Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!
5. The One Self, the Sole Reality, alone exists eternally. When even the Ancient Teacher, Dakshinamurti, revealed It through speechless eloquence, who else could convey it by speech?

— Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
"Though I beg, Thou art callous and dost not condescend. I pray Thee! say to me ‘Fear not!’ Oh Arunachala!"
—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 21

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!"
—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1.

Vol. VI JANUARY 1969 No. 1

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GRACE IN WORDS: The Verse in Telugu and Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece is the facsimile of Bhagavan's own handwriting.

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

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
IT is normal to a man to feel his individual selfhood, that is to feel and react as an ego. It is possible to have an intuition of pure Being, not individualized. So long as one believes in the reality of the ego, pure Being will appear as 'other' and be called 'God', because it is indeed other than the ego. When the ego is felt or perceived to be unreal, pure Being will be felt to be real and be called 'Self'. It is not a question of whether there is a God apart from you but whether there is a you apart from God.

The question for each person is whether he regards himself as a real being. If he does he sets up an image of that being. But that image is imaginary, as the term implies, and as such is necessarily unreal and cannot endure. It must break itself against Reality (which is one of the names of God). It may seem to be broken by Reality, but in fact it breaks itself by asserting the imagined reality of itself. Such an assertion of what cannot be against what inevitably is leads only to frustration. Bhagavan said that in adding 'Thy Will be done' to a prayer it is well to remember that it will be done, whether we say so or not. The Divine Will, which is the necessary harmony, will necessarily take place.

Pure Being, equipped with 'my' faculties and tendencies (the faculties and tendencies of each individual 'the'), is shaping them towards perfection. "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect," Christ said. However the unreal image of itself which the ego is moulding does not agree with the divine likeness of the perfected self, so it has to be broken down. The more a person's imaginary picture of himself diverges from the true pattern 'made in the likeness of God', the more he will become thwarted and frustrated and tend to become embittered against fate as in the quaint Authorised Version of Christ's saying, "he kicketh against the pricks". On the other hand, the more a person accepts the path of his true nature, the more grace and blessing he finds upon his life. This acceptance does not need to be conscious and doctrinally informed: it may
be a mute humility, submitting unquestioningly to the dim intuition of purity.

The perfect fulfilment of the individual’s wishes comes when he has ceased to have any wishes. That is to say when he has ceased to have any self-will to oppose to the Universal Will or Divine Harmony. There have been cases where a saint, even while still on the dualistic level of worshipper and Worshipped, has declared that God has such love for him as to grant him whatever he asks for. But if one studies the life of such a one, one will find that none of the things asked for were egoistic. One may even find that this overwhelming feeling of Divine Benevolence was not inconsistent with poverty, sickness or imprisonment. It simply never occurred to him to plead against such things. Since no opposition is set up any longer to the flow of Universal Being manifesting through ‘my’ faculties, no opposition has to be broken down and no frustration caused.

The same liberality is proclaimed in the scriptures and by the Enlightened as befalling the non-dualist so soon as he renounces opposition to the flow of Grace. Some devotees were speaking to Bhagavan once about shortage of funds at the Ashram and he said: "If I gave a single thought to the need for money so much would come in that you could not count it." Once during his last illness Sri Viswanathion (introduced in our issue of January 1967) said: "If Bhagavan would give just one thought to getting better the sickness would end," and he replied in a tone of disgust: "Who could have such a thought?" The meaning was: "Who could have a self-will to oppose to the Divine Will shown in the flow of events?" Even in the smallest things (and it was only in the smallest things that anything approaching a wish could be discerned) there was this immediate fulfilment. If he took up a book to refer to some passage it would normally open at the very page he needed. He remarked to an attendant on the need for a note-book and K. K. Nambiar (introduced in our issue of July 1966) dreamed that he needed one and brought one next morning. He happened to mention oranges at the Ashram and some one sent a crate of them next day. In general he did not express wishes; he had none to express.

One who has renounced the ego has thereby escaped frustration. He feels the nullity of the ego and at the same time, whether it is a paradox or not, he feels the Divine Benevolence and the fulfilment to which he has been brought.

