rounds off his.

And not only in its conclusion. The place where my travelling observer discovers a *man* in his view-finder and on his film, is the place (say, six feet away) where I find him in my mirror. Again, where he finds only a *face* is where I find it (say, two feet away) in my mirror. We agree that not right here, but over there, is where those human appearances belong.

And if he were now to recede from me (by helicopter and space-ship) instead of approaching, he would make me out to be, in turn, a city, a country, a continent, a planet (the Earth), a star (the Solar System), a galaxy (the Milky Way), and, in the limit, empty space. Or rather, *almost* empty space, as when he came up to me.

I am the Subject of all these portraits. What they are pictures of, the Reality behind every one of my appearances. And as *all* these regional manifestations, ranging from electron through man to galaxy, I testify on oath that each is, intrinsically and viewed from their common Centre here, the Self seeing itself as Capacity. When the Scientist, accordingly, labels me as 'waves or particles in space', or an 'animal', or a 'man', or any other grade of thing, his own researches indicate that I am also *every* grade of thing, and beyond all things their Core and Periphery of No-thingness.

#### V. PROSECUTION SUMMING UP

The Prosecution has nothing material to add to its case, but is content to appeal again to sober common sense, and call for a verdict of GUILTY, and the penalty of death.

#### VI. DEFENCE SUMMING UP

Traditional wisdom, my own Self-seeing and Self-feeling, my unique powers, my practical needs, my health of mind, the account which physical science gives of me — all seven have one message *I'm not the man I seem*. In their different ways they announce my true Nature.

#### VII. JUDGE'S DIRECTIONS TO THE JURY

Only when you have tried out *for yourselves* the basic 'Self-seeing' tests on which the Defence rests its case, are you qualified to pass your verdict.

Having sincerely carried out at least a few of these simple experiments, you may go on to consider whether, in the course of the trial, each of the Prosecution's seven points hasn't been turned into a Defence point. And, if it has, what their *cumulative* value is.

#### VIII. VERDICT ???

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"Self-reform automatically results in social reform. Attend to self-reform and social reform will take care of itself."

— SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

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# BHAKTI and JNANA

By

Dr. I. K. Taimni<sup>1</sup>

THE path of spiritual unfoldment is not a beaten track which every one has to follow in order to reach his Goal. "Each man is to himself the life, truth and the way" and the path which he follows unfolds from within himself as he advances according to his individual uniqueness and the role which he is destined to play in the Divine Plan in the far distant future.

The *Bhakti-Sutra* of Nārada gives in outline some of the salient features of the path of devotion or love and is considered as a sort of manual for those who want to realize God through the power of love. It does not deal with the subject with the mastery which is evident in treatises like *Yoga Sutra* and *Siva Sutra* but it gives a fairly good general idea of *bhakti mārga* and is of great help to those who are trying to cultivate devotion and want some guidance and information on the subject in the early stages of its development. To those who are emotional by nature and for whom *bhakti mārga* is especially suited *Nārada Bhakti Sutra* can serve as a very useful guide.

But it should not be concluded from what has been said above that the cultivation of devotion is necessary only for people of an emotional temperament and those who are treading the path of knowledge can dispense with it. Nature aims at an all-round perfection of the individuality and this means that all aspects of human nature have to be developed sometime or other in the series of lives through which the individual passes in his spiritual unfoldment which ultimately ends in his attaining Self-realization and Liberation from the illusions and limitations of the manifested worlds. The possession of an emotional temperament in a particular life means merely that in that particular life the individual will find it much easier to unfold his spiritual potentialities through his emotional nature.

The development of devotion is necessary for every aspirant and the question 'How to develop devotion?' is of vital importance and must be considered carefully. In a way, man has greater control over his mind than over his emotions. It is easier to direct the mind to any problem of an intellectual nature and engage it in considering its various aspects. It is not so easy to arouse our emotions and begin to *feel* strongly our love for any one although he is dear to us. The aspirant who decides to cultivate devotion to God has to learn how to make a beginning.

So, the preliminary preparation for the cultivation of love consists in purifying and harmonizing the mind and bringing it into a state in which it can serve as the vehicle of love of God. The purpose of all self-discipline which is prescribed and the virtues which have to be cultivated is to produce this state of the mind and when the aspirant is successful in doing so and also adopts the other means of opening up the channel between the inner and outer levels of our Being, love begins to well up from within, naturally and in an ever-increasing measure. The more we love God the more we know Him and the more we know Him the more our love for Him grows, until knowledge and love merge into one state of permanent awareness of that Reality which is referred to as Self-realization.

The aspirant should note carefully these two stages on the *bhakti mārga*. The first stage is a period of constant effort, self-discipline, purification and the development of those virtues and state of mind which are required for the expression of *bhakti*. In this stage, periods of emotional exaltation and

<sup>1</sup> From the 'Preface' to his recent book, *Self-Realization Through Love*, published by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras-600020.

depression follow each other alternately. But if the aspirant perseveres in his intensive effort and has the necessary potentiality within him he passes gradually into the second stage in which love of God begins to well up from within naturally and constantly in an ever increasing measure without any effort on his part. This state *parā-bhakti* or *paramaprema* which appears on attaining direct awareness of Reality is described very aptly in the *Narada Bhakti Sutra*, (aphorism 54), and makes the devotee Self-sufficient and full of bliss and 'Peace that passeth understanding'.

It is necessary to distinguish between these two stages because unless and until the second stage has been reached and the devotee is firmly established in the love of God he cannot afford to relax his efforts to cultivate

in the most intensive manner the deeper states of love referred to as *prema*. Too many aspirants begin to imagine that they have acquired the highest state of love and need not do anything further when actually they have just entered the path of love and have experienced love in its most elementary form. So exquisite and out of the common is the experience of this kind of love that a mere glimmer of it can be mistaken by the devotee for the highest experience in this field and incline him to relax his efforts in the cultivation of that love which is unfathomable and beyond all human experience.

It is possible for every aspirant to cultivate love of God to the highest degree and attain that Self-sufficiency and peace of the Eternal which is inherent in that Love and which cannot be found without that Love.

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## UNTO FREEDOM LEAD

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By

Randy Sindelman

I'm locked in the house of *maya* ;  
You hold the key.  
Swing the doors wide open  
And lead me into the freedom of your bliss,  
O venerable Master,  
Who pervade the world  
Yet remain beyond it.

Can the knower  
Ever be separated from the known ?  
Please close your scissors  
And snap the knot of ignorance.

Can the seer  
Ever be apart from the seen ?  
Oh bestower of vision

Please blow the clouds away  
And reveal your light.

Did I ever leave the womb ?  
Oh Vichara !  
Please sever this cord of ignorance.

I bow down to the supreme guru  
Who dwells in the heart of all  
And sheds his grace upon the world.

Oh Arunachala !  
Oh Ramana !  
My beloved Lord,  
I wait at your lotus feet.

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# ON DEVOTION

By

Wolter A. Keers

WHAT I have done, repeatedly, is to warn against blind devotion. *Bhakti* without *Jnana*, heart without head, leads to terrible things. On the other hand, head without heart tends to become rigidity, blind letter-worship that is intolerant also, and that tends to believe that it is always right.

To see things in the right perspective, we must see very clearly first, with our entire being, that neither the head nor the heart can understand what we really are. Truth can never be found within a framework, be it physical, intellectual or emotional. A body, a perception, a thought or a feeling is a terribly fleeting appearance.

When we talk of our body, in reality we talk about the concept we have made of it. That concept says: "I, the body, am 20 or 50 or 80 years old". But the body is not a concept in that sense: it is one flash of perception at a time, which by the trick of memory we paste on to a ready-made image. Usually, our perception is really just a little piece of the body: your hands on your lap, or an itching on your shoulder. But such things, although we call them 'I' and 'my body' are nothing but a very rapid perception of some small sensation — in other words of something that appears in consciousness. And something appearing in consciousness is what we call a thought.

So the body is a perceived something, whether it be an itch or an image or concept produced by memory, and in other words it is nothing but thought. The same is true for sense-perceptions: they are a form of thought, and the story we produce out of such sense-perceptions, again through the kind offices of memory, is what we call the world. But looking properly, without the optical illusion of memory and without preconceived notions . . . looking at just exactly what presents

itself in awareness, we see that it is a very, very rapid succession of thoughts.

The cardinal question: can a thought that lasts for perhaps half a second perceive the unlimited?

Every thought, including the flashing perceptions that we stick together and then call 'the world', is limited — the closer you look, the more limits you discover. One perception lasts perhaps a thousandth of a second. We always paste quite a collection of perceptions together, and make them into a thought, into a concept such as 'the world'. But we perceive the concept, never a world.

So a thought lasts for half a second and is limited by time. You were there as Conscious Presence before the thought was there, during its appearance, and you are still there after the thought has disappeared.

Now who understands what?

You as the idea or as the feeling of a thinker, projected into that head, you are nothing more than an idea. There is no thinker in that head. That thinker is a mere image, and that head is also a thing perceived, and not even that. It is an image, a thought. Can one thought appear in another thought? Can a thought rise in a head or in a thinker?

Whether you see thought as limited by time or by time and space, dream-space, in either case it is limited, and it can never understand the unlimited.

On the other hand, the unlimited cannot make itself limited: it cannot, so to say, climb down to the level of a thing, to know it. To infinite space, there are no finite objects. So from the point of view of the unlimited Self, there is no thought and no thinker, no waking state and no dream state.

So who understands? Who has got the problems? Who says there is an ego?



It is only the ego that says there is an ego. But on close examination, which means : on seeing that ego in the light of knowledge or consciousness, it turns out to have no substance at all. It is a mere thought, a reflex, like any other thought. You don't have to get rid of an ego, because there is no such thing ; there is only the thought or the feeling that there is an ego. Nobody has ever seen an ego. There is no such thing. What we mean by 'ego' is a crazy way of looking at things, of creating a centre of the unlimited that has no centre.

What you call the ego, worse : "your ego", is merely a bad habit. It is looking from all kinds of standpoints, like ear, eye, a touching hand, or from an imaginary personality, and claiming afterwards that all such standpoints represent one thing : an ego. You talk about *my, my, my*. But where is this proprietor of thought and perception ? That proprietor does not exist, other than as a thought. So one thought claims to own another thought.

Every image, every perception is completely new. Memory may want to tell us that an ego is 20 years old, but in reality it lasts for only a fraction of a second.

So who is there to be bound by an ego ? I ? But what kind of I ? The ever-present Awareness that you are and in which the short-lived I-thought appears, and on which it depends for its very existence, just like the wave depends on water and the pot on clay ?

You, consciousness without limits, who are there before and during and after a thought, and therefore in itself without thought and therefore without any limit whatsoever, you can never be bound by a mini-appearance that shows up once in a while, just as space cannot be bound by a draught of air passing through the room.

The only thing that is limited, is the limited, and we are not the limited. The limited consists of flashes perceived from time to time in this unlimited awareness. To call them 'I' is surely an absurdity ?

We are the unlimited, and however many flashes may appear and disappear, nothing

can ever leave a trace on what we are : immediately after a flash, a thought, a feeling appears, there is emptiness again, in which there is room for the next perception.

Now what has this got to do with devotion and *Bhakti Yoga* ?

This vastness is what we all have in common. As vastness, or, more correctly speaking, as the Unlimited, we are one. We are one, Common Experience, within which that body and this one appear as manifestations of one and the same Unlimited, all-piercing, all in-filling Presence that some people call God, others the Self, yet others *Atma, Brahman*, the 'I' — 'I', and so on.

In the language of feeling, this one, indivisible and unlimited Experience that we are is indicated by the word 'love'.

Haven't you noticed, if ever you loved someone with your entire being, that you became very vast indeed ? Can't you see, deep within yourself, that there is a heart that reaches beyond the horizon ? Haven't you had the experience, when you loved someone, that you felt like embracing every man and woman in the streets, every tree in the forest ?

That is the Unlimited Experience, when it reflects in the domain of feeling. And that is *Bhakti*. When you love, you are a *bhakta*, even if your love is not for a God or for a Guru or something considered holy.

At the summit of the love-experience, the feeling we call love transcends itself, and becomes Pure Love, the timeless, Unlimited. This Experience that we are is of course beyond memory, beyond time — Unlimited indeed. When we claim to remember how wonderful love was, we do not talk about this Unlimited Being, but about the after glow in the kingdom of the heart, in feelings, in the body. What we *are* can never be imagined and therefore never be remembered. Memory must be given up if we are to be pure, fully conscious Experience.

Seen that way, and understanding that in Love as It is, there is no limited I, and that therefore to talk about "my" Love is an absurdity, *Bhakti Yoga* may be of immense

help, and may take us to what we are again and again.

Now this may sound dry, like a clean and clinical analysis. But the moment all this is understood, there is no clinical view of things anywhere. The moment you understand all this, you find yourself back as it were as your neighbour . . . in fact as the love in his heart. Because you look at him or her as the love that you now are yourself.

Of course, religion and meditation may be of help. But as maturity grows, things that were a help become a hindrance. As long as the *bhakta* remains an emotional and pious person, he maintains the separation between himself and the object of his worship or love.

Real *Bhakti* is therefore inevitably mixed with *Jnana*: real *Bhakti* understands that love is the dissolution of the feeling that I am someone separate, who loves or worships. Real *Bhakti* recognizes the other in its own heart; in real *Bhakti* the impression that there are others disappears, and the profound recognition that all are one in Essence dominates to such an extent, that soon we are incapable to see others as others: we then see them as a manifestation of the very same Love of which this body is also a manifestation. The entire creation is experienced as one immeasurable divine play as Shiva's dance, an image that appeals very much to me — or as one unending celestial song. But the song sings itself and it does so only to the glory of the Unmanifested.

Self-acceptance is the a, b, c, of the authentic *Bhakti* approach. As long as I condemn myself, I cannot admit every thought and every feeling to surge up in awareness; I repress them, and live, on a psychological level, as if I were a better person than I am, or worse than I am. In doing so I nail myself on the belief that I am a person. I make it virtually impossible for hidden resistances, fears, vanities and so on, to show themselves so that they may be clearly examined in the light of Light Itself.

But self-hate is merely an escape, and a dangerous one, because it is socially rather

acceptable. But in fact it is not humble at all. This behaviour is based on the absurd belief that there is a person, outside of the Unlimited Light of Love — and that is conceit, not humility.

I was once confronted with the question: "What do you love more, love or yourself?"

When you look deeply into your heart, you find the question unanswerable: the question is a trick. For on deep reflexion you find that the question really means: "What do you love more, yourself or yourself?" For you **are** love itself.

You can never hate yourself. What you hate is the image you created about yourself. Are you an image?

And don't try to understand what you call a 'Master'. You have made an image of him — he is not an image, I can assure you. And that is why you think that he does things for you and he showers grace on you.

Think, just think for a moment! Does not every authentic Master tell you and show you and prove to you that you are not a doer and not an enjoyer? And now what are you doing? You are making a doer out of the Master . . .

What you see as a Master is a house uninhabited. The Master is a blazing emptiness. He is like a diamond that has been cleaned of all kinds of dust and dirt, and now the sun shines through it in all its radiance. But it is not the diamond that shines, it is the sun. Even so, it is not a "Master" who talks — it is freedom or knowledge or love itself that shines through what you perceived and call the Master. From his own point of view, if I may say so, he is not a master, nor anything else: he is Love itself, just like you, and you, and you! So never try to understand a Master — it is of no use.

The only thing you can do is to accept the invitation coming from some authentic tradition and from the mouth of someone who is in harmony with this perspective . . . to accept the invitation to look . . . to listen. At a given moment, descending into yourself, hand in hand with words that are spoken, you

find yourself listening to your listening, looking at your looking.

At that moment you have crossed the threshold. You are free, you are freedom, this unique Experience that you have always been.

The only thing that remains to be done is to get rid of that crazy habit to launch 'I'-s in all directions, and talk about my freedom or my understanding or my love, and so on. When you see that there is no 'me' who owns that body . . . that it is a mere linguistic trick, first to call the body 'I', then to feel it as 'I', then to make that secondary

feeling talk about "my body" . . . if you look at it in this way, the idea and the feeling of an 'I' who owns and does things will soon vanish.

When that happens, liberation is made possible, it occurs. One has to get rid of the idea of "my" liberation. That is the most difficult trap perhaps. It is not the ego or the personality that gets liberated, but liberation is precisely the disappearance of ego and personality ; of the idea of me and mine.

Liberation is the total and unconditional non-appropriation of anything whatsoever.

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## TAT TWAM ASI

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By  
Kavana

Fathers, Mothers,  
Infants of Longing,  
the Separation is too  
near for Forgetfulness.  
Going near to IT  
is remembering  
your distance . . .  
too near,  
too far . . .  
to be  
in harmony.  
Something farther,  
something nearer,  
to be with me.

You would go too far ;  
you would go too near . . .  
to be with me,  
to come to me.  
i am beyond the end.  
you are before  
the beginning.  
i AM . . .  
you were  
and are  
before me ;  
and i am . . .  
That.

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## The 'Who am I?' Enquiry

By

K. Padmanabhan

SRI BHAGAVAN was fully aware of the difficulty felt by His devotees in pursuing the *Atma Vichara marga*, and so recommended the easier course of *Bhakti marga*, fully accepting *prapatti* or total surrender, as both cause and effect.

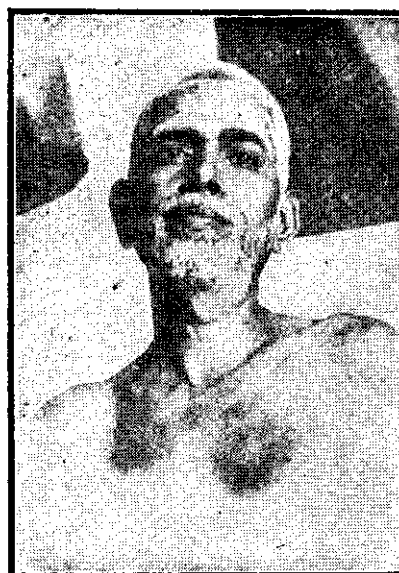
But one can never escape the *Vichara* or *Jnana Marga*, for it is the ultimate step. All other practices are conducive to guide one to this final path of Knowledge, culminating in Spontaneous Awareness. In fact, while these practices are long-drawn and are not final in themselves, the *Who Am I?* or Enquiry *Marga*, is not only quick, but also sure in leading to the already or ever-existing SELF, the state of thought-free awareness.

What is true meditation? It is devoid of all thought, and it already exists as Understanding, being a radical activity in Consciousness. Understanding exists or IS. It is beyond words and is always ready for being realised or experienced, with the silencing or quelling of thoughts. The eternal present is All-Consciousness.

One has to realise or experience Awareness or the Awakened state, the realisation of the already present Understanding, rather than strive for it with any prolonged method. Enquiry or *Vichara* is not for getting an answer, but it is the real observation of life. Enquiry is the approach to Understanding, to Experience, and it is Meditation itself.

It is rightly said: "Heart is the Guru; — *Anrita Nadi* or Awareness is His Form, — The bliss of unqualified enjoyment is His Teaching. — The Knowledge of all this is Freedom and Liberation, — The enjoyment of all this is Reality, — The existence of all this is Truth, — The activity of all this is Understanding, — and Understanding is Real Life".

Dr. Aliport states: "To live is to suffer; to survive is to find meaning in the suffering. If there is a purpose in life at all, there must



be a purpose in suffering and in dying, —". "With Understanding as Real Consciousness or Reality, or Radical Truth, there would be conscious sacrifice getting over the sense of persistent suffering in life."

On the path of *Atma Vichara* (Self-enquiry), one develops a *samatvabhāva* (sense of sameness in everything) leading to the recognition that there is nothing whatsoever other than the ultimate reality of Awareness.

Human language has its limitations and it is absolutely impossible for one to make another realise his experience. Each one will have to make his own effort. "Begin where you are". Begin today the enquiry *Who Am I?* and you are sure to experience the Reality during this very life. The aim is to 'grow to Heaven' and not to 'go to Heaven'.

There can be no better example and guide than Sri Bhagavan Ramana Himself to "Be quiet" and to experience the 'thoughtfree State', the ultimate Reality beyond bondage and liberation, pure, non-dual Awareness.

## ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM—2

## Sartre's Existential Philosophy\*

By

Moti Lal Pandit

## Introduction

JEAN PAUL SARTRE'S atheistic existentialism has its source in the writings of Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Husserl. Firstly, Sartre derives his "death of God" concept from contemporary nihilism, which owes its existence to Nietzsche. The idea that God is dead is the foundation of Sartre's atheism.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, Sartre borrows the concept of Dasein from Heidegger. Heidegger's Dasein is a being who has no nature and who has been thrown (*Geworfenheit*) into existence. Man makes or creates his own essence through his own existential choices in the "shadow of death". We cannot speak of Dasein in terms of *be*; rather Dasein is "being made". This Heideggerian Dasein is spoken of by Sartre as "being-for-itself" (*l'être-pour-soi*) or consciousness. This being-for-itself creates itself through the choices it makes. Death, according to Sartre, is not at all a possibility; it rather is the cancellation of all human possibilities. In Heidegger's case death is the highest possibility for man. Furthermore, Heidegger, by studying Dasein, wanted to arrive at the Being of beings (*das Sein des Seiendes*). But the case with Sartre is different: he is not interested, even remotely, in this problem. His whole attention and concern is drawn to one fact, and that is to analyze being-for-itself. Sartre also accepts the dialectical opposition between "being" and "nothing", which he renders as the opposition between being-for-itself and being-in-itself. Being-in-itself, which is devoid of consciousness, is represented by nature.