**Visitor:** God is said to be immanent, how do you justify your confining Him to the heart?

**Bhagavan:** God is said to reside in the Heart in the same way as you are said to reside in your body. Yet Heart is not a place. Some place must be named as the dwelling of God for those who take their bodies for themselves and who comprehend only relative knowledge. The fact is neither God nor we occupy any space. We are bodiless and spaceless in deep sleep, yet in the waking state we appear to be the opposite. Annam or Paramatman is that from which the body is born, in which it lives and into which it finally resolves.

— From *Guru Ramana.*
If comparative religion is a fairly recent subject of study it is because the need for it is recent. For most of known history the world has been divided into a number of separate cultures or civilizations each based on its own religion and knowing practically nothing about each other. As recently as two centuries ago an average Christian scarcely knew that there was a religion called Buddhism and had probably never heard of Taoism. The only two non-Christian religions that he might conceivably come in contact with were Judaism and Islam, and even of them his knowledge was very little and grossly distorted. If the representatives of a religion taught that theirs was the only true doctrine and the only valid way, they were not really to be blamed, because it was the only truth that they or their followers were likely to come in contact with. To-day the situation has completely changed. The spread of a one-world civilization has come about so rapidly that an average Christian has only to go to the nearest public library to get a score of books about Buddhism. In the former state of affairs it was not necessary to study comparative religion; in the present there is urgent need for inter-religious understanding. If the representatives of each religion continue to claim a monopoly of truth they are no longer justified by lack of contact with other religions but, on the contrary, are wilfully rejecting such contact in order to protect their blindness. Such an attitude, formerly harmless, has now become dangerous, because if each religion is going to decry others and claim a unique position for itself the effect on non-believers will be to make them decide that all religions are equally untrue. This is a very real danger.

The militant representatives of all three proselytising religions—Buddhism, Christianity and Islam (to give them in chronological and alphabetical order)—must know in their hearts that they will never draw every one into their own camp, but do they realize that they risk alienating people from every camp?

In the present state of the world it is no use telling people that only one religion is valid, because too much knowledge of other religions is available. It is also no use telling them that all religions are the same, because they are so obviously not the same, they differ in so many points of doctrine and ethics. What is needed is to impart understanding of them and show how different structures can be erected on the same substratum of truth or different mountain paths lead to the same peak. That is to say, that it is urgently necessary to impart not merely information but understanding about the various religions. In this domain there is no such thing as ‘the facts of the case’. Facts can be very misleading. What is needed is to understand the viewpoint from which each religion starts. It is like a group of white-robed dancers on a stage. If one section of the audience sees them through a screen of blue celophane, another green and another red, most people in each section will really believe that the dancers are.

1 There are cases, as in India and China, where religions co-existed: a Kabir or Nanak could appreciate Sufism, a Dara Shikoh write of the merging of the two seas, a Taoist expound Buddhism, but by and large the religions, with the cultures based on them, remained separate.

2 In fact he is very likely to have a Buddhist society in his home town and the Buddhist a Christian missionary in his.
the colour they see and that the other section must be perverse to argue otherwise. Some years back a book was published by F. H. Hilliard called 'The Buddha, the Prophet and the Christ'. The author, after discussing which of the three had the best right to be considered a Divine Man, comes down, with much satisfaction, on the side of Christianity. Now this is the kind of comparative religion which, by foisting the author's own misunderstanding on others, is not only unhelpful, but downright harmful. I do not say that the author was arguing unfairly; he was not, he was trying very hard to be fair; but he was unconsciously biased by the fact that his argument was entirely from the viewpoint of his own religion, like the people seeing the dancers only through a blue or a red screen. What he overlooked is that, of the three religions compared, Christianity is the only one based primarily on the conception of the Divine Man. Islam is based rather on the conception of a revealed scripture, and if a Muslim had written the book its title might have been: "The Gospels, the Sutras and the Quran as revealed scripture"; and Islam would have won. If a Buddhist had written it, it might have been: the Sermon on the Mount, the Shari'at and the Noble Eightfold Path as a way to Beatitude, and supremacy would have gone to Buddhism. The role of the teacher of comparative religion would be to explain that the three religions mentioned start from different viewpoints and show what those viewpoints are. And that is not an easy thing to do.