Sartre's interpretation of Hegel's celebrated idea of dialectics is quite different. He does not believe that thesis and anti-thesis can be reconciled, so that synthesis can be brought

about. Dialectical opposition between being-for-itself and being-in-itself is the fundamental basis of Sartrean existentialism.

Sartre borrowed his phenomenological method from Heidegger: Heidegger's phenomenology differs from that of Husserl in this that Heidegger is not concerned with *eidoi* or essences; rather he concerns himself with existence. By adopting Heideggerian phenomenology, Sartre made his concept of existence popular by emphasizing that "existence precedes essence". In other words, Sartre, like Heidegger, believes that there is no permanent human nature. Sartre begins with brute existence, which is pure consciousness. Sartre will finally apply the phenomenological method in analysing the content of consciousness.

## Basis of Sartre's Atheism

Sartre, in his *Existentialism and Humanism*, makes it plain that atheistic existentialism must be considered a valid existentialist posture. He writes that "there are two kinds of existentialists. There are, on the one hand, the Christians, amongst whom I shall name Jaspers and Marcel, both professed Catholics; and on the other, the existential atheists, amongst whom we must place Heidegger as well as the French and myself".<sup>2</sup> (It should be, however, kept in mind that Heidegger has

\* This is the second instalment in the series, continued from January 1976 issue, p. 11.

<sup>1</sup> "He regards God's non-existence as a postulate, a freely taken attitude that is not necessarily forced upon him by the actual situation of man. Atheism is the emotional *a priori* corresponding to the theoretical absolutizing of the phenomenological reduction".—James Collins, *Existentialists*, Gateway Book, Chicago (1964), p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, tr. Philip Mairet, Methuen and Co., London (1960), p. 26.

disavowed his connection with the Sartrean brand of existentialism).

Sartre is of the opinion that his type of existentialism is the only true type, whereas the existentialism of those philosophers who believe in God is invalid. He proclaims: "Existentialism is nothing else but an attempt to draw the full conclusions from a consistently atheistic position . . . Existentialism is not atheist in the sense that it would exhaust itself in demonstration of the non-existence of God. It declares, rather, that even if God existed, that would make no difference from its point of view. Not that we believe that God does exist, but we think that the real problem is not that of His existence; what man needs is to find himself again and understand that nothing can save him from himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God".<sup>3</sup>

From the above statements of Sartre it is clear that we are dealing with a philosopher in whose terminology God does not exist. Since, according to Sartre, there is no God, we cannot, therefore, speak of the creation of human beings. Man simply is. Man exists not with some purpose; his existence is rather gratuitous. Since there is no God and no purpose in human existence, there is only existence, and that "existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it".<sup>4</sup> When Sartre says that existence precedes essence, he means that man has no given and definite essence. He explains this idea in the following manner. A paper-knife is an article of manufacture. Before manufacturing the paper-knife, the artisan follows a certain pattern or formula in his mind. The paper-knife is manufactured because it serves a definite purpose. Man would not have manufactured the paper-knife if he had no idea about the purpose of the paper-knife. It is to this extent that "the sum of the formulae and the qualities making the knife's production possible" precedes existence.

Sartre applies this argument to God. When we, according to him, speak of God as Creator, we think of Him as a "supernal artisan". The implication of such thinking is this:

When man thinks of producing a paper-knife, he has a definite idea and purpose in mind. In like manner, when God creates man, He must have some idea or pattern in mind. Hence man would be the reflection of the idea in the divine mind. Therefore man "possesses a human nature; that human nature which is the conception of human being found in every man; which means that each man is a particular example of an universal conception".<sup>5</sup> But Sartre rejects the existence of God. From this it follows that, since there is no God who has the idea of man in mind prior to the act of creation, man's existence precedes his essence. To start with, man, in fact, is nothing. When man encounters himself in the world, it is only then that he defines himself. In other words, "There is no human nature because there is no God to have a conception of it".<sup>6</sup>

#### *Being-For-Itself and Being-In-Itself*

The world, according to Sartre, is split into two opposite modes of being, namely, being-for-itself (*l'être pour-soi*) and being-in-itself (*l'être en-soi*). Here the Hegelian influence is manifest in that being-for-itself is identified with nothingness, whereas being-in-itself with being or reality (thesis and anti-thesis of

<sup>3</sup> Sartre, *op. cit.*, p. 56. "Sartre is a convinced atheist. . . . His very philosophical conception is built upon the impossibility of the existence of God. His thought is intentionally and brutally opposed to God".—J. M. Spier, *Christianity and Existentialism*, tr. David Freeman, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia (1953), p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Sartre, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28. "We here find ourselves in the presence of a man who not only explicitly declares himself an atheist, but who claims — very naively, one must admit — to have furnished the proof of the non-existence of God. One could also show without difficulty that this pretension is incompatible with the profound exigency which is at the heart of the philosophies of existence".—Gabriel Marcel, *Problematic Man*, tr. Brian Thompson, Herder and Herder, New York (1967), p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> Spier, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Spier, *op. cit.*, v. 28. "By Sartre's well known definition 'existence precedes essence' is meant that we can never say what a person is, because he is always in the process of becoming. The term essence includes in its connotation, the notion that man is subject to laws, rules and fixed norms to which he more or less responds. Existentialism has radically broken with such a view. Man is nothing because he exists. His existence precedes his essence, because as free creating subjectivity, man is also the origin of his own law, rule and meaning".—*Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

Hegel). Since these two modes are opposite to each other, they are, therefore, contradictory to each other.<sup>7</sup> The difference between Hegel and Sartre lies in this: Hegel finally brings about a reconciliation between thesis and anti-thesis, whereas Sartre does not. For Sartre this opposition is fundamental and inexorable.

Man, as we have already seen, has no essence on the ground that there is no God. What is man? He is being-for-itself, that is, consciousness. That which lacks consciousness belongs to the antithetical class of beings, that is, being-in-itself.

Being-for-itself is consciousness and consciousness is always conscious of something other than itself. Here Sartre follows in the footsteps of Brentano and Husserl, who hold that consciousness always posits an object. This object transcends consciousness and is different from consciousness. The object which consciousness posits, is spoken of by Sartre as in-itself (*en-soi*). In other words, in-itself (object) is always opposite to for-itself (consciousness). My awareness of myself is always an awareness of my being aware of something. This something, which is the object of my consciousness, is always other than the conscious subject. In this sense there is a separation between consciousness and the object, that is, between for-itself and in-itself. Sartre describes for-itself and in-itself in these words: "All consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness of something. This means that there is no consciousness which is not a positing of a transcendent object, or if you prefer, that consciousness has 'no content' . . . All consciousness is consciousness of something . . . this means that consciousness in its inmost nature is a relation to a transcendent being . . . it means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness, that is, that consciousness is born, supported by a being which is not itself. To say that consciousness is consciousness of something is to say that it must produce itself as a revealed-revelation of a being which is not it and which gives itself as already existing when consciousness reveals it".<sup>8</sup> From this analysis it is clear that consciousness presupposes an object of

which it is conscious. Without an object there is no possibility of consciousness. Since an object is absolute necessity for consciousness, there is no need, maintains Sartre, to prove the existence of the object. Since consciousness is always conscious of something, and this something is other than consciousness, there is separation between consciousness and the object. It is for this reason that Sartre identifies consciousness with nothingness. In other words, "Sartre attempts to demonstrate . . . that consciousness is non-substantial, or nothingness. Nothingness not in the sense of not being anything but a 'nihilitating' activity. As nothingness, it is separated from the object and preserves a distance from it".<sup>9</sup>

Since consciousness is nothingness, it does not possess any essence. It is pure existence. The content of consciousness comes from its object. Consciousness is not, therefore, a definite being. Things and consciousness are interdependent in the sense that consciousness without things cannot exist and things without consciousness have no meaning. Hence Sartre defines man as a being who is not what he is and who is what he is not. It means that "Human reality . . . is something insofar as it is the series of individual actions which constitute a person's past history, together with those actions which are added to the past by the progressive realization of future projects.

<sup>7</sup> Vernon Bourke, *History of Ethics*, vol. ii, Image Books (1970), p. 204.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel Barnes, Citadel Press, New York (1964), pp. lx-lxii. "Thus consciousness and self do not have an independent existence; it is the object of consciousness which defines it".—Thomas Molnar, *Sartre: Ideologue of Our Time*, Funk and Wagnalls, New York (1968), p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> Norman Greene, *Jean Paul Sartre: The Existentialist Ethic*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press (1963), p. 17. "For Sartre, the *pour-soi*, or human mind, contains nothing. Indeed, in a way, it is nothing but a force, immediately conscious of itself and of the world, a force which knows its capacity for change and self-denial and wishes to escape from it. But it does not wish, in escaping to lose its self-awareness and longs rather for that moment when it will coincide as absolutely with itself as the *en-soi* does, while still retaining the self awareness which the *en-soi* lacks. This is, Sartre repeats, throughout *L'Être et le Néant*, a self-defeating and self-contradictory ambition".—Philip Thody, *Sartre*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York (1971), p. 71.

But that past and future are constantly being questioned by nothingness of the present".<sup>10</sup> Thus Sartre reaches the conclusion that there is no human nature as such. Since there is no human nature as such, there is, according to Sartre, a common "human condition". In other words, it means that there are certain *a priori* human facts which all human beings share collectively. For example, death and birth are the lot of all human beings. Since man has no permanent essence, "he has continuously to choose, to make decisions, to reaffirm old purposes and projects or to affirm new ones. He is continuously engaged in the work of self-construction, a task which is never completed but only ended by his death."<sup>11</sup>

Sartre contends that those who believe in God give priority to essence over existence. But he misinterprets the whole historical background of those thinkers who tried to prove that man has an essence in the sense that there must have been an idea of man in the mind of God prior to the creation of man. However, it must be kept in mind that this "notion is not . . . a sort of master die, in accord with which finite individuals are struck off, in assembly-line fashion. It represents the entire being of the creature in its unique existential act and individual traits, as well as in its essential nature".<sup>12</sup>

It is meaningless to say that existence precedes essence, because both existence and essence are concomitant principles. We do not deny the fact that existence enjoys a certain amount of primacy over essence. But when we consider the case of a finite and created being, there is no question of priority of existence over essence and vice versa. Both existence and essence constitute the being of man. It is essence which determines and limits existence. Since both are co-related, there is, then, no possibility of giving priority to one principle over the other. Sartre is guilty of the fact that he is not clear in defining the relationship between existence and essence. Essence, as Gabriel Marcel has pointed out,<sup>13</sup> can be understood in two distinct ways. From the metaphysical viewpoint, essence can be understood as quiddity of being. In this sense there is a co-existence between the individual essence and the act

of existing. Essence can be also understood from a moral point, that is, about the moral development of man. Man, no doubt, determines his nature through making existential choices. But it is sheer dishonesty on the part of Sartre when he substitutes moral essence for metaphysical essence. To overcome this difficulty, Sartre speaks of "human condition" instead of "human nature". Man needs to be *something*, so that he may differentiate himself from mere objects. Thus Paul Foulquié criticises Sartre in these words: "Not having distinguished between the universal essence, which makes us man, and the individual essence, that makes us this or that particular man — timid or brave, honest or dishonest — M. Sartre arrives at propositions that are paradoxical to the point of absurdity: 'Man first *is* — only afterwards is he this or that . . . man must create for himself his own essence'. Obviously, we do not create the universal or specific essence in virtue of which we belong to the human species, but the individual essence which is peculiar to us and which is not to be found in any other human being. This goes without saying, but it would have been better to be precise; we have not to choose between the essence 'green pea' or 'cucumber' or 'toad' or 'vulture' and the essence of 'man'; our generic and specific essence — 'animal' and 'man' — *is not determined by us*; we are men — only our individual or specific essence presents a certain indetermination. We are men, but what men shall we be? It is only within these limits that a door remains open upon liberty".<sup>14</sup>

Sartre is guilty of his ambivalence in the sense that he denies the human essence and speaks of the human condition, which is nothing but the human essence. The human essence as such is an abstract notion, but which is actualized at the moment when the human being begins to exist.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Norman Greene, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> Maurice Cranston, *Jean Paul Sartre*, Evergreen Book, New York (1962), p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>13</sup> Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, tr. Katherine Farrer, Harper and Row (1965), pp. 106-7.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Foulquié, *Existentialism*, tr. Kathleen Raine, Dennis Dobson, London (1963), p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> Régis Jolivet, *Les Doctrines Existentialistes de Kierkegaard à Sartre*, Paris (1948), p. 23.



Sartre does not consider human reality as essence because he thinks that for-itself is absolute freedom. "If for-itself is pure freedom, one is, in fact, presented with an essence of human reality. Sartre does not escape the necessity of defining that about which he is talking".<sup>16</sup> Sartre contradicts himself when he says that man has unlimited freedom. In other words, unlimited freedom has limits of its own. The expression "condemned to freedom" is simply to return to the philosophy of essences from which Sartre has tried so energetically to escape.<sup>17</sup> If we obliterate essence, then the understanding of existence, too, vanishes, because, as René Lafarge points out: "In man, existence does not precede essence, as Sartre would have it, at least not in the sense that existence would actuate nothing that pre-exist it. I would exist, but I would be nothing; man would exist, but there would be no human nature. It is true that we make ourselves through our choices and this is why we are responsible for ourselves. But we do not make ourselves anything we please. We are men and we remain men. As Amiel said, 'Man is but what he becomes — this is a profound truth. Man becomes only what he is — an even more profound truth'. To think otherwise would be to flounder into the unintelligible".<sup>18</sup>

*Being-In-Itself and Being-For-Itself*

Sartre's description of in-itself is as follows: "... in-itself is expressed by the simple formula: being is what it is. In the in-itself there is not a particle of being which is not wholly within itself without distance. When being is thus conceived, there is not the slightest suspicion of duality in it; this is what we mean when we say that the density of being of the in-itself is infinite. It is a fullness. The principle of identity can be said to be synthetic not only because it limits its scope to a region of the definite being, but in particular, because it masses within it the infinity of density. 'A Is' means that A exists in infinite compression with an infinite density ... The in-itself is full of itself, and no more total plenitude can be imagined, no more perfect equivalence of content to container. There is not the slightest emptiness in being,

not the tiniest crack through which nothingness might slip in".<sup>19</sup>

The in-itself is dialectically opposed to the for-itself. The in-itself consists of objects in the world. The objects are what they are. They are solid and possess permanence, which the for-itself lacks. The objects are mute and shapeless; they possess a density which threatens the very basis of the for-itself. The in-itself lacks consciousness. Sartre uses the illustration of white paper. He writes. "One thing is certain and that is that the white sheet I observe cannot be the product of my spontaneity. The inert form, which is beyond all conscious spontaneities and which must be observed and gradually learned, is what is called a thing".<sup>20</sup>

The world of object (in-itself) exists without any reason and purpose, since, according to Sartre, there is no God. Due to the absence of God, everything merely exists. It is of no use to inquire about the origin of things. In Sartrean scheme, everything is gratuitously posited. Meaninglessness and absurdity of human life is described by Sartre trenchantly in his novel, *Nausea*. We are told that "Every existing thing is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness, and dies by chance".<sup>21</sup>

The in-itself is thesis, whereas the for-itself is antithesis. The for-itself which is not what it is always tries to transcend itself. The for-itself is both contingent and unstable. Though unstable, the for-itself constantly tries to transcend its contingency and lack of being. It tries to achieve the stability of the in-itself. While the for-itself (man) lacks permanent essence, he relentlessly strives for a self-

<sup>16</sup> Wilfrid Desan, *The Tragic Finale: An Essay on the Philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre*, Harper and Bros., New York (1960), p. 162.

<sup>17</sup> Aimé Patri, "Remarques sur une nouvelle doctrine de la Liberté", *Deucalion*, 1: 79 (1946), quoted by Desan, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>18</sup> René Lafarge, *Jean Paul Sartre: His Philosophy*, tr. Marina Smythkok, Notre Dame University Press (1970), p. 178.

<sup>19</sup> Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 74.

<sup>20</sup> Jean Paul Sartre, *Imagination: A Psychological Critique*, tr. Forrest Williams, Ann Arbor (University of Michigan Press), p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Sartre, *Nausea*, tr. Lloyd Alexander, New Directions, New York (1964), p. 180.

contradictory position, that is, man tries or seeks to achieve an unification of the for-itself with the in-itself. Sartre is of the opinion that such a struggle is meaningless in the sense that this goal or project is unrealizable. Thus Sartre speaks of man as a "useless passion". One of Sartre's characters, Mathieu Delarue, while addressing his mistress, Marcelle, describes man as consciousness in these words: "And when you bring a child into the world, do you realize what you're going to do? A child: another consciousness, a little centre-point of light that would flutter round and round, dashing against the walls, and never able to escape".<sup>22</sup> This man's tension of unifying the for-itself with the in-itself is described by William Barret in these words: "Because we are perpetually flitting beyond ourselves, or falling behind our possibilities, we seek to ground our existence, to make it more secure. In seeking for security we seek to give our existence the self-containing being

of a thing. The for-itself struggles to become the in-itself, to attain the rocklike and unshakable solidity of a thing. But this it can never do so long as it is conscious and alive. Man is doomed to the radical insecurity and contingency of his being; for without it he would not be a man but merely a thing and would not have the human capacity for transcendence of his given situation. There is a curious dialectical interplay here: that which constitutes man's power and glory, that which lies at the very heart of his power to be lord over things, namely his capacity to transcend himself and his immediate situation, is at one and the same time, that which causes the fragility, the wavering and flight, the anguish of our human lot".<sup>23</sup>

(To be continued)

<sup>22</sup> Sartre, *The Age of Reason*, tr. Eric Sutton, Alfred Knopf, New York (1947), p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> William Barret, *Irrational Man*, Anchor Book (1962), p. 246.

## UNITY

By

Saint Ramalinga Swamikal

One It is and many !  
One in the many too ;  
The one within the one ;  
One that ever is One.

Not one it is, nor many,  
Neither many in one ;  
Not one within another,  
But One that ever is One.

The one within the one  
And the one not in the one,  
Becoming one in oneness,  
Remain the One alone !

# AESTHETICS IN INDIAN ART

By

Dr. C. Satyanarayana

WHAT are the characteristics that an artist should possess? In *Silparatna*, it is emphasized again and again that the artist must have keen powers of observation of nature, plant and animal life, and he must train his memory in such a manner that the impressions of his subconscious appreciation, consequent upon observation, can be easily brought to the plane of ordinary consciousness and these again expressed in the plastic language of art. The artist must, above all, be moral. He must purge his mind of all impure passions that blur his views; unless purity of mind is attained, it is impossible for him to merge deeply in his contemplation, in and through which alone the intuitive picture can be realized.

The artist must be one who is well-versed in the six limbs or *Shadangas*, of learning viz. 1. *Siksbā*, 2. *Vyākaraṇa*, 3. *Chandas*, 4. *Nirukta*, 5. *Jyōtiṣa*, and 6. *Kalpa*, and also in the sciences of mathematics, anatomy, etc., He must have knowledge of the nine aesthetic flavours (*Nava Rasas*).

The *Samarāṅgaṇa Sutrādharma* states that the artist must be a vastly learned and cultured man and must attain a practical dexterity in the use of his fingers and hands.

The indispensable qualities of a good artist are :

1. Power of intense contemplation or meditation (*Prajña*).
2. Power of careful observation.
3. Technical skill of hand through long practice.
4. Learning in particular, in the science of meter or balance.
5. Anatomy of different bodies, of animals and men, both in movement and in stillness and under the influence of

diverse and different emotions and passions.

6. Quick-witted intelligence.
7. Self-control and character.

It is said that good and noble character, with great powers of self-control, is absolutely necessary for the making of a good artist. Otherwise the artist would be swayed by passions and can never attain the requisite concentration.

Yashōdharma enumerates the six limbs (*Shadangas*) of paintings as follows :—

1. Distinction of form (*Rupabheda*) i.e. a knowledge of the characteristics (*Lakṣaṇas*) of persons to be represented :
2. Proportion (*Pramāṇam*), i.e. a knowledge of the canons of proportion (*Talamāna*) ;
3. Mood (*Bhāva*), technically the rise of emotion in a mind previously at rest, here the corresponding quality in works of art ;
4. Intrusion of loveliness, charm (*Lāvanya Yōjana*), i.e., the bringing out of the characteristics (in a human being, *lāvanya* means beauty, charm, grace, allure, here the like quality in painting) ;
5. Likeness (*Sādrisya*), perhaps with reference to portraiture ;
6. Harmony through diversion and distribution of colours and pigments (*Varna samvidhāna*), i.e., a knowledge of the appropriate colours suitable to each subject.

The Ajanta paintings are good examples of Indian art. They have been painted in a very beautiful manner, showing perfection in style as well. Except for the ancient monuments at Ajanta, Bhag, Ramghar Caves and Sittannavasal, the vast majority of great treasures of

Ancient Indian painting have been lost to us. In the harmony of colour, line and expression, these superb paintings have not been surpassed by even the finest specimens of other countries. Their beauty is 'Beauty' itself. If any modern artist were to visit any of these caves and see the paintings there, he will be struck dumb with admiration. Especially the composition and splendour of the Ajanta paintings will transport him into a world of beauty. The artists who painted these followed the six canons mentioned above. They were true to the tradition that they and their forefathers knew. That explains their splendour and excellence.

Is Indian Art influenced by *rasaprakriti*, aesthetic medium? Some are of the opinion that only poetry, dancing, drama and music are aesthetically inspired and not the static arts like sculpture and painting. The explanation they give is that for the effulgence of the aesthetic spirit, it is not sufficient for the art concerned to remain at one point, to be static, it should be in movement, it should be dynamic as well. A connected series of transient emotions are made to work on a basic master-motif in Dance, Drama, Poetry and Music. This basic master-motif is called *Rasa* and the transient emotions are called *Sanchāri Bhāva*. It is alleged that there is scope for the representation of only one static emotion in painting and sculpture. Nevertheless as one experiences joy on looking at a painting or a sculpture, it may be deduced that its origin lies in the aesthetic emotion contained in the picture. Take for example, a play where a scene of terror is enacted. The beholder does not experience terror, but only joy on account of the exquisiteness with which that particular emotion is portrayed.

It is common tradition that only pictures generating love, happiness and peace can adorn private homes, whereas other sorts of pictures should decorate temples and royal places.

We have referred to aesthetic flavour (*Rasa*). What exactly does it connote? When we read poetry of high quality or witness a dance or drama, they generate in us an

emotion, the fulfilment of which itself is the joy we experience. That joy can be said to be a product of aesthetic flavour and defined as such. The joy arising out of the portrayal of love (*Śringāra*), valour of heroism (*Vīra*), compassion (*Karunā*), wonder (*Adbhuta*), mirth (*Hāsyā*), fear (*Bhayaṇaka*), disgust (*Bhībhatsa*), anger (*Raudra*), and peace (*Sānta*) has its root in the experience of an emotion which may belong either to the static arts like painting and sculpture, or to the dynamic arts like poetry, music, dance and drama.

The aesthetic content of the static arts falls into three categories. According to *Sukraniti-sāra*, sculpture and pictorial representations of Gods are divided into three classes. In the first, classified as Benign (*Sātvika*) the spirit of peace is predominant. These images of gods are made in a sitting posture, in the attitude of meditation, and they generate in the onlooker an experience of peacefulness. Buddha, the Tirthankaras and Dakṣiṇāmurti illustrate this.

The second, classified as restless (*Rājasik*), are represented by images of Gods riding vehicles, and they symbolize love, mirth, heroism, wonder and compassion. They are all illustrated by Rati and Manmatha riding a parrot, and Durga riding a lion. The third category is one of terror (*Tamasik*). It is represented by slayers of evil. Armed deities like Narasimha and Durgā killing Hiranyakasipu and Mahishāsura. These are the sources of fear, wonder and repulsion.

That all emotions have their origin in love, and all varieties of emotions are eventually integrated into peace, is the Indian conception of the origin and fulfilment of emotions. If Indian Arts have reached a high status, it is because of the aesthetic vision permeating them.

What is Beauty? What forms its constituent? Jagannatha, a seventeenth century writer on Aesthetics, introduced the term *Ramaneeya* in the sense of the beautiful. In explaining the term beautiful, he says that which induces a unique feeling of pleasure

which is different from all other joys and therefore has something of a transcendental element in it, is called the beautiful. Beauty is not confined to the ordinary sense pleasure ; it is absolutely beyond any personal emotion — it is universal. It is a delightful state of knowledge. At the same time it has an end to realize. The sense of the beautiful is, according to Jagannatha, essentially an emotional thrill. Rabindranath says that that which gives us joy without any sense of utility is beauty. The joy that results from the experience of the Beautiful is different from the joy that arises out of sense objects ; it has something of the sublime.

Is beauty an attribute or characteristic of an object or thing ? Is the same object or thing equally beautiful to different individuals ? What is beautiful to one man may not be so to another ; even if it is, he may not consider the same thing as beautiful as the other. Each one will enjoy or appreciate a thing according to his mental calibre and development, and therefore different persons will regard different things as beautiful and they will, in gene-

ral, admire that which they are predisposed to admire by their culture and temperament.

When we talk of beauty in relation to art, we must know, as Tagore puts it, that it is not about beauty in its ordinary meaning, but in that deeper meaning which the poet has expressed in the statement "Beauty is Truth and Truth Beauty". An artist may paint a picture of a decrepit person not pleasing to the eye, and yet we call it perfect when we become deeply conscious of its reality. This concept is again illustrated in the classic saying attributed to Majnu when he was told that the world at large regarded Laila as far from beautiful. He said, 'To see the beauty of Laila requires the eyes of Majnu'.

Apart from these, is there such a thing as absolute Beauty, which is apart of the object itself ? The devotees of God (*Bhaktās*) identify God with Beauty, Love and Truth. The yogis say that the experience of Truth is Beauty in its real sense.

Aesthetic flavour gives rise to Joy (*Ānanda*). The *Rasika* enjoys this Beauty, the Yogi calls it truth and the Devotee becomes one with it.

## Meditation on *Nāda*

"Meditation on *nāda* is one of the various approved methods. Its adherents claim a very special virtue for it. According to them it is the easiest and most direct method. Just as a child is lulled to sleep by lullabies, so *nāda* soothes one to the state of *samadhi*. Again, just as a king sends his state musicians to welcome his son on his return from a long journey, so also *nāda* takes the devotee into the Lord's abode in a pleasing manner. *Nāda* helps concentration, but after it begins to be felt, the practice should not be made an end in itself. *Nāda* is not the objective ; the subject should firmly be held. Otherwise a blank will result. Though the subject is there even in the blank one must remember his own self. *Nāda Upasana* (meditation on sound) is good ; it is better if associated with Self-enquiry."

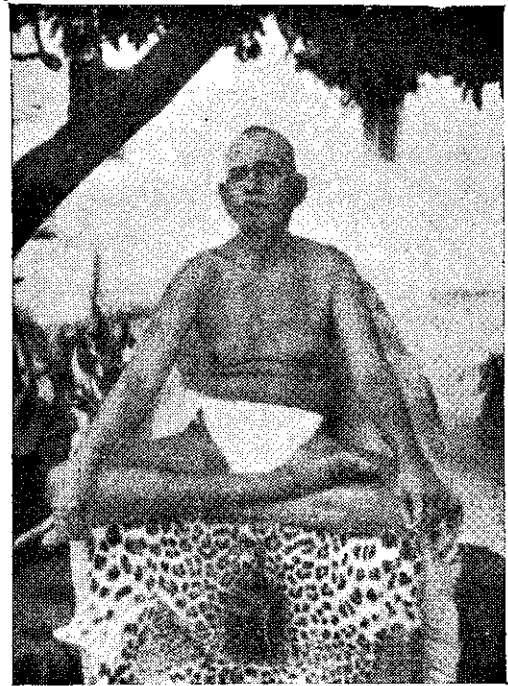
— Sri Bhagavan in *TALKS*.

## BHAKTI IS JNĀNA MĀTĀ

By  
Dr. M. Sadashiva Rao

IT is generally believed that meditation on the Name of God of the bhakti path is simpler and easier than meditation on the Self of the jnana path. In reality, there is little publicised information on the bhakti meditation as a *Sādhana* or spiritual practice. The precise nature of the jnana meditation was even more obscure until Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi taught Self-enquiry. The great Saints of Maharashtra, who lived from the 13th century onwards, developed the bhakti path as known today and propagated it through exquisite *bhajans*, or devotional songs, composed by them which have come down to the present day. They are the main source of information on the bhakti path and are highly inspiring. In these bhajans, the Saints not only expound the bhakti path but also give glimpses of the bhakti *sādhana* by relating their plenary experience. The plenary experience is *Jnāna* and suggests that the bhakti *sādhana* is not different in its essentials from Self-enquiry except in regard to its initial approach of intense bhakti or devotion to God.

Bhagavan has said: "Bhakti is *Jnāna Mātā*."<sup>1</sup> (Bhakti is the mother of *Jnāna*). The bhakti path leads to *Jnāna* to which alone Self-enquiry also leads. The goal of bhakti is described as total surrender to God. Bhagavan says: "Complete surrender is another name for *Jnāna*."<sup>2</sup> Again he says: "What the bhakta calls Surrender, the man who practises *vichāra* (Self-enquiry) calls *Jnāna*. Both are trying to take the ego back to its source and make it merge there."<sup>3</sup> In regard to the meditation on the Name and Form of God, he tells a devotee: "So long as you think you are name and form, you cannot escape Name and Form of God in your *japa* also. When you realise you are not name and form, the Name and Form will drop out by them-



selves. No other effort is necessary. *Japa* or *Dhyāna* naturally and as a matter of course, will lead to it. Name (of God) and God are not different."<sup>4</sup>

The core of Self-enquiry and of all *sādhana*s involving meditation is explained by Bhagavan as follows:

"The mind must be made to rest in the Heart (Self) till the destruction of the 'I'-thought (ego) which is the form of ignorance residing in the Heart. This is *Jnāna*; this is *Dhyāna* also . . . Therefore, if

<sup>1</sup> *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

one acquires the skill of retaining the mind in the Self somehow, one need not worry about other matters."<sup>5</sup>

To show how the mind can be made to reach and abide in the Self the following passage may be studied, as it not only describes succinctly the nature of the concentration but also mentions the *sādhana*s where it is applicable :

"As for *Sādhana*, there are many methods. You may practise *Vicāra* asking yourself 'Who am I?' or, if that does not appeal to you, you may engage yourself in *dhyāna* (on) 'I am Brahman', or otherwise, or you may concentrate on a *mantra* or on Name (of God) in *japa*. The object is to make the mind one-pointed, to concentrate on one thought and thus exclude many thoughts; and, if we do this, eventually even the one thought will disappear and the mind will get extinguished at its source."<sup>6</sup> (Italics ours.)

The first two *sādhana*s mentioned here belong to the *jnana* path and the next two to the *bhakti* path. The last sentence sums up the entire *sādhana* covering both paths. It can be expanded for a fuller understanding as follows :—

Meditation is begun by practising one-pointed concentration of the mind (turned inwards) on a single thought (the thought "I" in Self-enquiry and the Name of God in *bhakti*). Efforts are made at the same time to keep out all stray thoughts that may interfere with concentration. By this practice, the mind gets one-pointed and free of stray thoughts. As a result meditation gets deeper and the mind sinks into the (spiritual) Heart, the Self. The Self is Pure (thought-free) Consciousness. The single thought cannot survive in a thought-free state. If the mind is made to rest in the Heart, it is purged of its ego or impurity and gets merged (extinguished) in the Self.

Further clarification may be necessary for novices. After the initial practice to free the mind of stray thoughts, concentration on the single thought "I" or Name (of God) gets deeper and deeper until the mind gets merged in the Heart. Thereafter, it is only inference

in the Heart free from all thoughts called *samādbhi*, until one finds it as one's own normal state. This is what is known as Self-realisation. The Heart referred to is not the physical organ of that name, but the spiritual centre, the Self itself. The Self is beyond thought. The single thought unrelated to any outward object carries the entire mind deep within to sink into the Heart or Self. Knowledge of the Self is not knowing it as an object. It is *Being One with Self* when the mind, purged of its *vāsanās* merges in the Self. *Samādbhi*, inference of the mind in the Self in a thought-free state brings about absolute merger in the Self. The Pure Mind itself is the Self. It is also Pure and Infinite (Absolute) Consciousness.

The difference between Self-enquiry and *bhakti*-meditation lies in the initial approach. The approach of the *jnāna* path is towards the Impersonal aspect of God with no Name or Form i.e. the Self or Supreme Being. In the *bhakti*-path, the approach is to Personal God of one's choice with Name, Form, and other attributes. In Self-enquiry the single thought taken up for concentration is the "I"-thought. As deep meditation progresses, the thought gets refined and ends in the pure I or Pure Awareness. Bhagavan has also recommended cognition of the transitional "I" experienced immediately on waking from sleep but before becoming aware of one's identity or surroundings.<sup>7</sup>

The consummation occurs when the entire mind dives within and sinks into the Heart. It is a vivid experience of one's own reality. Not only during meditation or *samadhi* but even afterwards he will experience himself one with the Self. The *bhakta* will feel his oneness with his god, but His Name and Form would have dropped out as they cannot survive in the thought-free state. All duality vanishes for the moment when the transcendent state is first experienced. The un-evolved mind cannot stay long in the Heart but would stray out to the world of duality. The experi-

<sup>5</sup> *Self-enquiry*, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>7</sup> *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 275-79, 288.

ence should be revived in deep meditation until it becomes effortless and spontaneous. This is called by Bhagavan "abiding in the Self". He advises the devotee to abide in the Self at all times. It is the highest form of tapas and removes *vāsanās*. Further progress depends on God's or Guru's Grace. As Bhagavan has pointed out: "It (Grace) is really inside you, in your Heart, and the moment (by any of the methods) you effect subsidence or merger of the mind at its source (Heart), Grace gushes forth from within."<sup>8</sup>

The culmination of the bhakti *sādhana*, when the mind has merged in the Self, has

been described by the Maharashtra Saints beautifully in various ways. Sant Jñāneshwar says: "The Immortal Name is the *sādhana* for the achievement of *Samādhi*." Sant Namdev says: "The Name is found to be *Paramātmān* Himself when all duality between Him and I ceases." Sant Gora Kumbha says: "To reach *Nirguna*, I had to go through *Saguna*." Sant Tukāram says: "Like salt in water. I have become One with Thee. Like camphor in flame I have melted in Thee, leaving no residue."

<sup>8</sup> Day by Day with Bhagavan, p. 31.

## HENCE THE UNIVERSE

By

Wei Wu Wei

'A UNIVERSE' is only being-aware of a universe.

If there were no consciousness of a universe, no universe could appear to be.

'A universe' is our becoming aware of its extension in conceptual space-time, and its only existence is in the consciousness in which it appears.

The supposition that the universe pre-exists as a thing-in-itself, which 'dividuals' discover by sensorial experience, is the fundamental error which produces the conditioning termed 'bondage'.

As soon as it is apperceived that the 'universe' which is apparently objective is precisely and only *consciousness-of-it* as existing,

it is re-cognised as being composed of phenomena whose apparent existence is psychic,

for all objects, being objectivisations in mind, are sensorially perceived as objectifacts.

Phenomena may then be apperceived noumenally as what subjectively they are,

and the apparent universe reappears as existing solely in consciousness of it as such; for subjective consciousness is all which any objectification could be

as the being-conscious of objective appearance in mind.

Apperceived, there is nothing *but* what relatively can be described as subjective-consciousness, which is all 'we' could be, being it,

not as anything 'been', not plural, of course, nor even singular,

and then our universe is seen as *our total manifestation* as I.

*Note*: Incidentally this illustrates the famous Ch'an saying whereby mountains and rivers are first seen as existing, then as not-existing, and finally are seen as what we are.

Incidentally also, this apprehension is at least as old as the Vedas, and probably inherent in every psyche.



# Garland of Guru's Sayings

By SRI MURUGANAR

*Translated from Tamil by*

**Prof. K. Swaminathan**

488.

However hateful enemies may be,  
Noble minds should never nurse aversion.  
Dislikes no less than likes are fit  
Only to be eschewed.

489.

What I despise as not-myself  
My enemies despise as well.  
Hence their insults serve to beat  
And shape me as the blacksmith's anvil  
Help him in his work.

490.

The valiant hero who subduces  
Hate by love is the genuine sage.

491.

If but some men with wealth abundant  
Abandoned ostentatious living,  
Millions pining pitifully now  
In poverty could live in plenty.

492.

As our munificent Lord produces  
Enough for all, no more, no less,  
Consuming more than what we need  
Is the sin of wresting by sheer force  
And eating someone else's food.

493.

The sin of excess makes nectar poison.  
The sin of excess brings on countless curses.  
Those who perceive its boundless evils  
Should remove it.

494.

One's nearness to perfection may be  
measured  
By the meekness of one's natural  
behaviour.  
When even unawares the turbid ego  
Never rises, one attains for ever  
The height supreme of meekness  
Which all the world adores.

495.

Till selflessness grows full and perfect  
'Tis best to bow low to "others".  
For one aspiring to true greatness  
It would, alas, be tragic to expect  
Homage from others.

496.

Because He serves all beings meekly  
And with delight for ever as if bound  
To servitude, therefore the Supreme  
Has earned the highest adoration  
Offered by the whole world without end.

497.

Within all things Himself beholding,  
Meeker than all, even meeker  
Than His humblest devotees,  
By virtue of such meekness  
Spontaneous, the Supreme  
Achieves supremacy.

498.

Since the minute and vast alike  
Vanish beyond the mind,  
Awareness true, transcendent holds  
In its embrace both vastness vaster  
Than the vastest and minuteness  
Tinier than the atom's.

500.

Worth pursuing is Self-enquiry  
Worth enjoying is Self-infinitude.  
To be given up is the ego-sense.  
To end distraction, merge in the source,  
The Self of pure Awareness.

499.

Flimsy straw floats high atop.  
To the bottom sinks the heavy pearl.  
Men in the world, wherever placed,  
Are high or low by what they are.

501.

Worth seeking is Awareness pure.  
Worth meditating on are the Lord's Feet.  
Worth joining is the company of the good.  
Worth welling up within the heart is Peace.

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"Can a man ever understand God's ways? I too think of God sometimes as good and sometimes as bad. He has kept us deluded by His great illusion. Sometimes He wakes us up and sometimes He keeps us unconscious. One moment the ignorance disappears, and the next moment it covers our mind. If you throw a brick-bat into a pond covered with moss, you get a glimpse of the water. But a few moments later the moss comes dancing back and covers the water.

"One is aware of pleasure and pain, birth and death, disease and grief, as long as one is identified with the body. All these belong to the body alone, and not to the Soul . . . Attaining Self-Knowledge, one looks on pleasure and pain, birth and death, as a dream."

— Sri Ramakrishna

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## WHO WROTE THE ZOHAR?

By  
Norman Fraser

**I**N these days of distressing enmity between Arabs and Jews it is heartening to remember that in medieval southern Spain Arab and Jew lived side by side in harmony and fraternity. Indeed, from about the early 10th century until the advent of the Almohade dynasty, the Sephardim spoke Arabic, dressed like Arabs, were given Arabic names, and even became Arabic poets and philosophers (*vide* Abdulhassan Jehuda ben Samuel Halevi, born 1086). After 1147, however, when both Jews and Christians were declared to be heretics, there was a complete change of climate and the most prominent and therefore vulnerable of the Jews emigrated northwards. During this time of ferment and persecution in the Diaspora the Sephardim had become the leading intellectuals, probably because of their blending of the otherwise static Thora-Mishna learning with the enlightened Arabic scientific teachings such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, etc.

Quite a number of Jewish families penetrated into the Languedoc country where they established a centre at Narbonne and eventually fanned out over the whole district. They were well received by the Albigenses (Cathars) who, because of their own advanced religious and practical ideas, recognized and admired the Judeo-Arabic culture and customs brought to them. So the Hebrews were not only able to live in peace but were employed by the local ruling families because of their honesty, intelligence, learning and skills. They mixed freely and exchanged views with the Cathars who "took them to their hearts" and even declared that "Jewish law is better than Christian law" because they had noticed that among the Jews there were no murderers, no marital unfaithfulness, no thieves. Men like Moses and David Kimchi became famous as teachers of Hebrew to both Jews and Cathars, but this fraternisation was

one of the reasons why the Cathars got into trouble with the Church, were persecuted and finally exterminated.

According to Hebrew records the first stirrings of what was to become the Qabalah occurred in the mind of a blind Languedoc Jew called Isaac whose father, Abraham ben David of Posquières (1125-98), had had somewhat similar ideas simmering in his mind. Abraham mixed with both Cathars and Jews, taking voluble part in the endless discussions about Maimuni (known as Maimonides, 1135-1204) and his Aristotelian theories. Isaac-the-Blind, who is said to have flourished at the end of the 12th century, must have listened to all this and turned it round and round in his mind as blind people are wont to do, as the beginning of a new-old cosmic insight began to take shape. He accepted the idea (scorned by the Jews) of up to three reincarnations. Did he get this from the Cathars and were some of his Qabalistic ideas presented to him either in dreams or other-consciousness? He was certainly 'sensitive' and used to tell those who came into contact with him to what extent they were "young or old souls". Naturally he gathered a group of followers round him including Azriel and Ezra ben Solomon, identical twins from Gerona, about whom little is known except that one of them died in 1238. Contemporary accounts depict them as utter scoundrels who passed off their stupid and puerile ideas as those of "Masters of Antiquity" to give them the seal of authority. Azriel stated that since boyhood they had travelled far and wide looking for a hidden wisdom which would give a satisfactory explanation of God and Creation. Eventually they found someone, seemingly somewhere in the Middle East, to whom this wisdom had been handed down and who convinced them. They pooled their findings

with Isaac's but were laughed to scorn when they propounded them to the learned philosophers of Seville. Nevertheless, this teaching became known as *Bahir*. It spread and was finally established by a Montpellier doctor known as Bonastruc de Porta (Nachmani, among the Jews) 70 years after Majmuni's death.