This means that although the teaching of comparative religion has become urgently necessary in our age, it may not be at all easy to find people competent to teach it. More factual information is obviously not enough. It is the attitude of mind of the teacher that is more important.

With a few honourable exceptions the subject has not had a good record in the past. It began in the 19th century when Europe's intellectuals were expected to be atheist or agnostic, the century of Freud, Darwin and Marx; and its early exponents, the school of Frazer's 'Golden Bough', were seeking to undermine Christianity and religion in general by showing that the so-called higher religions had grown out of what were then thought to be 'primitive superstitions' (though they were debased remnants of religion). Later comparative religion fell largely into the hands of proselytisers whose aim was to belittle or disprove all religions except their own. It is a shameful fact that some of its chairs, even some of the most eminent, still remain in such hands.

This raises the very important question whether and on what basis professors of comparative religion can be expected to grade the religions. It is a terribly presumptuous thing to do — to set oneself up in judgement over the religions. On the other hand, since they differ in doctrine, can they be accepted as different paths to the same ultimate Truth? I suggest applying Christ's criterion, that is "By their fruits you shall know them." This applies to religions as well as individuals. If a tree produces mangoes I shall still believe it to be a mango tree however cleverly my neighbour may argue that mango trees grow only in his garden. To put it differently, anything that performs its function is satisfactory. The function of a fountain pen is to hold ink and to write, and one that does so is therefore satisfactory while one that fails to is not, even though it may be of solid gold.

So now we are driven back to the question what is the function of religion. I suggest that it is twofold, horizontal and vertical. Horizontally it is to establish a harmonious way of life for a community, regulating personal relations, social conditions, education, law, etc. Vertically it is to provide pathways to Beatitude. Each facilitates the other; the harmonious way of life facilitates the quest of Beatitude for those who undertake it, while the perennial flow of Grace through those who attain Beatitude maintains the Divine Spirit in the way of life and counteracts the
natural tendency of all institutions to petrify. Without the vertical modality, the horizontal will rapidly become lifeless and unjust; but without the horizontal the vertical can still persist. The horizontal modality of religion is almost defunct in all religions to-day. There are few if any communities know of which it could be said that they follow a Christian way of life, or an Islamic, or a Buddhist, or a Hindu. Life in our one-world civilization has been secularized. Education, finance and civil and criminal law have been withdrawn from the custody of religion. To pronounce on the horizontal modality of any religion we would have to consult the historian; and even in doing that we would have to check his prejudices as well as his facts, because the same pattern of life can be depicted in various lights.

But the vertical modality of religion, the ascent to Beatitude, still remains; and this brings us back to the subject of comparative religion, because I suggest that the possibility of attaining Beatitude under the guidance of any religion is the proof of its validity. A religion which can produce a St. Francis or a Meister Eckhart is a true religion whether its doctrinal theory seems acceptable to me or not. So is one which can produce a Ramakrishna or a Ramana Maharshi. If you object that it has not made a St. Francis out of you, the reply is that that is your fault; once it is established that, given suitable material, a religion can produce a St. Francis the blame for its not doing so in any specific case cannot be imputed to the religion.

Suppose a group of people in Bangalore are discussing the possibility of going to Delhi by road or rail or air, the discussion of the practicability of any of these routes ends as soon as some one can be produced who has taken it. What remains is only the explanation of how he did so. Similarly, as soon as it can be shown that some one has attained a beatific state through any religion there ceases to be any question whether it is possible to do so and the task of the professor of comparative religion becomes to explain how it can be done rather than to argue whether it can be done.