*Bahir* (which I translate as 'choice') disappeared or was incorporated later in *Zohar* (Splendour) which appeared through Moshe ben Shem Tob de Leo'n (1250-1305). This Moshe de Leo'n was a truly extraordinary character. He started off, seemingly, as a travelling showman or mountebank and had many hair-raising adventures throughout Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Seen through antagonistic Jewish eyes he is said to have been an unmitigated rogue and varmint, to have lost, spent or given away all his money, and to have neglected his wife and daughter. Then, and the Jews said because he was desperately in need of funds, he took to writing, in spite of also being said to be unlettered, and produced an astonishingly intricate system of religious-mystical philosophy which he called *Zohar*. This shocked and bewildered the orthodox community and the final insult was that it was written in Chaldean! This, he explained, was because the real author was Simon ben Jochai who lived in a cave during the 2nd century and was inspired by the Angel Metatron. "Lies! Subterfuge!" shrilled the Talmudists and dismissed Simon ben Jochai as a myth. Did they never stop to wonder how an uneducated, illiterate man could write an involved and complicated treatise in Chaldean? In the middle of all this hullabaloo one, Isaak-from-Akko, demanded to see the

original as de Leo'n had so far only produced copies. De Leo'n promised to show it to him but thereupon fell ill and died. Two men were sent to see his widow and daughter who had settled in Avila and they, afraid of losing the moneys they would receive from copies, stoutly denied any authorship other than de Leo'n's. "We can assure you that it was all his own work." It is not clear whether any original manuscript was ever produced — probably not, as the rabbis were jubilant. However, in spite of all this, the *Zohar* fired the imaginations of an ever increasing number of learned men, especially in southern France and Italy, who, most of them, wanted to keep this teaching secret among themselves. However, the news of it spread and during the 14th century reached the Church where it caused a stir. Pope Sixtus IV (1471-84) ordered the *Zohar* to be translated into Latin. Later, Pope Paul IV (1555-59) had it published in 3 volumes at Mantua between 1558 and 1560.

In his introduction to his English translation of the *Zohar*, MacGregor Mathers quotes several passages from the *Bhagavad Gita* concerning aspects where the teachings of the Qabalah and those of the *Gita* coincide. They also coincide with certain teachings in Masonry, Theosophy and Rosicrucianism.

Incidentally, I have heard recently that Professor Scholem of Jerusalem University has found that Shimeon ben Jochai did exist after all and was a pupil of Akiba ben Joseph who lived from circa 40 to 135 A.D. But nobody seems to have hit on the simple solution that de Leo'n *was* ben Jochai; otherwise, being uneducated, he would not have known Chaldean any more than an unlettered Indian would know Sanskrit.

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"Love that One Who, when you shall cease to be, will not Himself to be, that you may become one who will never cease to be."

— Abu Sa'id ibn Abi I-Khayr

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# How I Came to the Bhagavan

By

Robert Moore

THE proper title here should be "How Bhagavan came to me", long before I recognised Him.

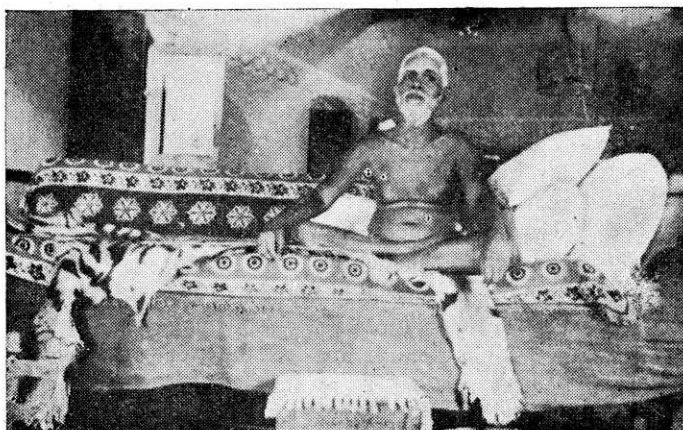
A boy of 12 years stood in front of a mirror and saw his own image staring at him like a stranger — and asked deep within "What is this shell, this cocoon which houses so many emotions, thoughts, and far deeper — *something* which observes all this, as a detached spectator? What am I? *Who am I?*"

This sequence persisted for several weeks, each time the mirror was confronted. But being born in Australia, with the western teachings of God who reigned above, somewhere and apart from his devotees and could only be reached, through earnest attendance at church and Sunday-school and threatened Hell's fire for any breach of *His* teaching; the lad did not follow this line of enquiry for some years afterwards.

He rebelled at the idea of enforced collective worship in church led by minister, priest or padre who seemed empowered to forgive sins, yet were ordinary men who often transgressed their professed ideals, the



Mrs. & Mr. Robert Moore



moment they removed their vestments after a service.

He thought that God was our father so how could He bear His children suffer punishment in hell; he felt that God was immanent in every living being, in plants, insects, earth and sea; in every thing on this planet as we know it — *He* was there.

And God being within us, why not we be devoted to *Him* and love Him in our own quiet way, just as we love our parents, family, wife, and friends? This boy's father was taken away from the family group when he was only three years old and he being the youngest of eleven children, was always looked upon as too young to know anything. Consequently he found none to answer his earnest questions, regarding his views upon, and feeling towards, God and worship.

He kept his convictions to himself, always feeling out of place with violence, bullying, and games which asserted domination over other people, always believing that a good

"loser" felt happier than a "bad" winner and dogged by "self consciousness".

His happiest moments were when he could be "with nature" — feeling as he described it "a feeling of freedom" — watching plants grow, and animals and birds free in their natural environment, all following their own inherent nature — so unlike humans, who clouded their lives with dreams and delusions and only looked to their physical needs, and judged their fellow man by the size of his pocket and possessions.

The feeling persisted always that something lay beyond the accepted orthodox teachings — that an observer within watched everything with detachment. But he was unable to find the key to the puzzle.

After completing studies in automotive electrical engineering, this young man spent years in pandering to physical demands, always paying "lip-service" to God and postponing his inner search. He worked in New Guinea among very young souls, who though closely resembling primeval man were still endowed with a type of mental telepathy.

In his 34th year, cancer was detected in his system and he was told that if the affliction became active — death could result in 24 hours. Instead of panic there immediately arose in him the question "If I die, what is left? What spiritual advancement has this soul made? Who am I? What really dwells within?" The only answer he could find was that the soul or spirit would leave the body behind, like a beautiful butterfly leaving an empty cocoon as a shell and nothing more, not knowing what happened to it.

He realised that man dies a hundred deaths by his recurring fears and phobias, yet when one is faced with actual death, one realises that God alone decides when and how. In this instance God decided by a simple operation, to preserve this body for a few years more in order to learn a little more.

In his 36th year this man, while walking along a New Guinea beach alone one night,

feeling sad and full of self-pity, stopped to admire the stars, and on reflecting that some of those stars were far, far bigger than the earth and our sun as we know them, and yet looked so small — suddenly realised how tiny and egoistic man is, who blames others for his misfortune and trying situations in life, because he won't face *himself*.

In his 37th year this man met Marie, a devout disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi. This was not man meeting woman, but soul meeting soul, and at long last, someone who felt as he felt, enquired as he had enquired, and could answer through Bhagavan *all*. The man who throughout his life had been self-conscious turned suddenly *conscious of the self* and like a flower, opened to the light of *His grace*. Jesus comes into perspective.

Suddenly passages in the Holy Bible take on new meaning: "Love thy neighbour as thyself". "In my Father's house there are many mansions" (levels of consciousness and spiritual advancement). To come to Ramanasramam is to come *home*.

Bhagavan's advice to "put all your luggage on the train" applies so much to all of us.

To have faith in Bhagavan *completely* means leaving everything in his hands. Whatever is meant to be *will* be.

It is a long road to liberation but what a labour of love!!

Now this man of 42 years thanks Bhagavan for ever for the many blessings he *has been* receiving — the complete peace of mind and spirit, the miracle of this body, the wonder of nature, everything within and without and above all His Grace. I feel for ever humble that this man is being shown the path — the only desire left now (I know there should be no desire, but then I am *not* yet perfect) is to *be* perfect and one with the Absolute.

This body may travel back to Australia — but the heart remains with Arunachala — at the Feet of Bhagavan.

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"Let not poverty and misfortune distress you; for as gold is tried in the fire, the believer is exposed to trials."

— 'Ali

## Grace Divine of Maharshi Ramana

By  
Jagannath Chattopadhyaya

THE progress of science in our days is phenomenal. Gravitation has been conquered and communication with very far off planets is now being attempted. The limitless expanse of space is probed into systematically. We feel how puny and paltry we are, when we think of the colossal magnitude of the Universe containing countless suns more luminous and brilliant than ours and having their own separate planetary systems. The human mind reels before this vastness. Despite these spectacular strides on the material plane, we are still very far from the establishment of a society free from tension, where perfect peace will reign supreme and war will be no more.

Material progress would be of little worth without inner improvement. From time immemorial the world's sages and seers have exhorted mankind to turn their gaze within. Addressing all as sons of immortality — *amritasya putrāḥ* — the Vedic Rishis urged them to find within their being, the Supreme Self or *Paramatman*. Five hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the great Greek philosopher, Socrates, told everyone who approached him : 'Know Thyself'.

The political doctrines of our age, exploiting economic inequality, are swaying the minds of the masses towards rank materialism. Seldom does man seriously think about the meaning and purpose of human life. Is he merely a civilized animal? In this dire, deplorable predicament, Divine Grace alone, manifesting itself as Self-realized seers, can steer us on to the right path. And that is the significance of the advent of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi in our midst. It is only such a mighty influence that could stem the tide of gross materialism and turn us inward into the true realm of awareness.



Bhagavan says that the world, the cosmos, is nothing but the projection of our mind. Eddington, the renowned astrophysicist, says : "Where science has progressed further, the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind has put into nature . . . To put the conclusion crudely, the stuff of the world is mind stuff". Sir James Jeans says : "The universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a machine".

In our deep sleep there is no thought, no mind ; it is only the reflected light of the Self. Bhagavan Ramana says : "If the mind is taken to exist and one seeks to control it, it is like a thief turning out to be a policeman to catch the thief that is himself". Continuous enquiry about the nature and source of the mind, Bhagavan Ramana says, will eventually culminate in the realisation of the Self after completely eradicating the mind. For ordinary

people like us, this method of Self-realisation seems to be rather difficult and the alternative method of complete surrender of the worthless ego at His lotus feet seems to be more appealing. Whether by Self-enquiry or self-surrender we have to realise that phenomenal objects are like passing figures on a cinema screen.

We have the assurance from Bhagavan Ramana that as an animal caught and held by a tiger can never escape from its grip, a devotee who has come under the influence of his grace would surely be saved by him from all pitfalls and dangers.

Devotees of Bhagavan Ramana, all over the world, feel the operation of this Grace in their lives. All those that came in contact with Sri Maharshi bear testimony to the unbounded Grace he bestowed upon them. Such were Humphreys, Paul Brunton, Grant Duff, Maurice Frydman, Major Chadwick, S. S. Cohen, Arthur Osborne and a host of other devotees. The eminent Bengalee scholar and indologist, Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee, once asked Bhagavan to extend his Grace to him as he was about to go a thousand miles away from Bhagavan.

Sri Bhagavan replied : "Time and space are only concepts of mind. They do not count in the Self."

Divine Grace is ever-present, ready to help us ; we, on our part, have to be receptive and open ourselves to it. Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said : "God is in all men but all men are not in God and that is the reason why they suffer." The unbounded Grace and compassion of God is superbly portrayed by Jesus in the Parable of the Prodigal son. Jesus himself was the personification of such love. We find it recorded in the Bible : "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." Grace is beyond the laws of causality and *karma*. It is sometimes showered on a person seemingly undeserving.

Bhagavan's Grace is always there in its plenitude ; we have only to be receptive to it, surrendering ourselves completely to its unhampered operation. As Bhagavan is immortal his boundless Grace is ever experienced all over the world by his devotees, not excluding this writer.

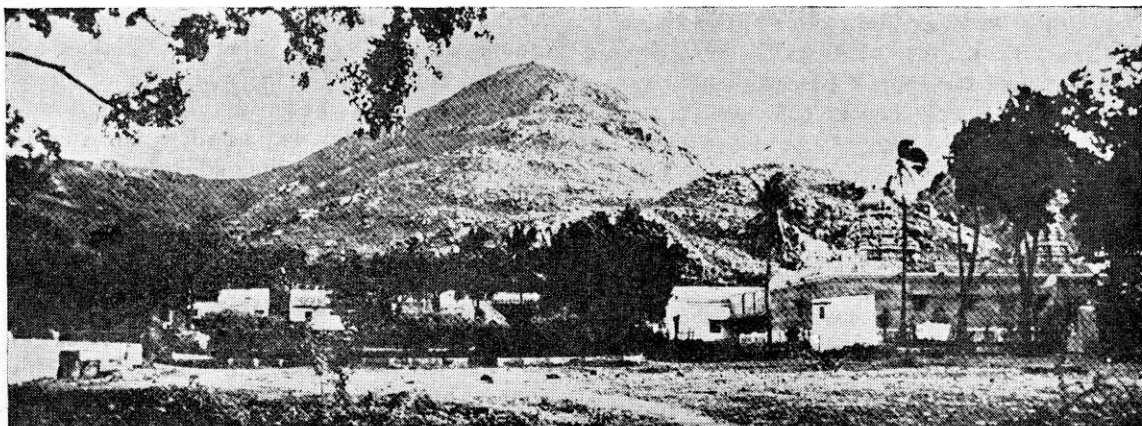
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"The ignorant man, attached to his body, is controlled by the impressions and tendencies created by his past deeds, and is bound by the law of *karma*. But the wise man, his desires being quenched, is not affected by deeds. He is beyond the law of *karma*. Since his mind rests in the *Atman* he is not affected by the conditions which surround him, though he may continue to live in the body and though his senses may move amongst sense objects. For he has realized the vanity of all objects, and in multiplicity sees one infinite Lord. He is like to a man who has awakened from sleep and learned that his dream was a dream."

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— *Srimad Bhagavatam*, xi, xx





## ASHRAM: Abode of Peace or a Training Camp?

By  
'Satyamayi'

NOW and again visitors ask why *Sri Ramanasramam* does not offer some sort of systematic spiritual training, as is done in western meditation-centres and other spiritual movements that sprout nowadays widely. Such visitors are not aware that the unique character of this Ashram consists in its strictly adhering to the living tradition, in the way in which Sri Ramana Maharshi used to instruct those earnest seekers who came to him for guidance.

As is well-known, the central teaching of Bhagavan Ramana is the quest of *Who Am I?*, keeping the point in view that the ego-I has to vanish. The fact is that it will become stronger by any other unconcerned mental 'activity', because such activity is only of the ego-I. Bhagavan took it as one of the most treacherous traps on the spiritual path, as one can see from his severe warning against it:

"He who instructs an ardent seeker to do this or that is not a true master. The seeker is already afflicted by his activities and wants Peace and rest. In other words he wants cessation of his

activities. Instead of that he is told to do something in addition to, or in place of, his other activities. Can that be a help to the seeker? . . . Activity is creation; activity is the destruction of one's inherent happiness. If activity be advocated the adviser is not a master but a killer. He cannot liberate the aspirant but strengthens his fetters."<sup>1</sup>

But then — what about our efforts to get rid of that ego-I, isn't it also 'activity' — and where to find guidance to discriminate between a right and wrong activity? Sri Ramana's teachings in this respect may be called 'a direct way'. One of the most striking features of it is perhaps that he never expressly admitted to be himself the Guru. The Guru was only from the point of view of the devotees.

This attitude of Bhagavan is perhaps the main feature which distinguishes his Way from all others: his disciples have to learn to stand alone, to walk alone, at least on their spiritual Path. Alone, with the only 'partnership' of

<sup>1</sup> *Talks with Sri Maharshi*, p. 554.

the Master within. And perhaps this is the greatest difficulty for many, even among those who have decided to follow his guidance, because most people like to have contact with others. That is a natural tendency among human beings, but it means very often a distraction, if not 'attachment', and to succeed on our spiritual path we have to learn to detach ourselves.

Let us now consider meditation, the foremost 'activity' of the seeker. According to Bhagavan, meditation is a means to still the restless flux of thinking, which gives in the end the capacity for controlling all our reactions, mental and emotional. When this goal is reached the mind is mastered and all is well in the realisation of one's fullness in Aloneness of that Pure Awareness.

How to reach this high plane of Aloneness which is the same as the Great Silence, if we still look out for company?

The *sadbaka* is not yet the Sage; only there is that very important spiritual truth, that what is natural to the Sage has to be the *sadbana* of the *sadbaka*. True, meditation is a technique only; but besides that, it has the purpose of stilling the mind, it is also the technique to learn to stand alone, to throw away every prop and support. As long as the seeker thinks himself not fit for that, he has to rely on God, Guru or the Self — but that

too he has to do *alone*, not as a member of a group, as has become almost a fashion in Western countries. Of the many paradoxes on the path perhaps the greatest is the fact that the most individual way of all is the way to get rid of our individuality, our ego-I. Bhagavan asks: "Find out the meditator!" He will never be found in a meditation-class, only within oneself.

Ashram visitors of today are as free in their ways as they were in those days when Sri Ramana Maharshi was still among us in his body. There is a library and a bookstall as well of spiritual literature in several languages and there are some old devotees with whom they may clear their doubts. There will always be friends and disciples, who have been with Bhagavan for years and know his teaching inside out, able to give advice for practice and to help them solve their spiritual problems in an individual way. That alone can give them what they need in their particular situation.

We shall continue in the same way because we feel responsible for preserving unaltered the *Gospel* which Sri Ramana Maharshi proclaimed anew to a mankind in the grip of the agony of restlessness. The Great Silence within, the Self, is not a result of much creative activity, but a Gift to a creative non-activity, by which we may prepare ourselves to receive that Wisdom that can never be 'got' by do-ing, because its very nature is Be-ing.

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"To Rama who addressed Vasishta: 'Which is that big mirror in which all these are mere reflections? What is the heart of all souls or creatures in this universe?', Vasishta replied: 'All creatures in this universe have two kinds of Hearts — one to be taken note of and the other ignored'. Hear their respective traits. The one to be ignored is the physical organ called the heart which is situated in the chest as a part of the measurable body. The one to be taken note of is the heart which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is both inside and outside (us) and has neither an inside nor an outside."

— from *Gems from Bhagavan*, p. 41

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# MAHĀVISHNU

THE Litany of Thousand Names of Vishnu, well-known as *Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram*, begins with the Name *VISWAM* which means the universe. He is himself the universe and its Lord, who through his *Māyā* projects it and withdraws it into himself and is its immanent Reality. And so he is *Pranava AUM* which is the beginning, middle and end of everything. *Pranava* is Divinity dwelling in the hearts of all. There is no more sorrow for him who knows it thus. The idea of his immanence is conveyed by the second Name *VISHNU* which is derived from the root *Vis* — to enter. He is the Lord of the past, present and future, *Bhuta-bhavya-bhavat-prabbub*.

Though, in reality, He is formless, he assumes by his *Māyā* endless forms. Whatever there is with or without form, here or elsewhere, all that is his Form. The Form of Vishnu assumed by him is for the redemption of all beings. Everything about it is highly symbolic.

The gem, *Kaustubha*, adorning his chest represents the taintless pure Self of the entire universe beyond all qualities and characteristics, what is revealed by Bhagavan Ramana as the Heart. The mark on Vishnu's chest, *Srivatsa*, denotes his *Māyā* known as *Pradbāna* also. The garland worn by Vishnu, *Vaijayanti*, stands for the original five aspects (*tanmātras*) of the five constituent elements of creation (*Pancha-bhūtās*).

The conch of Mahavishnu is described by Sankara as the orb of the clear full-moon on the summit of a blue hill. Vishnu is said to be of blue complexion but He is, in reality, devoid of any colour like the sky which is known as the Home of Vishnu (*Vishnupada*). The conch (*Pāñchajanya*) stands for the five *mahā bhūtās* the subtlest of which is *ākāśa*. Sound is its nature. And so the conch repre-



Mahāvishnu

sents unmanifest sound, the ever vibrant *Pranava* (*AUM*) as well as the *Vedas*, *Vedangas*, *Itihasas*, *Puranas*, *Smritis*, all scriptures and literature and all variations of Sound. It may be said to be the equivalent

of Tārā, the second of the *Ten Mahavidyas* of the Mother. Sound creates, sustains and destroys as well. The meditation on Sound, *Pranava* or other *Mantras* is well-known as a *sādhana* leading to spiritual unfoldment.

The disc or Wheel (*Chakra*) of Mahavishnu known as Sudarsana (of captivating splendour) represents Time and all its divisions, seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, centuries, millenniums, and aeons. Time is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of everything. It is speed and strength and is said to be the mind as well, 'the speed of wind and the speed of mind' as the proverb goes. Sound in movement is Time. That is the relationship between Sound and Time, *Sankha* and *Chakra*. It was with his *Chakra* that Vishnu saved Gajendra, the elephant-king, from the crocodile gripping its foot tight. That is symbolic of Divine Grace coming to the succour of the jiva enmeshed in *samsara*, phenomenal existence with all its trials and tribulations. The *Chakra* is described by Sankara as the Light of lights which knows no darkness. In a sense, the Sun is the *Chakra* and in another it (the Sun) is his vehicle Garuda. Vishnu is known by the name *Chakra* or *Chakri* as well as *Chakrapāni*, Wielder of the *Chakra*. Vishnu's bow *Sārṅga*, with its arrows, stands for the five senses of perception (*jñanendriyas*) and the five organs of action (*karmendriyas*). As the Wielder of the Bow He is known as *Sārṅgadhanvā* and *Sārṅgapāni* or simply *Sārṅgi*. His mace (*gadā*) represents the intellect (*buddhi*) which with its power of discernment annihilates everything non-self and stands alone in its pristine glory. It is known as *Kaumōdaki* which means that which delights.

Nandaka, the effulgent Sword of Vishnu, described as the gem of a Sword (*Asi-ratna*) is *Vidya*, Jnana within the sheath of *Avidya*. This is evidently what Sankara means by the statement in his *Vivekachudamani*, "This self-luminous Witness of all glows incessantly within the sheath of *Vijnana*". A flash of this Sword of Jnana puts an end to all ignorance, *ajñāna*, and its offshoots.

Garuda, the powerful King of birds, the Vehicle of Vishnu stands for the life current

(*Prāna*) permeating and moving the whole universe. He represents the Vedas as well. Garuda is a Form of Vishnu, his Vehicle and the emblem of his banner. Garuda is the destroyer of all poison, even the poison of the ego and all its evil tendencies afflicting all beings.

The Great Serpent, Ananta or Adishesha, serves as the bed of Vishnu and so He is the one support of the whole universe. He is Brahma Swarupa, the very Form of Brahman, the all-knowing Witness of all. He is the import of all the Vedas, the Ultimate Residue (*Adi-sesha*) left on the withdrawal of the whole manifested universe.

Maha Lakshmi, who is herself in her other aspects Saraswati, the goddess of Speech and Gauri, the consort of Siva, adorns the breast of Vishnu as the very embodiment of Divine Grace, the Goddess of affluence and prosperity, ever intent on helping all beings with non-differentiating profound sympathy for all.

Bhu Devi or Bhumi Devi is the other consort of Vishnu who at the mere presence of her Lord creates, supports and protects everything animate and inanimate. She is *Mula Prakriti* controlling other powers operating in the universe, the nourisher of all beings.

Coming to the Form of Vishnu, from his feet up to his thigh are the seven nether worlds, his hip region is the Earth, his navel is the sky and his stomach, chest, neck, arms and the head and crown constitute all the upper worlds and deities reigning over them, the Sun, Moon, Stars, Indra, Varuna, the Aswins, Maruts and others.

The ten Avatars of Vishnu as the Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf-man (*Vāmana*), Parasu Rama, Sri Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki (which is yet to come) are well-known. They have their own significance and are of great inner import. We find in *Srimad Bhagavatam* mention of Suyajna, Nārada, Nara Nārāyana, Kapila, Dattatreya, Rishabha, Dhanvantari and Vyasa as Avatars of Vishnu. Ultimately whatever in creation is exalted and endowed with grace and glory, all that is a manifestation of the Lord, as Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

A word, in conclusion, about the unity of Vishnu and Siva. They only represent two Formations of the same Reality and so those endowed with discernment would see no incogruity between them. One is here reminded of the famous Sanskrit verse : " Vishnu is the Heart of Siva and Siva is the Heart of Vishnu. There is no difference between them ; those who differentiate do grievously err ". There is also in the south, a representation of Siva and Vishnu in one Form known as Sankara-Narayana.

" One is holding the Conch in his hand, the other a skull ; one is wearing the Vaijayanthi garland, the other, one of serpents ; one is Lord of Dwāraka, the other of the cremation ground ; one rides on the Garuda, the other on a Bull. One has two eyes, the other three. One puts down the Asura Bali and the other the egoistic Daksha. One is Lord of Lakshmi, the other of Uma. May the Wearer of Srivatsa on his breast and the Bearer of Ganga on his head destroy all evil and bless us for ever ! "

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" Happy the man who is busy attending to what God is saying in him. He is directly subject to the divine light-ray. The soul that stands with all her powers under the light of God is fired and inflamed with divine love. The divine light shines straight in from above, and a perpendicular sun on one's head is a thing that few can survive. Yet the highest power of the soul, her head, is held erect beneath this shaft of godly light so that there can shine in this light divine which I have oft described as being so bright, so overwhelming, so transcendent, that all lights are but darkness in comparison with this light."

— Meister Eckhart

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# Glory of Arunachala

## Arunachala Mahatmyam

Translated from Tamil by

M. C. Subramanian

### CHAPTER XIV

#### SANKARA EMERGES

(from the Column of Effulgence)

Nandikesvara continued :

**V**ISHNU, being wise looked at Brahma in disbelief. He was certain that Brahma had not seen the top of the column. He laughed aloud and said to himself : "Only the Deva of Devas, the Lord of all beings, can bless me who am under a delusion and can humble the pride of Brahma. He humbled my pride after I had tried to discover the bottom of the column of light. And so I developed devotion to Tryambaka (the three-eyed God) the Svayambhu (who stands by Himself). I shall now praise Mahesvara (the great God), free from pride. We two came out of His two sides. This Hiranyagarbha (Brahma), in his pride, still thinks of deceiving me with the aid of a false witness. Sankara (Siva) the destroyer of sorrow is my only refuge. Who else will save one who is guilty and ungrateful and a traitor to his Guru ? Therefore I shall praise Sankara alone."

Reflecting thus Vishnu praised Siva as follows : "Hail ! Thou who art in the form of earth, water, fire, air, and Hôta (one who makes the oblations in the fire) ! Hail ! Thou who art in the form of space ! Thou who transcendest the three *gunas* ! Save me. Thou who art in the form of Time ! Save me. Thou who dost possess imperishable riches ! Save me. Ocean of compassion ! Graciously save me. Thou art the creator of all, the protector of all and the destroyer of all. Who is there apart from Thee ? Thou art tinier than the tiniest (atom) and greater than the greatest. Thou pervadest everything inside and out. The

Vedas are Thy breath. The world reveals Thy glorious workmanship. Thou art That. Thou art all that belongs to Thee. Wisdom is Thy soul. Thou art the Lord. Devas, Danavas, Daityas, Siddhas, Vidyâdharas, human beings, animals, birds, mountains, trees are all Thyself. Thou art Svarga. Thou art the Goal of life. Thou art Yoga and Thou art the Supreme Knowledge. Lord ! What is there which is not Thyself ? Thou art the beginning, middle and end of all animate or inanimate. Thou abidest in all in the form of Time. Thou art Siva, the Supreme Lord, the controller of all, He who blesses all."

Vishnu next said to himself : "*Dhurjati* (Siva) should, by some means or other, be directly perceived by me. By seeing Him and surrendering to Him I shall attain Liberation. (If I cannot see Him) I shall praise His abode as well as I can. He who is capable of hearing all will hear this (praise) and bestow His grace on me" (and began to praise Siva thus) "Hail ! Deva ! Mahâdeva ! Vâmadeva ! Vrishadhvaja (he who has the emblem of the bull on his banner) ! Kālântaka (Slayer of *Kāla*, Time) ! Yajnanâsaka (the destroyer of the sacrifice) ! Nilakantha (the blue-throated one) ! Chandrasekhara (the wearer of the crescent moon) ! Hail Sambhu (Home of everything Good) ! Siva (Auspicious one) ! Isana (the Ruler), Sarva (All) ! Tryambaka (three-eyed one) ! Dhurjati (one who has matted locks) ! Kāmāri (the foe of *Kāma*, the God of Love) ! Purāri (the enemy of the three cities) ! Sthānu (the motionless being) ! Bhava (the truly existent one) ! Mahesvara (the great Lord) ! Hail ! Īsa (Ruler) ! Sūli (the bearer of the trident) ! Pasupati (the Lord of souls) ! Hara (Destroyer of sin) ! Sarvajna Jyoti (the all-knowing effulgence) !

Bhutesa (Lord of beings) ! Kapāli (the bearer of the skull) ! Nilanetra (the blue eyed one) ! Hail ! Rudra (the terrible one) ! Pināki (the wearer of the bow named Pināka) ! Bhūtādhipa (the Lord of all beings) ! Gangādhara (the wearer of Gangā) ! Vyōmakesa (he whose locks are space) ! Girisa (the Lord of the mountains) ! Parameswara (the Supreme Lord) ! Hail ! Bhima (the mighty one) ! Thou who disguisest Thyself as a hunter ! Thou who wearest skulls ! Repository of compassion ! Kṛiṣṇanuretaḥ (one whose seed fell into the fire) ! Kailāsapati (Lord of Kailasa) ! At Thy behest the wind blows, Adishesha (the great serpent) supports the earth, the Sun and Moon shine and the Brahmāṇḍa (the cosmic egg) floats in the expanse of space. It is at Thy command that the bright constellations move in the heavens. (By Thy Grace) Brahma and I became expert at creating and sustaining the world. Thou causest the Earth to produce nourishing crops and holdest the seas within their bounds. The supernatural powers like *animā* (shrinking to an atom) are very insignificant for Thee. How can I ignore Thee who art praised by all the other Amaras (Immortal ones) ? We think of Thee in trouble and forget Thee at other times. But Thou shouldst not, on that account, become displeased with Thy devotees. Thou shouldst always be merciful to them. Devotion to Thee is wisdom. When Thou concealest it, there is delusion. These are the causes of bondage and liberation."

When Chakrapāṇi (Vishnu, the Wielder of the Wheel) humbly clasped his hands and praised (Siva), Padmasambhava (Lotus-born), Brahma scorned him. Immediately Pasupati (Siva, manifested himself before them).

## CHAPTER XV

### BRAHMA PRAISES SIVA

Nandikesvara continued :

Splitting asunder the column of light, Siva appeared before the two (Brahma and Vishnu). He was like the full-moon in the

evening, was mounted on a bull white as the peak of the Kailāsa mountain, wearing matted locks, and the crescent moon on his head, a garland of skulls (on his neck), a serpent in the place of the sacred thread, serpents for ear-rings, and with an eye in his forehead, five faces, five long curved blue throats ; and He carried in his ten hands, the trident, the skull, the tiny drum (damaru), the deer, the axe, the bow, the *khatvāṅga* (a staff with a skull at the top), the sword and two serpents, one on each side. His body was whitish, he wore a lower garment of tiger skin, an upper garment of elephant hide, was fully adorned and was praised by all the Devas.

When the lotus-eyed God (Vishnu) saw him, he danced with joy. He who was born from the lotus of Vishnu's navel (Brahma) was confused and was dumbfounded. Mahādeva showered Mādhava (Vishnu) with kind looks and with an angry 'Hum' ordered the four-faced god (Brahma) to draw back. He then said : "The two of you need not be ashamed for having exceeded your powers in your pride of office. Hari (Vishnu) pondered deeply and became enlightened. But this Brahma, on the contrary, has uttered falsehood and I now cut off his fifth head for that sin. Brahma shall not hereafter be installed (in any temple). And this screw-pine flower, which bore false witness, shall never again find a place on my head".

After cursing Brahma and the screw-pine flower thus Siva turned to Vishnu and spoke "Child ! Be composed, I love you and am pleased with you who are a devotee. Have you not come out of my limbs ? Besides, you are my *sātvic* part. You shall, as before, be my foremost devotee in the whole world. Your devotion to me will increase every moment and you will finally be liberated."

When the three-eyed God blessed thus the devoted and egoless Hari (Vishnu), Brahma got exceedingly frightened. He humbly bowed to Siva and began to praise Him.

(To be continued)

# The Liberation of Gajendra, the Elephant King

By

Prof. R. Sadasiva Aiyar

**I**N the *Bhāgavata*, VIII Skandha, 3rd Canto, we have the most uplifting story of the Liberation of Gajendra by the Supreme Being, which none can forget.

The story of Gajendra is briefly this. In a certain forest, lordly trees twined round with flower-starred creepers abound, and broad lakes whereto resort the animals when athirst. One day an elephant, the head of a great herd accompanied by his harem, came to drink from a lake. When he put his foot into the water, a crocodile gripped it with his deadly jaws. In vain did Gajendra struggle hard to release his foot. He appealed to all the gods for succour, but none could help him being of limited power. The happy thought then struck him that he should inwardly recite this hymn learnt in a past birth that welled up in his heart !

I bow unto that Lord of Lords, the Brahman of boundless power ; I bow unto him who is formless, yet of countless forms Whose activity is most marvellous. I bow unto Him, the Light Supreme, Paramātman, witnessing all. Mind and words limp struggling even to shadow Him forth. But He can be attained by seers through purity of life, considering action not as their own.

My obeisance goes forth unto the Lord of Salvation, Who well knows the blessing of *Nirvana*.

I adore Him who is at once Supreme Peace and severe sternness, the occult Being beyond comprehension.

I bow unto Him Who is jnana itself, the omniscient One beholding all with equal eye, presiding over all, witnessing all. Thou art *Purusha* stemming from Thyself the primal state of *Prakriti*, the

primordial matter of the Universe we perceive.

Thou seest the functioning of our senses, being the cause of all objects.

My adoration unto thee that art Light eternal, though to the unregenerate Thou art a shadow.

I bow unto Thee again and again, the universal Cause, all-marvellous.

Thou art all Sacred Scriptures, the supreme blessedness and the final Goal of all beings.

I bow unto Thee Whose boundless mercy can release from bondage creatures like me who regard Thee as their sole refuge. I bow unto Thee vaster than vastness Whose Light animates all minds and bodies.

O Isvara, I bow unto Thee Who is all knowledge, without attachment or quality, Whom ripe minds seeking meditate in their hearts.

Those bound in their self, in their offspring, their kith and kin, their houses and wealth, can never attain Thee. Those who wish for any of the four *purushārthas* (i.e. the ends of human life) *dharma*, family life, the means for maintaining and providing for the family, and finally Liberation, by worshipping Thee get their heart's desire.

Though Thou hast accorded Thy blessings, shall I with my bestial nature gain Liberation ?

Those who have surrendered themselves to the Lord, without longing for anything, immersed in the sea of ecstatic joy, sing Thy most marvellous all-auspicious praise. I worship Him, the Supreme Brahman,



the Sovereign Lord, by inward yoga, Him, the all powerful One.

Brahma and the other gods, the *vedas*, the worlds, the moving and the non-moving, with their varied names, are but His insignificant reflections.

All this immense flood of *gunas*, *buddhi*, mind, bodies emerge and vanish, even as flames of fire and the rays of the Sun, emerge and vanish, again and again.

The Supreme Being is neither gods nor asuras, neither mortal men, nor the lower animals, neither male nor female nor neuter. He is without any quality or action.

He is neither *sat* nor *asat*; yet He is everything. May He shine forth (here, in the world of men.) I wish not to live; what good is the elephant nature within and without? I long for dissolution without delay; I yearn for release from this wrappage of the *Atman* within.

I render obeisance to Brahman the Supreme Reality, Who is the cause of the Universe and non-Universe, who is Himself the Universe.

The most formidable obstacle to realization is *Abamkara*.

With Sat Guru's Grace and continuous effort it can be conquered.

*The Symbolism of Gajendra Moksha ;  
the spell it casts over us —*

Like the other episodes inwoven in the *Bhāgavata*, the *Gajendra Moksha* figuring in it is also symbolical. Gajendra enveloped in its hide, black and thick, has been roaming carefree with his cows. So do all men in *samsara*, unmindful of anything beyond its attractions.

It is only when any calamity suddenly faces them that they are roused to reflection on the purpose of life: "How comes it that I am

so careful and yet this pain is mine and none around me enables me to overcome it? Sometimes the pain ceases only to start again. God alone can stop this endless cycle. If I pray to Him He will. In their mental process men exactly resemble Gajendra. They too have a hide, thick and black, in their *Abamkara*, which makes them also pachyderms.

Let us glance at another appeal of *Gajendra Moksha* to all who are familiar with it. While their primary aim is spiritual, it is natural for humans to think of earthly life also. This aspect is not peculiar to the *Bhāgavata*. Every great saint while granting his Grace to the devotee unasked, also enables him to get over earthly tribulations.

Gajendra's inspired hymn is from first to last *advaitic*. In this respect it is unique among teeming hymns of the *Bhāgavata*. The *advaitic* spirit glows in it throughout.

The pre-eminent and all-embracing method of reaching God is the conquest of *Abamkara*. The very first verse of Bhagavan Ramana's *Aksharamanamalai* commences with the prayer to Arunāchala to root out this arch-enemy in the mind. Let us glance at others. They are the burden of all holy scriptures.

(i) Meditation and concentration in solitude, (ii) non-attachment, considering nothing as our own, and purity of heart and (iii) the cultivation of intense devotion which implies seeing God in all beings.

In the bhakta's eye there can be no such thing as high and low. Devotion is synonymous with out and out trust in God and the conviction that He will look after our well-being in all vicissitudes. But this complete surrendering of ourselves to the Divine will needs long practice.

No one can go through Gajendra's hymn without being drawn to it again and again. Indeed it haunts us by the spell it casts over us.

## STORIES FROM YOGA VASISHTHA—VIII

## THE STORY OF VITAHAVYA

Translated from Sanskrit by

M. C. Subramanian

VASISHTHA said to Rama :

O Rama ! There is another path which enables one to attain the Supreme state, a path which was steadily followed by the sage Vitahavya. This sage, who dwelt in a cave on the Vindhya mountains, was very much attached to the performance of the religious rites prescribed in the first part of the Vedas. But, after a long time, he realized that these rites produced only terrible *samsaric* delusion and fearful physical and mental suffering. He became unhappy. So he completely renounced action and resorted to a hut of plantain leaves in order to practise conceptless *samādhi* (*nirvikalpa samādhi*). He spread a deer-skin on a clean spot and sat on it in the lotus-posture with his fingers on the upturned feet. He gradually withdrew his senses from external and internal objects and stopped the mind from going out in different directions. He thought of various ways of keeping his mind steady. He said to himself : "How very strange that even when this mind is withdrawn from everything it gets unsteady again and again like a leaf caught on a wave. It goes from the pot to the cloth and from the cloth to the cart. Thus it jumps from one thing to another like a monkey among trees. The eyes and other organs are five openings for it. They are distinct from the Self and have no connection with it, just as the nether world has no connection with the upper world."

Addressing his mind he said :

"O wandering Chārvaka<sup>1</sup> of a mind ! O you, who go begging everywhere ! Do not wander about the world mourning vainly. Your belief that you are sentient is false. O Fool ! Pure Consciousness and mind are not

identical ; they are quite dissimilar. Your egoistic and vain notion that you are the Self is all wrong. Cast off this delusion which is the result of the ego-sense. You exist only so long as one does not investigate. You cease to exist, like darkness before light, when one investigates. You never existed in the past, nor do you exist now, nor will you exist in the future. I bid you farewell. I have now become calm and quiet. I have luckily been cured of my fever. I now abide in my Self, the state of Turiya. The Lord who is unborn and is Pure Consciousness is like a witness. Turning to the senses, he said : "O Tribe of the senses ! Alas ! Why do you vex yourselves in vain ? Like a traveller who is afraid of snakes or a brahmin of Pukkakas (persons of a very low caste) Pure Consciousness stays at a distance from the senses. Forgetting Pure Consciousness and turning towards fancies is what produces sorrow. When the Self is free of all concepts of the insentient mind and there is no body-awareness, it is known as Pure Consciousness."

Having arrived at these conclusions Vitahavya controlled his mind forcibly and remained absolutely desireless and free from the agitations of the senses. His life-forces gradually subsided within him like a roaring fire which has burnt out its fuel. His slightly opened eyes which were like half-open lotus-buds were turned towards the nose. He held his head, neck and trunk erect in a line. He looked like a statue carved out of rock or a figure in a picture. He remained in this state for three hundred years, but these years passed away like half an hour (*muburta*). In course of time his body became covered with the

<sup>1</sup> An atheist and materialist.

mud brought down by the floods of the rainy season. He woke up after another three hundred years, but could not move his body as it was enveloped by mud on all sides. He was aware of the body, but there was no movement of the life forces in it as all the openings were obstructed. In this condition he began to imagine strongly various creations and (by the strength of his imagination) he actually experienced them. He lived (in his imagination) for a hundred years as a sage under a kadamba tree in the forests of Mount Kailāsa. He next lived for another hundred year as a Vidyādhara (a celestial being free from sorrows and for five yugas (aeons) as Indra adored by the devas. He was then a follower of the God who bears the Crescent moon on his head (i.e., Siva) for a kalpa (four yugas). He experienced all these lives in his imagination.