There is one qualification to this; that is that a path to Beatitude may have been valid in some religion but have got overgrown and lost through disuse. Because religions do not progress. In spiritual power they degenerate. This is true always of all religions, though it is also true that so long as there is sufficient spiritual vitality in a religion it is periodically restored by Divine Grace. Sri Krishna told Arjuna that he had taught that same yoga to the ancient royal sages that he was now teaching to him, but it had been lost through long lapse of time. That is what happens. He also proclaimed: “Whenever dharma is eclipsed and adharma prevails I manifest Myself.” That also is what happens. Before asserting the possibility of going to Delhi by train it would be necessary not only to produce some one who once went that way but to check whether the track is still usable or has since been washed away by floods. Before asserting the validity of a religion the professor of comparative religion would have to check up that it not only produced great saints centuries ago but still can to-day. If he is to do this successfully and thus bring real benefit to his students he should be a mango-eater in Ramakrishna’s use of the term. You will remember that Ramakrishna said that, coming upon a mango-grove a sensible man will not waste his time counting trees and branches and leaves but will pick and eat a mango. People who talk about comparative religion can be classified at large into leaf-counters and mango-eaters; it is the latter that are needed. Also, to revert to what I said earlier about proselytism, what is needed is some one who can appreciate not only a mango but an apple or a peach as well, not some one who argues that because a mango is sweet an apple must be sour.

So the conclusion is that adequate teaching of comparative religion at the universities is urgently necessary but might not be very easy
to organize. One possibility in a multi-religious country like India might be to split the discipline up among exponents of different religions, each one lecturing on his own religion. But then there is the danger that it might strike the students as being like a bazaar with each shopkeeper crying up his own wares. It would be better if one single mango-eater with an appreciation for apples and peaches also could be found.

**Garland of Guru’s Sayings**

76. The Lord’s compassionate grace it is That impenetrable oblivion blots out Our countless former births each filled With griefs we suffered and inflicted.

77. Memory of the tale of troubles This present birth has brought on us Embitters, our whole life and makes Forgetfulness a thing to long for.

78. Shakti and svakti both are born Through the wondering mind’s conceiving. But in the Self’s Reality Beyond the mind’s bewildering play They are not, were not and will never be.

79. Ascribing individuality To realized muktas Is only learned folly. In the pure sky of Being Their separateness is but the shadow Cast by the separateness Of lookers-on still bound.

80. Since in the hearts of seekers of the Self Awareness as the sole true Being stands, And attachment to the body is no more, We cannot declare

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

“That One or this One is a peerless seer.”
Are seers but bodies and so more than one?

81. Ye who go round in eager search Of this Great Soul and that Great Soul to look at, Are not all Great Souls one Great Soul, The One within yourselves, your own To reach and know and be?

82. No matter what one’s penance or one’s powers, One is not a true seer effort-free But still remains a seeker As long as one feels tethered To a body of one’s own.

83. Without Self-knowledge which transcends All individuality, Vain, vain are wonder-working powers. These maddening gifts none seeks But those who have not known Identity with Self.

84. The seer consummated, formless, is the sum Of all the wonder-workers in the world. His are the many miracles that happen. He stands as silent witness of them all, This Dakshinamurti.
MAN has an innate feeling of a repository of vast power and energy, by whatever name he may call it. The different forms of religion are only different ways of venerating this Almighty Power. Among the Semitic peoples like the Jews and Muslims it is the power aspect, the grandeur of this unique, omnipotent, omniscient Power which is most emphasised. Among the Aryan peoples this Power is seen also as immanent in nature and in man who is a part of nature. It is stated in the Upanishads that in the beginning nothing existed but God, and therefore this whole cosmos with all that it contains is a manifestation or projection of the supreme Power of Paramatma. Buddha taught the in­exorable laws of causation, showing the whole of nature to be governed by these laws. Although he never mentioned God in his teaching, yet by Nirvana he indicated the nega­tion of not-God, that is of our illusory ego, and the possibility of merging in an ineffable cosmic state of bliss and consciousness. In all religions we find a common basis of unanimity that links them together or, in the words of Sri Krishna, binds them like jewels on a thread. In all we find the sense of an Omniscient, Omnipotent Power, by whatever name it be known.

However, what I wish to concentrate on particularly in this article is the teaching of service to mankind which stands out as a salient feature in every religion. Let us examine some of the principal religions from this angle.