Vitahavya had also a desire to see all his past lives. Immediately he saw all his previous bodies and even the body known as Vitahavya which was still in existence. He desired to raise it up in order to see it properly. He thought: "This body is enveloped by mud. I shall therefore enter the Sun God and raise it up. His attendant Pingala will raise it up for me." So he entered the Sun in the form of his subtle body like air entering a pair of bellows. When all-knowing Ravi (the Sun God) saw the sage entering into him he issued suitable instructions to his attendant Pingala. Thereupon Vitahavya entered Pingala's body and Pingala proceeded towards the cave in the Vindhya mountains. He soon reached the forests containing beautiful bowers and caves with glorious rain clouds hovering over them. He entered the cave containing Vitahavya's body and digging with his nails, removed the mud which had enveloped it and pulled it up just as one pulls up the root of a lotus from a lake. The subtle body of Vitahavya (which was inside Pingala) now entered his own physical body and Pingala returned to his heavenly abode.

Shortly afterwards Vitahavya proceeded to a lotus-covered lake of clear water which was near, and after bathing in it, worshipped the Sun God. Thereafter he began to live as

before free from attachments. He was full of friendliness, equanimity, wisdom, contentment and compassion.

Although he had seen the highest worlds he once again desired to control his mind. He said to himself "The senses were formerly well-controlled by me. Now I have nothing more to gain from thoughts. Just as one breaks a brittle creeper I shall break all thoughts of existence and non-existence. I shall then remain steady like a mountain peak, immersed in what remains. When I am awake I seem to be asleep and when I am asleep I seem to be awake. I am changeless awareness, indifferent to good and bad. I am absolutely pure. Having established myself in the state of Turiya (the fourth state) I now remain with my mind completely controlled." He next entered into samādhi for six days. When he woke up he felt like a traveller who had fallen asleep for a moment.

Thereafter Bhagavan Vitahavya, that Siddha and man of great austerities, dwelt there for a long time in a state of absolute freedom (*jivanmukti*). Having got rid of all ideas of acceptance and rejection, his mind transcended desire and desirelessness. He knew that at the end of his life he would attain the state of liberation without the body (*videhamukti*), free from all taints of samsara. Once while sitting in his cave in the lotus-posture, he said to himself: "O Attachment! Become detached. O Hatred! Cease to be hatred. I have played with you for a very long time. O worldly enjoyments! Salutations to you! I have been fondled by you for hundreds of thousands of lives like a child by its parents. Salutations to the joys which made me forget even this holy state of supreme bliss! Salutations to you, O Misery (*dukkha*)! It is because of your stings and promptings that I sought my right path. O Friendly (i.e. good) Acts! You have been my relatives for a very long time. You have destroyed yourselves after producing in me the knowledge of Self. Salutations to you, O Mother Desire! You have become lonely, lean and still. Do not feel sad on my account. Lord Kama (the god of love)! Forgive the faults which I have committed against you. I

am now enjoying tranquillity in solitude. Bless me. Salutation to you O God of good deeds! You have formerly raised me up from hell (*naraka*) and made me attain heaven (*svarga*). O Life-forces! May you be blessed! You were my old natural friends. But I am taking leave of you and going away."

Having, in this manner, made up his mind (to renounce everything) he became completely free from thoughts and desires. Uttering slowly the *Pranava* (the sacred sound OM) he attained the state of Yoga. He rejected all the objects of the three worlds, inner and outer, gross and subtle, which had been merely imagined. When the sound of the long drawn out final syllable of OM became inaudible he rejected all the objects of the senses. He then overcame the darkness (Ignorance) which obstructed the rising consciousness. He contemplated for a moment on the effulgence which burst forth and then rejected that also, so that there was neither darkness nor light. He contemplated his state also for a moment and then rejected that also. He next rejected in a fraction of a second his innate consciousness which manifested itself free of tendencies. He reached the state known as *pasyanti* (lit. seeing) and, after remaining as Pure Being for some time, passed over into a state resembling deep sleep (*sushupti*) and remained in it steadily. After establishing himself firmly in *sushupti* he passed over into the state of *turiya* in which he experienced

bliss even though there was no object to produce it. He now felt as if he was both existent and non-existent. In this state he became that which cannot be expressed by words, the *Void* of those who believe in a *Void* (*Sunya-vādins*), the Brahman of those who believe in Brahman, the Pure Consciousness of those who believe in Consciousness alone (*Vijnānavādins*), the Purusha of the *Sāṅkhyas*, the *Isvara* of the Yoga School of thought, the *Siva* of the *Saivites*, the *Kāla* (Time) of those who believe in Time only, the *Atman* of those who believe in the *Atman*, the *Non-Self* of those who do not believe in a Self, the *Madhyama* (Middle) of the *Mādhyamika* school of thought, all of those who treat everything alike, the conclusion of all scriptures, that which exists in the hearts of all, is everything, all-pervasive and the essence of everything. He became that which is absolutely changeless, the effulgence of effulgences which can be understood only by actual experience. He became that which is one as well as the many, pure as well as impure, complete as well as incomplete. He became established in that pure state which is beyond birth and death, without beginning or end, partless as well as possessed of parts. He became *Isvara* who is purer than the sky. After living as he pleased for thirty two thousand years he utterly ceased to exist as a separate individual and so he lost any possibility of rebirth.

(To be continued)

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"When . . . I prayed with my heart, everything around me seemed delightful and marvellous. The trees, the grass, the birds, the earth, the air, the light seemed to be telling me that they existed for man's sake, that they witnessed to the love of God for man, that everything proved the love of God for man, that all things prayed to God and sang His praise."

—The Russian Pilgrim

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**SANĀTHANA-DHARMA** (An Advanced Text-book of Hindu Religion and Ethics). Pub.: The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras-600020. Pp. 384 + xii. Price: Rs. 20.

When Dr. Annie Besant, one of the foremost resuscitators of Hinduism in modern India, and her colleagues founded the Central Hindu College at Varanasi in 1898, they found to their dismay, that while there were books in abundance dealing with particular schools of Hindu religion and philosophy, there was not a single text-book to systematically instruct the students in all those underlying principles of Hinduism, which are common to all its many sects. So they took it upon themselves to prepare a graduated series of three books, one in the form of catechism for the use of small boys, another an elementary text-book of Sanatana Dharma for the use of the higher and middle school classes, and the third one — the volume under review — intended for college students. While a number of scholars supplied the Sanskrit texts, English translations and other material, it was Dr. Besant herself who drafted the running text. So we now have three books of utmost clarity and brevity filling admirably the void these pioneers found when they initiated the College which later on was to develop into the Benaras Hindu University.

It is remarkable that by 1906, i.e., in less than four years of their first publication, these books in the English original and translations sold like hot cakes, reaching the astounding figure of 1,30,000 copies. Taking note of the vaster readership now, and the greater ignorance of our people on matters relating to the Vedic religion, one wishes a greater reception to this new reprint.

The book is prepared with great care to suit the questioning mind of the present generation. This is not to say that it brings the whole of our religion within the narrow confines of rationalism. But even when it treats of the invisible and inscrutable, the treatment is so scientific that the unbiased reader may come to accept that the non-rational is not irrational but has a (Supra) reasoning and science of its own.

Readers like the present reviewer will be delightfully disappointed to see that the book does not lay undue emphasis on the "occult" aspect of our

religion, which is of some special importance to the theosophists, but which is only one of the many tributaries of the great stream of Vedic religion. It is a book, thoroughly unsectarian, and inclusive of all the divergent forms of Hindu thought, avoiding controversy at the same time.

The book is divided into three parts, the first containing chapters on the basic Hindu ideas about the Absolute, Its manifestation as the world and the individual souls, the theory of reincarnation, the Karma theory etc., Part II deals with the general Hindu customs and rites like the important ones among forty *samskaras*, *Śrāddha*, Pancha Maha Yagna, Puja, the dharmas of *varna* and *āśrama* and the four Purusharthas (the last one a later addition by Dr. Bhagavan Das); Part III elaborates the ethical teachings in Hinduism — the word 'elaborates' is purposely used, because this part is rather loose and lop-sided in a book that is otherwise a model for compactness.

Though captioned "an advanced text-book", this book will be easily intelligible to any average reader, without a perusal of the earlier two volumes and it is far more interesting than a text-book. It is a "must" for all those who want to be enlightened on all the basic tenets of the great religion that has made Bharath, Bharath.

RA. GANAPATI

**THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD:** A new translation with commentary by Francesca Fremantle and Chogyam Trungpa. Pub.: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1409 Fifth Street, Berkeley, U.S.A. Pp. xx + 120. Price: \$ 3.95.

The sub-title of this well-produced and well-printed book is — 'The Great Liberation through hearing in the *Bardo*'. *Bardo* is a Tibetan word which connotes the Buddhist concept of the 'intermediate state' of being after death, more or less equivalent to *antarābhava sativa* of Sanskrit. In Tibetan Theology the text of this *Bardo Thotrol* is read to a dead person to help him attain liberation. The book is mainly meant for the Buddhist initiates, but also may be read with interest and profit by those interested in the later phase of Tibetan Buddhism.

This Buddhist scripture claims an uninterrupted holy tradition several centuries old. It holds a

mirror to the nature of the mind and its projections — agreeable as well as terrible, peaceful as well as wrathful — as they appear immediately after death in their overwhelming forms and the *maṇḍalas* of *tathāgatas* like Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratna-sambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi and their *herukas* or wrathful energies.

In the words of Francesca Fremantle, the fundamental teaching of this book is

"The recognition of one's projections and the dissolution of the sense of self in the light of reality. As soon as this is done, these five psychological components (*skandhas*) of the confused or unenlightened state of mind become instead factors of enlightenment." (p. xvii)

The Tibetan author who has collaborated in the Commentary and Translation of this scripture is an initiate in the *Bardo* Tradition and has given us a simple and clear English rendering of the *sādhana* of two *maṇḍalas* of 42 peaceful and 58 wrathful deities. The main verse portions of the original are given in a very effective English garb of which the following is a specimen —

*When the journey of my life has reached its end and since no relatives go with me from this world, I wander in the bardo state alone; may the peaceful and wrathful Buddhas send out the power of their compassion and clear away the dense darkness of ignorance.* (p. 103)

The text is fully documented by charts and illustrations and is a very useful addition to the scant literature of living traditions of Buddhist religion in Tibet.

DR. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY

THE LIGHT OF A THOUSAND SUNS: By Jacob Trapp. Photographs by Bruce Roberts. Pub.: Rider & Co., 3, Fitzroy Square, London, U.K. Pp. 128. Price: £ 1-45.

'If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky...'

was the line cited by Robert Oppenheimer from the eleventh discourse in the *Bhagavad Gita* when he watched breathlessly the first atomic blast come off 'successfully' in the desert of southern New Mexico. From this line derives the title of the book.

'I have become death, the destroyer of worlds waiting the hour for their doom to strike...'

The Author might have added these ominous lines also from the *Bhagavadgita* which came to mind to

this western scientist watching the ushering in of the atomic age. They would give the necessary jolt to men of this 'age of science and technology of growing materialism and collectivism' and unprecedented interference with the course of nature to 'listen to the intuitive voices of wisdom of the great sages.' This age needs nothing quite so much as to listen to these timeless voices says the author and to take heed of the warnings of the few scientists of discernment who can see the writing on the wall.

The title of the book and the heading of the chapters are not in conformity with the contents. Glimpses of Reality can be experienced as the light of a thousand suns but here 'rationalizable topics' are dealt with to illustrate for instance that religions are absurd though not quite without reason or that Christianity is of no avail. Later one is glad to read far from illustrating the absurdity of religions that 'they arise from profounder depth than the rational, are not amenable to reason and answer to a need other than the need for logical demonstration. And basic to them all, humanly, is the sense of the numinous.' The author also says that the towering absurdity of Christianity is that God became human and died on the cross. The voice of the great sages to which the author urges one to listen to, proclaim with one accord that there is nothing but the Self or God or Brahman, that we do not exist apart from God who dwells in all hearts and by whose reflected light we function and reason. So God can become human and die on the cross particularly so if 'the God who dies for us is the God who is resurrected in us.'

A strange conglomeration of profound truth and paradoxical statements.

LUCIA OSBORNE

SHREE GURUGEETARTHESHWAREE: By Kusumeshwaree. Pub.: Dhananjaya Balakrishna Dhavale, Keshav Bhikaji Dhavale, Girgaon, Bombay-4. Price: Rs. 35.

The Sanskrit Text *Gurugita* is found in the Sri Skanda Purana in the form of a dialogue between Siva and Parvati, the Eternal Teacher and the Eternal Disciple. The book under review is an English rendering of the Marathi Commentary of the Sanskrit Text along with the original verses.

The unique contribution of Indian Spirituality and Mysticism is its concept of Guru, the Master. In ultimate analysis, God himself is the Guru or as the *Gita* puts it, Brahman is none other than the Master, *gurum viṇḍ brahma nānyat*. When the disciple is ready, He appears on the scene in the

human form of a Guru and leads the disciple. Even for those rare evolved souls who need no outside Guru, the God seated in their heart acts as the Guru. The Guru is the real Father as he brings about the spiritual birth in the disciple. As far as the disciple is concerned, the Guru is the delegated Power of the Godhead and God acts through him. Depending on the sincerity, intensity of devotion and receptivity of the disciple, God manifests through the Guru and responds. Just as a woman of good family would be thinking about her husband all the time, the disciple should be constantly thinking of the Guru, *guror dhyānam sadā kuryāt kulastri svapater yathā*, says the Gita. Real knowledge is spontaneous and self-born and nobody can impart it. The real Guru makes the knowledge manifest in the disciple. The very remembrance of the Guru makes knowledge rise of its own accord *yasya smarana mātrena jñānam utpadyate svayam*. Such is the Guru's grace. It makes the dumb loquacious and makes the lame cross over a mountain.

The devout recitation of *Gurugita* is said to bestow the grace of the Guru on the disciple and this book under review helps one recite with the full understanding of the meaning of these verses.

**COLLECTED WORKS OF NOLINI KANTA GUPTA** : Volume Four : The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Pub. : Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry. Pp. 409. Price : Rs. 15.

The book under review deals with Part Eight to Part Twelve of the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, a collection of articles written by the author from time to time giving a comprehensive coverage to all the aspects of Integral Yoga. Esteemed as an authentic exponent of the Master's philosophy and Yoga, Nolini Kanta Gupta always writes with purpose and precision and this collection of articles is no exception.

Parts Eight and Nine are based on talks of the Mother given by Her in French and as such are of absorbing interest. The Mother's teaching is direct and universal and goes to the heart of the matter. Lofty spiritual truths, intricate philosophical concepts are all explained here simply and one understands by the heart, more than by the mind. To the sincere aspirants on the path of self-perfection, these talks act as a practical guide.

The other three parts carry the original writings of Sri Gupta on the various facets of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. There is an article on cosmonautics as well. These writings are all thought-provoking

and bear the stamp of the lucid thinking of the author.

S. SHANKARANARAYANAN

**ASANA PRANAYAMA, MUDRA, BANDHA** : By Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Pub. : Sivananda Ashram, Monghyr, Bihar. Pp. 382. Price : not given.

This is a copious treatment on Yoga for the body, nerves and the mind with plenty of illustrations leading the student to master each āsan. The illustrations were drawn by Ma Devashakti of USA and the book was printed by the disciples of the great Swami in the Ashram graphics. The Swamiji is very fortunate in having innumerable disciples East and West who follow him with ardent devotion. We can count in this book more than 140 useful asans. All the known Hathasans are extensively treated with clear illustrations.

They are asans for beginners, antigestrics, Shakti Bhanda, eye exercises, relaxation poses, pre-meditative poses, meditative poses, vajrasanas, bending asans, backward bending asans, forward bending asans, spinal twist asans, inverted asans, balancing asans, advanced asans. The chapters on pranayama, Dandhas, Neti, Dhauti, Basti, Kapalbhāti and other intricate Hatha kriyas are well explained in this valuable book. This is a remarkable book on Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga too which is worth careful study and practice.

**YOGA SELF-TAUGHT** : By Andre Van Lysabeth. Translator Carola Congreve. Pub. : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 260. Price : £ 2-25.

Mon. André Lysabeth is a leading Yoga adept of Bruxelles, the founder of Belgian Yoga Foundation. His Yoga Self-taught, French, is a record seller in Europe. We welcome its English translation by Carola Congreve. This remarkable book contains well illustrated lessons on Yoga and we feel as if an expert is guiding us step by step. "It is entirely trustworthy" says Jean Herbert in his foreword. "This book allows the pupil to assimilate the right technics of breathing, relaxation and principal Asanas that bring health, vitality and *joie de vivre*" says the author.

The author gives us scientific methods of controlled respiration, and toning-up exercises for liver, pancreas, spleen, stomach, heart, lungs and other vital parts of our being. He recommends the prolonged singing of OMMMM to rhythmise the breath. He recommends balanced vegetarian diet and condemns carcass meat. He closely follows Swami Sivananda in his *election* and elucidation. He

has chosen nine popular asans. Udhyana, Nauli and Suryanamaskar which he teaches with copious illustrations. Though it is specially meant for Westerners, we recommend it to all who wish to learn Hatha Yoga scientifically.

**YOGA — FROM SHORE TO SHORE :** By Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Pub. : Sivananda Ashram, Monghyr, Bihar. Pp. 190.

"If I were asked now for a way to earthly harmony, I would say carry the message of Yoga from shore to shore, door to door". This is what the Swamiji is doing in his own invincible way. This book is a collection of his illuminating lectures or rather it is Yoga worldwide. He explains Yoga as a pathway to new transformed life and makes a synthesis of Karma, Bhakti, Jnana, Hatha, Raja, Mantra, Tantra Yogas. His lecture on Inner Silence and Ajapa Japm is interesting. He lays constant stress on the alchemy of meditation and Kundalini Yoga.

Only when we have learnt the method of going within ourselves may the annihilation of sufferings in toto come within our easy reach. Meditation gives rest, relaxation, peace and bliss. Sit erect, Chant OM for five to ten minutes. Repeat the mantra *Soham*, inspire *So* and respire *ham*. Synchronise mantra with the breath, concentrate on the psychic centre, the heart's core, continue silent meditation and sing a long OM at the end. This is the technique of meditation that Swamiji recommends.

The book is a treasure of spiritual science and is worth repeated study. Price, priceless.

YOGI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI

**TOWARD THE MAITREYAN REVOLUTION :**

By Karl Heussenstamm. Pub. : International Co-operation Council, 17819 Roscoe Blvd., Northridge, Calif. 91324, U.S.A. Pp. 267. Price : \$ 5.

The author of this book is a notable worker in the Cause of Human Unity. For years he has been engaged in sponsoring and co-ordinating the activities of various organisations in the world promoting the Ideal of the Oneness of the Human Race. The theme of this work is that mankind is passing through a meaningful crisis which is preparing it for the next stage of its destined evolution e.g. Universal Consciousness.

*Maitreya* is the symbol of the coming Universal Man who is already born in the subtler and higher spheres of existence. Through various movements, thought-revolutions, spiritual philosophies, political and social upheavals, the new Consciousness stress-

ing on diversity based upon Unity and Unity manifest in diversity, is preparing to take hold of the mind of the race. "The new religion offers a unity of East and West, of idealism and humanism, of spirituality and science, of classical and modern thought; it brings the vision of the future into a unity with the great traditions of the past and present; it arises from a powerful explosion of concentrated creative energy, born from the mainstream in evolution, streaming forth from the cosmic unconsciousness into the enlightened consciousness of humanity."

The role of modern technology in hastening this advent of the Cosmic Avatar, the advances in human psychology registered by movements of creative meditation, Kundalini Yoga and allied ways of spiritual evolution of consciousness, and the services of Art, Literature, Mysticism in the revolution under way are analysed with clarity and presented in their total perspective.

An elevating and inspiring book.

**YOGA :** By Dharendra Brahmachari. Pub. : Indian Book Co., New Delhi-32. Pp. 232. Price. : Rs. 40.

A book on Yoga, but with a difference. Unlike most tracts on the subject, this treatise sets modest limits for its theme and deals with *asanas* and *pranayama* only, in order to ensure sound health of body and mind. It does not describe the usual asanas and poses that are found in the Hatha Yoga books, but concentrates on the subtler asanas for developing the mind, memory, will-power, improving the hearing, strengthening key-joints of limbs, toning up abdominal muscles etc.

While on the asana of prayer, the author writes :

"(Posture) — with eyes closed, feet together, the body erect, fold your hands with the thumbs on the throat-cavity and the forearms pressed against the chest. (Exercise) — concentrate your mind on the Supreme Being. As soon as you have attained this mental state, relax the pressure of your forearms and palms. As long as you are unsuccessful in achieving this state of mental concentration, keep the forearms pressed against the chest... According to Yogic tradition, this exercise, by its effect on the Manovaha nerve, helps to sublimate the sexual instinct and to increase the powers of concentration. The exercise is an unerring means for bringing about communion with one's inner self. Acting on the advice of some unknown saint, Lord Buddha was able to attain the perfect peace with the help of this exercise, while sitting under the Bodhi tree."



Forty-eight of these exercises are followed by what the author calls *sthula*, grosser, exercises. There is an interesting section on the displacement of the navel and the exercises to set it right. The last section deals with the Shat Karma, cleansing processes. 130 full-page illustrations are given to help the reader in following the instructions.

M. P. PANDIT

YOGA : SECRETS OF PSYCHIC POWERS : By Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda.

YOGA OF PERFECTION : By Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda.

Both published by Swami Lalitananda, International School of Yoga, 6111 S.W., 74th Avenue, Miami, Florida-33143, U.S.A. Price : \$ 5.99 each.

SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH YOGA : By Selvarajan Yesudian.

Published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Price : £ 1.50 (paperback edition).

Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda, "genius of Yoga from India", as the American publishers hail him, who has established his International Yoga Society near the University of Miami, and has published more than thirty books on the subject, had learnt the Yoga Vasishta teachings under Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. The phenomenon of *siddhis* or miracles of which he has written is perhaps as old as humanity itself, and one wonders whether it had something to do with the awakening of the religious impulse itself. The extraordinary nature of psychic phenomenon, as distinct from true spirituality, seen all over the world, amongst people in all stages of civilisation, whether it be the Witch of Endor or of Atlas, has attracted man from the natural to the supernatural or preternatural. Times were when people instinctively related a close connection between psychic powers and godliness. But a change has come in the attitude of civilised man towards the phenomenon of miracles, a few looking down upon such phenomena as superstition or a matter for scientific investigation. There is great need to do research in the whole natural history of the spiritual or non-physical or transcendental aspect of human personality to realise that man is "a uniquely personal being over and above the world of matter."

This was understood by the ancient thinkers of India, who had mastered the art of metaphysics and were quite familiar with cryptesthesia and other allied powers. Patanjali had systematised the dyna-

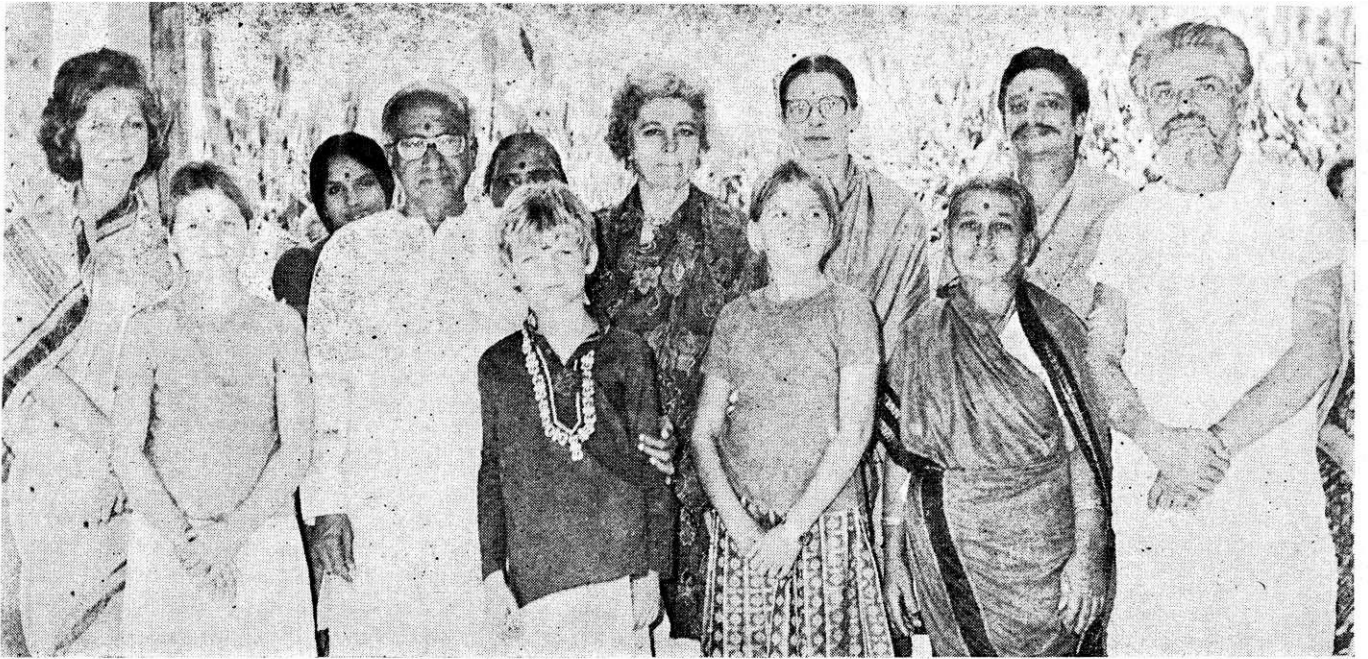
nism of the psychic principles in his "*Yoga Sutras*" pointing out the soul's superiority over the mind, which needs to be controlled by Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. The will and mind are only servants for the soul's use, urges the great master psychologist, and as long as man is wrapped up in his material life and does not admit that the real knower and only experiencer is the soul, so long do these servants remain usurpers of the soul's sovereignty. Hence is the *Gita* statement : "Self is the friend of self, and in like manner, self is its own enemy!" (VI. 5)

Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda has rendered a translation of the third chapter of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* (*Vibhutipada*) which deals with the internal means (Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi) for the attainment of various psychic powers, for purifying the mind-stuff and realising the goal of life, *Kaivalya* or Self-realisation. In the second book under review he has rendered the *Bhagavad Gita* briefly in four sections. The first is composed of the three most important parts of the *Gita*, describing the nature of a Yogi of perfection (II. 54-72), XII. 13-20, XIV. 21-27) giving word by word meaning of these sublime verses. While the second part presents a brief of all the 18 chapters, the third gives selected verses from each of the chapters. The last section is a brief resume of Integral Yoga, which is the theme of the Song Celestial. There is no doubt that this book will prove to be an unusual guidance to earnest aspirants who want to study the *Gita* time and again to discover the endless treasure of spiritual values.

\* \* \*

Selvaraj Yesudian's book bypasses the realm of psychic, where "under every flower curlleth a serpent" and reaches towards the "Hall of Wisdom, the Hall which lies beyond, wherein all shadows are unknown and where the light of Truth shines with unfading glory." "Although I was born and bred in the Christian faith," remarks the author, "although a foolish fanaticism several times took possession of me, my heart nevertheless pulsed with the same rhythm as those of my Hindu brothers." He is convinced of the practical aspects of Hinduism, as it promotes man to strive for the realisation of God in his daily life and is oblivious of the "deep rift we Christians make when we turn our religion into a Sunday affair." Yesudian along with Elisabeth Haich had taught thousands of students self-reliance through Yoga at their international schools in Europe and the contents of the book are mainly based on his class talks and lectures.

ARGUS



(l. to r.): H.H. Queen Sophia of Spain, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Queen Mother Frederika, Princess Irene and our *Managing Editor*.  
(front row): The Princesses, Smt. Nagalakshmi Venkataraman and T. N. Venkataraman.

## ASHRAM BULLETIN

## THE QUEEN OF SPAIN VISITS THE ASHRAM

**Her Majesty Queen SOPHIA of Spain, with her two daughters and the prince, visited the Ashram on January 17, 1976, accompanied by the Queen Mother Frederika of Greece, Princess Irene and Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.**

**They stayed for two days and participated in all the activities of the Ashram, including pujas to Sri Bhagavan's shrine of grace.**

This is the first visit of the Queen after King Carlos of Spain ascended the throne recently, though she had already visited the Ashram in 1974, along with King Constantine and the entire Greek Royal family.

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, received the Queen, showed her round the Ashram and presented her some books and photos of Sri Maharshi.

Queen Sophia is well read in the works of and on Sri Maharshi ably guided by Princess Irene. The Queen Mother Frederika is fond of her grandchildren and, being a convinced Advaitin herself

and soaked in Hindu tradition, she has taught them all the stories in Hindu lore. The princesses, during their leisure hours, enact scenes from the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* sharing the parts among themselves!

During their short stay the entire Royal family participated in the anniversary of the passing away of Swami Rajeswarananda, who brought up Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan from his boyhood and made him what he is. The Swami was a great devotee of Sri Bhagavan and the editor of *The Call Divine* for many years.



**Sri Bhagavan's Jayanti Celebrations at Madurai.** The large portrait of Sri Bhagavan is taken in procession to the accompaniment of *Nadaswaram*.

# SRI RAMANA

## JAYANTI

### CELEBRATIONS

The 96th *Jayanti* (Birthday) of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated with great enthusiasm by the devotees on December 20, at His Abode of Grace (Sri Ramanasramam), and in other places.

At Madurai — *Sri Ramana Mandiram*, the place where Sri Ramana had his Experience of the Self — His Jayanti was celebrated for five days with interesting programmes. There were Bhajans and lectures by scholar-devotees and the picture of Sri Maharshi was taken around in procession.

At *Arunachala Ashrama*, New York, U.S.A. and Bridgetown, Nova Scotia (Canada), the celebrations

were ably conducted by the ever-earnest devotees there. Smt. Joan Greenblatt composed the following poem for the holy occasion :

#### RESPLENDENT RAMANA

The moon in all her glory may  
light the path of those at night  
and cool the ever blazing sun  
but Thou shinest more resplendently.

Although in such a natural way  
the leaves blow ever beautifully  
refreshing the tired spirits thus. . .  
yet it is Thou who soothest us in Thy Light.

No wonder then that each year  
When the dance of Shiva fills the air  
in the prayerful village lanes  
we fall in reverence at Thy feet.

Another year has left its mark  
with Thy care and watchful eye  
we slowly walk the path alone  
into the night with Thy guiding arm.

\* \* \* \*

Reports of Ramana Jayanti celebrations have also been received from : Ramana Sat Sangh, Nellore ; Sri Janaki Nilayam, Thanjavur ; Sri Ramana Arunachala Sadhanalaya, Belgaum ; Ramana Kendra, Calcutta ; Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee, Bombay.

## RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The *Jayanti* was celebrated in orthodox style on December 28 with puja and *Pārāyana* in "*Ramana-chala*" and with morning, noon and evening worship at Uttara Swami Malai Temple. At the public meeting held on December 25, the chief guest, Shri T. A. Pai, Union Minister for Industries and Civil Supplies, congratulated the Kendra on its good work and wished all success to its service programmes.

\* \* \* \*

On February 28 *Sivaratri* was observed by a large gathering of devotees. After the singing of *Sivapurāna* and of *Sivānanda Lahari* by a group of ladies, members recited *Rudra Japam* and sang in chorus *Akshara Mana Malai*.

\* \* \* \*

*Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi*, the famous musician, visited the Kendra on March 16 and sang some songs, including a *sloka* of Sri Bhagavan's, in the presence of a large number of devotees. She also listened to the rendering of Bhagavan's hymns and Muruganar's songs by *Smt. Sulochana Natarajan* and others.

\* \* \* \*

During the Sunday evening meetings, Sri Bhagavan's devotional hymns are being studied in depth.

RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA,  
ALWARPET, MADRAS

The Sunday evening *satsangs* are being held regularly and begin with Veda Parayana. On December 28, at the *Jayanti* meeting, Prof. P. K. Seshadri gave a learned discourse on Sri Bhagavan's philosophy. On subsequent Sundays, Dr. Kuppuswami Sharma and Sri D. S. Sastri narrated and commented on some incidents in Sri Bhagavan's life.

\* \* \* \*

*Sri K. K. Nambiar* and his sister *Smt. K. K. Madhavi Ammal* (both introduced to our readers in our issues of October, 1965 and October, 1971, respectively) belong to the most privileged group of devotees, so to say, as they enjoyed such closeness and proximity with our Master by their complete dedication and deep devotion. Their granddaughter, *Geetha*, got married on January 26. Before the wedding, Sri K. K. Nambiar brought her to the Ashram to receive the Grace and blessings of our Master. They were accompanied by *Smt. Janaki Nambiar*, her daughter, *Soudemini*



(l. to r.): Jayaram K. Nambiar, K. K. Prabhakaran, Soudamini Prabhakaran, GEETHA, Janaki Nambiar and K. K. Nambiar.



*Prabhakaran, Sri K. K. Prabhakaran* (son of Smt. K. K. Madhavi Ammal) and *Jayaram K. Nambiar* (son of Sri K. K. Nambiar). The occasion was a real family gathering and every member of the Ashram greeted them with warmth and affection.

We convey our greetings to Geetha and her husband *Sri M. K. Unnikrishnan*.

\* \* \* \*

We are happy to announce the wedding of two staunch devotees of our Master — *Zarine* and



*Christopher Pegler*



*Zarine Pegler*

*Christopher Pegler* (referred to in our *Ashram Bulletin* of October 1975 and January 1972, respectively). Their marriage took place in Bombay attended by some of our devotees. Christopher's father, *Mr. R. G. Pegler* from England arrived in Bombay to bless the couple. So devoted to Ramana the couple are that they chose to spend their first month of wedded life at the cool shade of Arunachala at the Master's very Ashram!

We congratulate them and wish them a very happy married life.

\* \* \* \*

*Sri P. S. Easwaran*, Secretary of Prem Sangh, who is a great devotee of Sri Bhagavan, had the marriage of his eldest son, *Bhavani Shankar*, with *Usha*, performed at the Ashram, in front of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace on January 26. The couple received the blessings of Bhagavan and his devotees.

We wish the couple all the best in life.

## PILGRIMS

For some, visiting the Ashram and getting soaked in the nectar of Ramana-experience is so easy and natural that irrespective of distance and other problems, they make it an annual feature to come to the Ashram and live there as long as possible. But there are some others who, despite their earnest efforts, could visit the Ashram only very belatedly. It was so with the devotee, *Sri R. P. Jaspers* from The Netherlands (Holland). Though devoted to Sri Bhagavan for a number of years, he could come to the Ashram only now and that too for only a couple of days. But, he returned fully rewarded by Sri Bhagavan's Grace. He writes :



*R. P. Jaspers*

"Though I have been in contact with Sri Ramana-sramam for about ten years, I could not manage so far to make a trip to India. In the autumn of 1975 I had two dreams in which I had a very clear vision of the sacred Hill Arunachala and I understood that I should go. Because of obligations elsewhere, I was able to stay only for two days at the Ashram. I arrived early in the evening of the first of January 1976, just at the time of dinner. But instead of taking my dinner I went to bed; in the intensely quiet atmosphere of the Ashram I could not resist an overwhelming sleep! The next morning I ordered books in the book-depot and in the afternoon I paid homage to Sri Arunachala by walking barefoot all the eight miles around the Hill. They call this the *Pradakshina* of Arunachala. The following morning I went up the Hill to Skandashram and in the afternoon I had a very interesting and fruitful talk with one of the inmates of the Ashram. The hospitality of the ashramites was heart-warming. Staying in the Ashram is staying in a different world altogether, a world of profound Peace and blessedness. One is surrounded by a vibration of love and bliss; the presence of Sri Bhagavan can still be experienced vividly. I hope that I may visit the Ashram more often and for longer periods."

R. P. JASPERS,  
Overveen, Holland.

*Sri T. F. Lorgus* (Caixa Postal 1946, Tel. 21888, Porto Alegre, R. G. Sul, Brazil) is our journal's agent in South America. He is a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. We had the pleasure of receiving him at the Ashram recently, with two of his friends. He writes :



*T. F. Lorgus*

"During the many years I have been acquainted with Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and His teachings. I have seen myself in imagination very often physically at the side of His couch in His chamber, practising His *tratak* and meditating, as

well as climbing the sacred hill of Arunachala, exactly as it now happened to me unexpectedly ; I had no idea of the possibility of my going to India and to Sri Ramanasramam. So, I feel certain that this materialisation of my eager desire to be close to the Master and 'feel' those places where He lived, is due to His spontaneous Grace manifested to me.

"It is very difficult to explain in words the inner changes one goes through after having actually been in those places where the Sage lived in His simplicity. One feels vividly His presence and it becomes easy to enter into concentration and meditation, leaving behind the body and all *samsara*, in other words, to eliminate the ego. While there, I met many foreign visitors who had had similar experiences.

"Myself and the two Brazilian friends who stayed one day at the Ashram are very grateful to those responsible for its administration ; they gave us a warm welcome and we hereby thank all of them.

"Unfortunately we had to put up with the heat at the Ashram, but I was surprised at my endurance, and I remember with deep gratitude the cool and refreshing living room at Mrs. Osborne's bungalow near the Ashram and her loving help and kindness in clearing certain points of Bhagavan's teachings which are not so easy to grasp because we attempt to do so by the use of our minds and intellect, which I learned is an impossibility, as Bhagavan Himself taught. I eagerly look forward to my next visit to this sacred Ashram for a longer stay."

T. F. LORGUS, Brazil.

\* \* \* \*

A decade ago, a frequent visitor from New Delhi to the Ashram with her child, *Shivaji*, was

*Smt. Madhuri Sondhi*. She was always received at the Ashram with warmth and sympathy. Her husband, a reputed professor and politician,



*Smt. Madhuri Sondhi*

*Prof. M. L. Sondhi*, is also a devotee of Sri Bhagavan and was for some time the Vice-President of Ramana Kendra in New Delhi. *Smt. Madhuri* is the Editor of *Shakti*, published from the capital of India. We were very happy to receive Sri and *Smt. Sondhi* with their two sons one evening in January. Their short stay was fruitfully used by

them in meditating at Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace and at the Old Hall. She writes :

"We were able to pay only a brief visit to the Ashram without advance information and even though our visit was so short, we found those few hours so rewarding that we would not have missed them for anything in the world. We attended the prayers in the early morning at Maharshi's Shrine (we are seeing it for the first time) and were struck by the Temple design with its emphasis on space, and light — the latter extending even to the illuminated representations of Bhagavan. We also spent some time in the Old Meditation Hall, and were drawn into its vibrant and intimate atmosphere. It was a beautiful experience for our children, especially, as in Delhi they cannot even dream of anything so profoundly peaceful. We are ever grateful to the unfailing courtesy and hospitality of the Ashram."



*Prof. M. L. Sondhi*

SMT. MADHURI SONDHI.  
New Delhi.

\* \* \* \*

The whole family of *Sri H. C. Khanna* of Kanpur (introduced to our readers in our issue of April, 1970), are earnest devotees of Sri Bhagavan. Almost every year some members of his family including children visit the Ashram and stay for a month or more. This year too, *Sri H. C. Khanna's* eldest son, *Sri Ranvir Khanna*, though himself unable to come, sent his family to the Ashram — *Smt. Uma*

Rani Khanna, Alka, Anil and Vinni. They were happy to participate in the 96th Birthday celebrations of Sri Bhagavan at the Ashram on December 20. Smt. Uma Rani Khanna was accompanied by Smt. Kusum Kapur (Sri N. C. Khanna's only daughter) with her son, Rajnesh and daughter, Shivani. Smt. Kusum Kapur and her children had to leave earlier.



Khanna Family : (l. to r.): Anil, Alka, Smt. Uma Rani Khanna and Vinni. (Inset): Alka.

The following is from Alka Khanna, fourteen year old daughter of Sri Ranvir Khanna :

"Through the devout efforts of our grandfather and our father we had the fortunate opportunity of devoting ourselves to Sri Bhagavan even from our childhood. We are made to memorize passages

from Bhagavan's teachings and we have to recite at least some of them every day. We are told that when we grow up we will understand the significance of those passages and that it would be enough now if we simply get them by heart and repeat them every day. This is my second visit to the Ashram and I am already so much attracted to it and to Arunachala that I feel I will have to repeat my visits every year.

"The happiest part of my stay at the Ashram this time was, in addition to going round the Hill, going to the top of the Hill and offering worship to the Sacred Feet of Arunachala on top of the Hill. I have heard that Bhagavan evinced interest in enquiring of people who had gone to the top whether they had seen the Holy Feet there. Hence though the climbing up was difficult, the feeling of doing the most sacred act filled me with joy and fulfilment. I was, of course, accompanied by my mother, brother, sister and Uncle Ganeshan. I cannot but mention here that but for Uncle Ganeshan we could not have accomplished this sacred and arduous task. He kindly guided us daily to the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan with agarbathis and induced us to attend the Veda Parayana and puja to Sri Bhagavan.

"When the day to leave approached I felt so sad; but, I could console myself that the Ashram is our HOME to which we could return whenever we really feel an urge to visit it. Sri Bhagavan is there to receive us, attend to our needs—both material and spiritual—and look after us more than our own father and mother. This visit has definitely helped me in all ways to stabilize and strengthen myself. My devotion to Sri Bhagavan has become purposeful and I am now really drawn to Him. I only pray that He showers His Grace on me and on all of us, so that we could stick on to Him, as iron pieces to magnet!"