In the Judeo-Christian scriptures it is stated that God made man in His own like­ness. From this it follows that service to man is equivalent to service to God. Christ made this still more explicit when, speaking of the weakest and most defenceless of his followers, the small children, he said: “inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of these you do it also to me.”

In Islam also service to mankind is given a prominent place and is reflected in the warm heart and noble conduct of Hazrat Muhammed himself. It is said in the Quran: “No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself. God will not love that man who does not love God’s creatures. He is the best beloved of God from whom the greatest good is derived to all man­kind.” And in another place it says: “Woe to those who pray but are heedless in their prayers, who make a show but refuse help to the needy.” Islam constantly enjoins surrender to God and service to mankind. It seeks to knit its followers together in a common brotherhood.

Coming next to Hinduism, we must remem­ber that by that we mean the ‘sanatana dharma’ or ‘eternal religion’ based on the Vedas and Upanishads. This teaches that a man is born with accumulated debts which he has to pay off by performing yagnas or sacrifices. These are of five kinds. The first is Brahmayajna by which we pay off our debt to the great Vedic seers or rishis on whom knowledge dawned and to whom we are indebted for our inherited lore. The second is pibriyajna, by which we pay off our debts to our ancestors. The third is devayajna by which debts are paid off to the gods or spirits. The fourth is bhutayajna by which we pay off our debts to all the beings of this

1 Bhagavad Gita, VII, 7.
The fifth and last, with which we are primarily concerned here, is nityanirjnya or the human debt by which we pay off our obligations to mankind. It was appreciated that the lives of men are closely interlinked. Our debt to mankind in general can be paid off by ministering to the needs of the poor, the hungry and the distressed. It is incumbent on every house-holder, therefore, to feed at least one such needy person before taking his own meal, if any such approaches him. It is also laid down that at least a tenth of one's income should be spent in charity. It is declared by the Lord that the hospitality which is to be considered a duty is that which is given to one who is not in a position to return it or who deserves it according to the conditions of time and place. This is indeed sattvic or pure-minded charity. We find also in the Vedas the unique example of the great rishi Dadhichi who sacrificed his very life for the good of mankind. Our actions and thoughts should be such as to cause happiness to others. One should remain aloof and cause pain and injury to none. This is indicated in the Gita where Sri Krishna says: "Dear to me is the man who causes no suffering to anybody and who himself is not swayed by pain or pleasure, fear or anger."  

The ethics of the Upanishads, from which Vedanta is derived, are sublime and lofty. They teach that the universal Paramatma resides in every individual heart and therefore every individual is basically the same. This is expressed, among other places, in the Brihadaranyak Upanishad in the dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi, where Yajnavalkya says: "Truly, it is not for the sake of the husband that the husband is loved but for the sake of the Self (in him); it is not for the sake of the wife that the wife is loved but for the sake of the Self (in her)." 

In dealing with Buddhism we have to remember that the Lord Buddha was born and brought up in the environment of Hindu tradition and culture. In the words of Rhys Davids: "Buddha was born and brought up, lived and died, as a Hindu. There was not much in the metaphysics and principles of Gautama which cannot be found in one or another of the orthodox systems, and a great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books."

Seen in this light, Buddhism can be regarded as an offshoot of Hinduism. Nevertheless, there is a peculiar sublimity in the recorded teachings of the Buddha. This can be seen in the following answer given by the Buddha to a disciple who asked him on what he should meditate. "Meditation is of five kinds: In the first place you should broaden the horizons of your mind in such a way as to embrace with love both friend and foe and the followers of all creeds and religions, always thinking that you may be of service to them all. The second is that you should realize in your mind the abysmal depth of misery into which mankind is plunged and therefore direct your thoughts to its mitigation and redress. Your whole life purpose should be the relief of this inexpressible distress of mankind (caused by tanha or clinging to desire). In the third kind of meditation you should associate your mind with the happiness and prosperity of other people. The fourth kind is on the mind's conception of sin and impurities. These are the outcome of weakness and ignorance. The egoistic sensual pleasures from the body are transitory, but the sins and impurities they engender are of a long-standing nature. The fifth kind of meditation is the highest. In this your mind should possess equanimity and poise. It should be in such a state that neither grief nor happiness, poverty nor prosperity may affect it. You should transcend all these pairs of opposites -- this duality confined in space and time -- and reach that ineffable state of peace and bliss which is indescribable and attained only by Nirvana." 