ALKA KHANNA  
Bombay.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another interesting visitor this time was Dr. M. S. Rao, a research-scientist, till recently connected with the Government of India Khadi Board, as Adviser on Village Industries. He belongs to a family deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan. He was with us for ten days in February and he writes as under :

"Though coming from a family of devotees of Bhagavan, and my uncle, Dr. M. Anantanarayana Rao, had built a house in Ramana Nagar in the forties, it was not my good fortune to visit the

place hallowed by the Greatest Spiritual Teacher of our time — till this month. The visit has now fulfilled my utmost spiritual aspiration. Though Bhagavan's physical presence is missing, this is more than compensated by His Immense Spiritual Presence which inspires every one who visits this Ashram. Bhagavan's message has spread far and wide over the entire world and thousands of pilgrims are flocking to drink deep in it. The Ashram authorities have developed the necessary amenities to meet the situation. I wish the Ashram further success in future in the most worthy task they have undertaken."

—Dr. M. S. Rao, Bombay.

*Senora Esther A. Cordoba* from Argentina, an earnest devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi, paid her second visit to the Ashram and spent here three quiet months devoted solely to sadhana. On leaving the Ashram she has the following to share with our readers:



*Esther Cordoba*

"I heard about Sri Ramana Maharshi from my Argentine guru the Fandro Eru and from reading different books by Arthur Osborne and Paul Brunton. So I spent some time at the Ashram in 1970. Suddenly I felt identified with all and knew I would return. With the Grace of Sri Bhagavan I did return in December 1975 to spend a little more time here. Immediately on arrival I felt the powerful vibration and magnetism of the Arunachala Mountain and the divine Grace of Sri Ramana Maharshi. A great change came over me transporting me into a world of peace and love and much more security. My perception became more clear and I felt as if I was drinking from a sacred source and felt so grateful that all the time I kept on saying: Thank you Bhagavan for the possibility of living at the Ashram, an oasis 'Ramana' in the middle of a desert where the thirsty for a spiritual life come from all over the world to quench their thirst.

"I would also like to thank Mrs. Osborne for her motherly care when I came to her sick and badly in need in being looked after.

"I cannot imagine now how it will be possible for me to live far away from here. I know that

There has been a regular flow of visitors during the last quarter and it continues to be so till today. Some of them keep on returning and finding this abode of our Master, their HOME! We also have given in brackets the duration of their stay for information:

Mrs. Trudel Elsaesser, West Germany (1 month)  
Miss Hannie Meier, Switzerland (2 months)  
Miss Diana Sundin, France (4 months)  
Mrs. Christa Scholz, West Germany (4 months)  
Mr. Jochen Anthuber, West Germany (3 months)  
Mr. & Mrs. Hibschenberger, West Germany (1 month)  
Mr. & Mrs. Heinz Andre, West Germany (1 month)  
Mr. & Mrs. Gausmann, West Germany, (2 months)  
Miss Claudine Bigot, France (3 months)  
Mr. Randy Sindelmann, U. S. A. (2 months)  
Mr. Eric A. Bijdendyk, Holland (1 month)  
Mr. & Mrs. Pegler, England (1 month)  
Mrs. Helga Kalldrof, West Germany (2 months)  
Jaffie Jeanine Ann-Marie, U. S. A. (1 month)  
Barry Mc Queney, U. S. A. (3 weeks)  
Rudi Bernatzki, West Germany (3 weeks)  
Sri and Smt. Ratna Navaratnam, Sri Lanka (2 weeks)  
T. Navarathnam, Sri Lanka (2 weeks)  
Swami Sadasivananda, Rishikesh (1 month)  
Sri Ra. Ganapathi, Madras (1 week)

Bhagavan is everywhere and distance does not matter; yet the magnetic current is powerful. When in Argentina I will raise my eyes to the sky I am sure to perceive that Bhagavan Ramana and the Arunachala Mountain are in my heart and my heart is in Bhagavan and the Arunachala Mountain.

"Thank you and the Ashramites for everything. They are the loving spiritual family of Bhagavan."

—ESTHER A. CORDOBA, Argentina.

*Sri Satyanarayana Tandon* of Kanpur, a staunch elderly devotee who pays every year a visit to the Ashram which he considers his 'Home', stayed at the Ashram for two months from December onwards, along with his wife. Being a printer and publisher he has brought out a booklet containing the transliterated version in Hindi of *Aksharamanamalai* (The Marital Garland of Letters), with meaning in English and offered it at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan.



## OBITUARY

## MAURICE FRYDMAN

Born in Poland near about 1900, *Maurice Frydman* graduated from the Sorbonne University in Paris as an Engineer and immediately went to India where he spent the rest of his life, out of sheer love for the country, its people and its philosophy of Absolute Salvation by the Direct method of Vedanta.

From 1935 he led a very busy life in India with a touch of real genius. He started the Bakolite



*Maurice Frydman*

factory in Bangalore, invented the *Dhanush Takli* (bow-shaped *charka*) in co-operation with Mahatma Gandhi, tried to improve on the elementary education of Andhra Pradesh, constructed a major part of a 36-spindles *charka* on which a whole family might work simultaneously and even for some time he was the

Dewan (Chief Minister) of one small Indian State, Oundh in Maharashtra.

Frydman's religious propensities were not less diversified, than his material ones. In 1925 he got converted from Judaism to Christianity in the Liberal Catholic Church, founded by Theosophist bishops and was ordained a priest in it. But before long he became the chief expounder of J. Krishnamurti's thoughts in India, only to turn an earnest devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi with whom he had stayed many times since 1935. He became *Bharatananda*<sup>1</sup> wearing an ochre robe about this time, but he gave it up soon after as of no significance. Comparatively recently he took to translating into English the advaitic teaching of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj of Bombay and last year published his book: *I Am That*, in very chaste English.

We are grieved at the loss of such a many-sided genuine seeker of Truth in his own way. May he rest in Peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Maharshi!

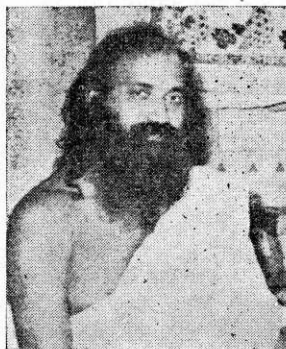
## KODURU VENKATARATNAM

We are sad to announce the premature death of *Koduru Venkataratnam*, one of the devotees who had the rare privilege of being a personal attendant of Sri Bhagavan during His last years.

Born in 1922, he came to Bhagavan in 1942 and dedicated himself to spiritual life. After Bhagavan's *Brahma Nirvana* in 1950, he travelled all over India and came into close contact with many evolved souls, like Sri Sankaracharya of Puri and Sri Avadhutendra Saraswati. He was of great help to younger *sadhakas*, as he himself lead a life of utter purity and discipline.

Due to physical ailments Venkataratnam was

almost bed-ridden for the last three years and was relieved of the burden of a sick body on February 18, at his sister's place in Kavutaram in Andhra Pradesh.



*Venkataratnam*

We learn from Sri Neal Rosner, his devoted disciple, who had been his personal attendant throughout, that the end was remarkably peaceful

and that he was in a trance when he passed away and that his face and eyes glowed with spiritual effulgence as he merged at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

## PROF. R. SADASIVA AIYAR

We deeply regret to record the passing away in Bombay, at a ripe old age of *Prof. R. Sadasiva Aiyar*, a dear friend of the Ashram and a great devotee of Sri Bhagavan. Readers of *The Mountain Path* will recall the very illuminating contributions<sup>2</sup> from his pen appearing in the journal from time to time.

After a brilliant academic career in the first decade of this century he chose teaching as his vocation and joined the Maharaja's College, Mysore, where he had the privilege of working with such distinguished teachers as Professors Radhakrishnan, Hirianna and Radhakumud Mukherjee. Later he joined the famous Deccan Education Society of Poona and taught in colleges at Sangli and Poona.

The last years of his life were spent in meditation and in imparting his rich insights into the *philosophia perennis* to a few choice friends. His one great occupation towards the end was studying the writings of Bhagavan and contemplating on Him. He now rests for ever at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan.

<sup>1</sup> an article by him appears in this issue.

<sup>2</sup> his last contribution on *Gajendra Moksha* appears in this issue.

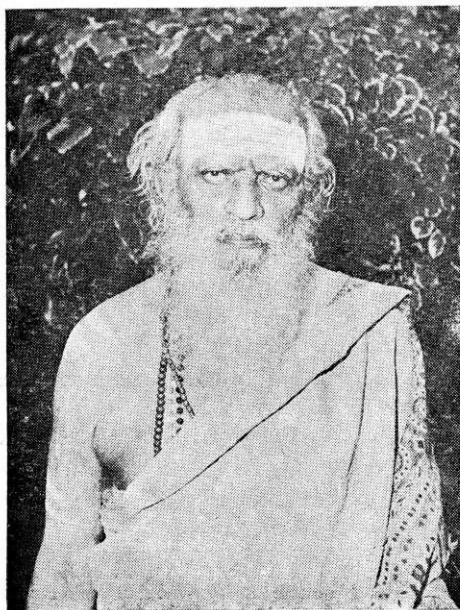
## INTRODUCING....

....Swami Dhirananda Saraswati

Swami Dhirananda Saraswati had heard of Bhagavan Ramana even from 1908 from a relative of his previous *ashrama* (stage of life) one Krishna Dikshitar, who was a devotee and frequent visitor of Bhagavan. He used to narrate to him of his experiences in the presence of Bhagavan, whom he ranked with Dakshināmurti and Sankara.

Once, on such an occasion, he went into a trance and the hearer also shared the ecstasy with him. But it was only in 1923 that he had his first darshan of Bhagavan.

He joined Mahatma Gandhi's movement for *Swaraj* (freedom) in 1921 and engaged himself in the production and propagation of *Khadi*. As such he had with him Rs. 3,000 worth of *Khadi* then for disposal before Dipavali; but at the suggestion of a friend he started for Tiruvannamalai, hoping to return to his work in three days. But on reaching the Ashram, where it is situated now, he was overpowered by the divine atmosphere of Bhagavan



Swami Dhirananda Saraswati



and stayed on for three weeks forgetting everything about the work he had undertaken. Reminded of his work he returned late but the stock of *Khadi* with him got disposed of in no time and he bought and sold a further consignment worth Rs. 1,000. He had a sample of how Bhagavan takes care of those who forget themselves in Him.

He then went to Uttarakasi in the Himalayas to stabilise his experience in the presence of Bhagavan. He had the benefit of the elevating company of Swami Tapovan Maharaj there for five years and studied Vedanta under him. He went to Kashmir and stayed there for a year with the Swamiji. He had the good fortune of meeting there a great

Siddha, Nagananda Yogiraj (in his 96th year) and his guru's Guru, Sitaram Gosai at Kollimalai in the south.

In 1929 he again joined the Congress and got imprisoned for two years. He returned to Uttarakasi and stayed on there for six years. He then had to take care of his mother who passed away in 1937. He was again a political prisoner for two years. All these years he was visiting Bhagavan off and on. He served the Ashram during the Kumbhabhishekam of the Mother's temple in 1949 and was able to get 40 bags of rice for the function along with a co-worker, Krittivas, during a period of acute rice-rationing.

Immediately after Mahatma Gandhi's tragic end he went to the Ashram and stayed there for a month to get over his shock. He began to stay for longer periods at the Ashram and was present

during the Mahanirvana of Sri Bhagavan. In 1952, he went back to the Himalayas, was initiated in *sannyasa* by Swami Sivananda Saraswati at Hrishikesh and returned to the south in 1964.

From then onwards he became a constant visitor to the Ashram. Apart from his own experiences he had heard from his *sannyasa-guru*, Swami Sivananda Saraswati and *vidya-guru* (Swami Tapovan Maharaj) of the unique greatness of Bhagavan and decided to stay permanently at the Ashram in 1971 and the wish got fulfilled in February 1975.

He is now a permanent resident-devotee here, devoted to Bhagavan and the Mother, spending his time in *sadhana*. As one who took *sannyasa* direct from *brahmacharya* he is sound in body and mind in his 95th year now and promises to give the pleasure of his genial company to all co-devotees for many more years.

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## THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Statement about ownership and other particulars about *The Mountain Path* according to Form IV, Rule 8, Circular of the Registrar of Newspapers for India :

1. *Place of Publication* — Madras-18 ; 2. *Periodicity of its Publication* — Quarterly ; 3. *Printer's Name* — T. V. Venkataraman ; *Nationality* — Indian ; *Address* — The Jupiter Press Private Limited, 109-C, Mount Road, Madras-18 ; 4. *Publisher's Name* — T. N. Venkataraman ; *Nationality* — Indian ; *Address* — 109-C, Mount Road, Madras-18 ; 5. *Editor's Name* — Viswanatha Swami ; *Nationality* — Indian ; *Address* — Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai ; 6. *Names and Addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than 1% of the total capital* — SRI RAMANASRAMAM, Tiruvannamalai.

I, T. N. Venkataraman, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date : 30-3-1976.

Signature of the Publisher : (Sd.) T. N. VENKATARAMAN.

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# Letters to the Editor

Replies by Lucia Osborne

## ĀTMA VICHĀRA AND JAPA

For some months now I have been practising the type of meditation called *ātma-vichāra* as recommended by Bhagavan. In the beginning I concentrated on the enquiry 'Who am I?' and tried to meet each thought that arose in the mind by the further question 'To whom does this thought occur?' and so on. But I had some disturbing visions which made me change my approach. I tried instead to concentrate on a mental image of Bhagavan as obtained by a careful study of his photograph chanting his name at the same time as in a traditional *japa* whenever I had any such disturbance. Simultaneously I continued the Self-enquiry. This yielded better results. Soon I was able to pass into a kind of comatose condition when I seemed detached from the world. I was able to remain in this state for about an hour. It seemed to me that I should pursue *ātma-vichāra* for the whole day examining every thought and action if I were to progress in this field. At this stage my body began to protest and its distemper was indicated by palpitations, rise in blood pressure and so forth. Some kind friends I consulted assured me that these symptoms were indicative of some mistake in the technique of meditation. They advised me to seek guidance. I wonder if you could put me on the right track.

A devotee from Madras.

If you have been having disturbing visions during the practice of *Ātma-vichāra* you might also have asked to whom these visions appeared. When there is disturbance of any kind it is advisable to turn to Bhagavan in the heart, the spiritual heart on the right side of the chest which is also all-pervading. This is the safest focussing point which will remove all disturbance and keep you safe. It is said that in this age of Kali-yuga invocation is a very powerful aid and can lead to liberation. Chanting Bhagavan's name as in a traditional *japa* is good but it should be done wholeheartedly and one-pointedly without practising anything else at the same time. Even if the invocation seems not to bring much response to start with if one perseveres in a spirit of surrender the spark in the cold ashes of the heart may burst into flame till the very bones melt

as saints express it. You can follow this up with the *vichāra* whenever disturbing thoughts arise.

A 'comatose' condition may also indicate a kind of yogic sleep when one experiences a kind of happiness of being detached from the world but it leads nowhere.

\* \* \* \*

## HOW TO SURRENDER

For 15 years I have struggled to erase the feeling of 'this is me'. Killing the ego is not an easy thing. I enclose copies of the pages in which His words are recorded. I ask for help. Bhagavan says that partial surrender is possible for all. In course of time that will lead to complete surrender. This method seems best for me. Please send me the book called *Spiritual Instruction* and instruct me in detail how to surrender oneself to God.

A devotee from New York.

You ask for detailed instruction how to surrender. Sri Ramana Maharshi's replies, copies of which you enclosed, are detailed enough and simple. All that is necessary is determination and steadfastness. If you feel you are helpless by yourself, continue performing your spiritual practices sincerely, patiently not worrying about results which you can leave safely to Sri Ramana. This will be partial surrender. He assured us that earnest effort never fails so it is only a matter of time and perseverance and above all, patience. You can fortify your surrender with prayer and whatever helps you to surrender. Remembering Bhagavan in the heart will give you the necessary strength. Help comes to an earnest seeker. It is said that the Guru is lying in wait for an earnest seeker in order to help him. The book, *Spiritual Instruction*, has been posted to you.

\* \* \* \*

## 'I' AND SELF

Conceptual confusion hinders practice in getting rid of concepts. The word 'I' appears to be used to refer both to ego and to Self. I cannot always tell from the context in books from Sri Ramanasramam how the word is being used. I cannot re-

solve the apparent contradiction in the statements :  
'I am the ego' and 'I am not the doer'.

If the enclosed lines are comprehensible I would be grateful for your comments and correction of the ideas expressed.

JOSEPH M. HEIKOFF,  
U.S.A.

*The word 'I' does not refer both to ego and the Self. We identify ourselves with the ego or individuality out of ignorance. 'To inhere in one's own Being where the "I" or ego is dead is the perfect state', says Sri Ramana Maharshi. You have answered your own question*

*But who  
is the 'I'  
of the 'my'?  
But who  
Is the 'I'  
That knows? Who am I?  
Answer  
I am  
'I-I'.*

*This is an intellectual answer which has to become living experience. Then you will realise that you are the all pervading unlimited Self designated as far as words can express it by 'I-I'. If you read carefully the books on Bhagavan's teaching you will find no such statements as 'I am the ego-I or I know the ego-I' for that is myself. When ignorance is dispelled through investigation or whatever spiritual practice is followed sincerely and onepointedly you will know at first intellectually, then experience intuitively that you are the SELF without limitations. You are neither the ego nor the doer. There is only the SELF.*

\* \* \* \*

#### TURN TO HIM IN YOUR HEART

As I have been growing up (I am 21 years old) I have noticed that my sexual instincts are not as normal as they should be and I find myself attracted to certain persons of my own sex both in a sensual and in an ideal platonic way. This has been growing in me since about the age of 15-16 years. I have been trying to suppress it but alas it just gets worse, and keeping it to myself and not being able to speak to anybody about it does no good at all... There is a strong and growing movement over here called the GAY society which is slowly and gradually trying to get the laws changed on discrimination against homosexuals, so that they will be accepted as a normal part of society and I just

don't know whether to become one of their crowd and identify with them or to try to win over this homosexual problem by treading the spiritual path and hopefully receiving God's grace. . . . I was wondering how Bhagavan's Grace could be contacted by one so far away. . . . In me here is also a great spiritual ideal not to be born again on this earth and so I must absolutely conform to God's will: . . . Is for instance homosexuality the sign of a dying nation? I just don't know, I am not wise, intuition does not call on me so I seek help from a god-ordained response to prayer from Sri Bhagavan's disciples.

Anything at all you have to say will be gratefully received as I am in urgent need of truth, aren't we all? . . .

I look forward to your reply by the grace of Sri Bhagavan.

A devotee from U.K.

*When the homosexual urge gets the better of you turn to the Beloved in your heart who is also male and everything else — Bhagavan. You are not far away from Him. He is always with you in your own heart watching over you and always ready to help a sincere devotee. Pray to Him, call to Him silently or loudly (invocation), pray to Him, the best of Friends, the Beloved, the core of your being and He will not forsake you but remove your distress in the measure of your earnestness and devotion.*

*Homosexuality is not a sign of a dying nation but rather of this age of decline the Kali-Yuga where perverted urges and neuroses are much in evidence. But it is also said that fortunate are those born in this age because by simply remembering in the heart and invoking God's name one may gain liberation and not be born again.*

\* \* \*

#### AN APPRECIATION

Allow me to put on record my sincere appreciation of the Editorial in the January 76 edition of *The Mountain Path*. The emphasis on Pure Awareness as the one and only ever-present Reality is so apt that it is often lost in a welter of words. The final paragraph sums it all up beautifully.

My reason for writing at this time is that, as a longstanding reader of *The Mountain Path*, it has been 'felt' from time to time that articles are laying stress on the religious pivot of their authors regardless of the central theme of the Maharshi,

namely, to concentrate one's quest on the discovery of the origin of the I-sense. His specific statement that in the end God, Guru and Self are one and the same is in accord with the Buddha's pointing of the Way to the Unconditioned. The Maharshi's use of the term 'Self' is clearly equivalent to the Pure Awareness realised by the Editorial-writer, a

glimpse of the Unconditioned wherein there is no mental activity with its subject-object duality. Other writers frequently refer to Awareness of something which is worldly or even heavenly but not Realisation.

— LAWRENCE H. EWELS,  
London.

## **In the Blowing Out of a Flame**

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This book examines the attempts of the Buddha and those who have followed him over the past 2,000 years, to satisfy man's social, cultural and psychic needs. In approaching the history of Buddhism and its founder from the socio-cultural rather than the religious angle, the author challenges the widely accepted interpretations, religious and academic, of ancient works. Buddhism is going through a period of challenge while growing Western interest of eastern religions has produced a Buddhism designed to appeal to that interest. Buddha's teaching has, as a result, tended to be obscured.

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