3 Bhagavad Gita, XII, 15.
Thus it will be seen that service to mankind forms, as it were, the central pivot on which all the religions of mankind revolve. Whether or not belief in a personal God exists, selfless love for our fellow beings is emphasised in them all. Indeed, it is by this that we attain to our true nature, which is divine. In the words of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, "Action performed unselfishly purifies the mind and helps it to fix itself in meditation." He further states that until we attain Realization by waking out of this illusion of a phenomenal world we must do social service by relieving suffering whenever we come upon it, but without the sense of doership, that is the feeling that it is we who are doing so or who should get the credit for doing so.

Right and Wrong

Q.: If it is a question of doing something one considers wrong, and thereby saving some one else from a great wrong, should one do it or refrain?

Bhagavan: What is right and wrong? There is no standard by which to judge something to be right and another to be wrong. Opinions differ according to the nature of the individual and according to the surroundings. They are again ideas and nothing more. Do not worry about them. But get rid of thoughts. If you always remain in the right, then right will prevail in the world.

(The devotee was not satisfied with this answer and asked for further elucidation.)

Sri Bhagavan then pointed out that to see wrong in another is one’s own wrong. The discrimination between right and wrong is the origin of the sin. One’s own sin is reflected outside and the individual in ignorance superimposes it on another. The best course for one is to reach the state in which such discrimination does not arise. Do you see wrong or right in your sleep? Did you not exist in sleep? Be asleep even in the wakeful state, abide as the Self and remain uncontaminated by what goes on around. Moreover, however much you might advise them, your hearers may not rectify themselves. Be in the right yourself and remain silent. Your silence will have more effect than your words or deeds. That is the development of will-power. Then the world becomes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within you.

— Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi.
HENRY THOMAS HAMBLIN—
A MODERN MYSTIC OF THE WEST

By GILBERT HENRY GEDGE

FEW of us are privileged to come into close personal contact with a great spiritual leader, but all who know Henry Thomas Hamblin intimately were so blessed. I first met him after a meeting in London in 1948. I had then been writing regularly for his magazine, the Science of Thought Review, eleven years but had never met him in the flesh, though I had twice tried to do so. In regular correspondence with him over the years, I had grown to love this man who I know from his writings had faced up to all the problems I was familiar with and had found the spiritual way of dealing with them. As he turned to greet me when I touched his elbow and I looked into his eyes for the first time there was rapport between us immediately. We had little or no opportunity for conversation, however, until an hour or more later when we sat side by side in a taxi—and then words seemed unnecessary. After two or three minutes silence he suddenly turned to me and said: “Isn’t it wonderful how everything looks so much brighter when we are spiritually uplifted! Even the drab, dirty bricks seem to take on a living colour!” That was literally true for each of us at that moment. But H.T.H. by no means viewed the world through rose-tinted spectacles. As he tells us in his books and writings, he came through the hard school of business with its emphasis on the practical, and he was very much aware of the evil and suffering in the world. His vision was able to pierce beyond that, however, to the spiritual Reality behind the world of appearance. To him the Presence of God was the only Reality, and after he left the business world his one aim in life was to help as many people as possible to find that Reality and make it the very basis of their lives.

H.T.H. had a very difficult time before he was ready to do such work, however. Born of poor parents and, according to his own account, by no means well-endowed with perseverance or talent, he had great difficulty in his early years. At the age of sixteen he had a remarkable spiritual experience the impact of which, though partly erased by the stresses and follies associated with the process of growing up, never completely left him. It was on that occasion that he realised for the first time his oneness with Reality—the I AM. Despite his vision H.T.H. had his period in the wilderness, until the time came when, some seven or eight years after his first
spiritual experience, he had a second. One night, feeling a compulsion to pray, he knelt by his bed and at once became aware of the Divine Presence. It was as though he were cradled and poised in Divine Love, filled with the deep peace of the Eternal and “floating out on to the bosom of an Infinite Ocean of Infinite Bliss”; yet, at the same time, His Peace and His Bliss flowed through me like a great river, and I was one with it.”

Yet again, however, H.T.H. became enmeshed in the enticements of this world and spent quite a number of years “making money”. He worked very hard and indeed was very successful, and was able to leave behind the poverty-stricken existence which had been his previously. But he was not satisfied. He was by nature a pioneer, and could not rest content to enjoy the fruits of his efforts. As soon as an enterprise (and he actually started at least three) began to show signs of becoming established and the work involved began to appear easy and a matter of routine, he lost interest. His restless temperament impelled him to seek a new outlet for his energies.

Ultimately the time came when his very success became to him a form of slavery, and he began to loathe his business. Eventually, after sundry struggles, he severed all connection with it, and thus relinquished the assured income of a wealthy man. Having done so he found himself urged to write, and from then on he poured out a succession of lessons and books which have helped many thousands of people to change their thinking and thus their life. His first book was ‘The Message of a Flower’ which still delights all who read it. This was followed by ‘Within You Is the Power’, a book of which over a quarter of a million copies have been issued.

His last, and in my opinion his greatest, book was ‘My Search For Truth’. The early part of this book inevitably repeats some of what he wrote in his earlier ‘The Story of My Life’ but it then goes on to give a clear picture of the philosophy and beliefs that he gradually grow into. His ideas slowly developed over a long period from the time he published ‘Within You Is The Power’, but the basis remained fundamentally the same; the omnipresence of the all-goodness of God. But, whereas in ‘Within You Is The Power’ his object was to show people how by proper direction of their thought and faith they could change and control their life and circumstances, his later works were more specifically concerned with teaching people how to find a living consciousness of the Presence of God for Himself alone. He himself at the time of his great success in business had lost all sense of that Presence. As he wrote in ‘My Search for Truth’: “I was shut off from Nature and from God.” God had work for him to do, however, and eventually guided him back to the Divine pattern for his life. The change over was not without suffering and severe struggles. He hung on to his business life as if his whole being and life depended on it — as indeed he thought it did! — but a succession of night experiences literally drove him out of it. In the middle of the night he would wake up feeling he was actually in hell, with all the sorrow, suffering and despair of the damned concentrated in his own soul. For some time he tried to ignore these warnings, but eventually decided to give up business — and then these terrible experiences ceased. Ambition had driven him on a career which was not what God intended for him, but now Infinite Love and Wisdom could use him.

In the meantime he had come in contact with some of the so-called “Mental Science” teaching, but soon found that all his use of denials and affirmations only ended in failure. Eventually, of course, he realised that what he was really seeking was “to know God and experience His peace”. That, with the concomitant idea of one-ness with God, became the basis of all his future teaching, in which he continually emphasized that our seeking must ultimately be not through mental effort.
but through acceptance and surrender, "turning the heart to the Lord". For him the omnipresence of God meant inevitably the presence of the Divine Order here and now. "The Kingdom or realm of God is with us now and always".

That Kingdom of God we find not through our mind but through our heart. "In other words, my heart responds to Love, so that I feel God. And thus it is through feeling that I know, and not through reasoning. Because God is Love it is necessary that in order to know God we too must become Love, for only God (Love) can know God (Love). It follows, therefore, that we can really know God only through feeling." Hamblin ends this chapter: "I find now that it is no longer necessary to follow any set system of meditation—but only to know God and to feel immersed in His peace, and to feel His peace flowing through me like a river."

In October 1921 he published the first number of a new monthly magazine, The Science of Thought Review which was an immediate success and is still helping thousands of people. Soon, however, he was to go through experiences which were to test him thoroughly. After having "reduced prayer to an exact science that could be used successfully to clear any situation", he suddenly found that his prayers were useless and God seemed to have removed Himself from him. He felt himself threatened by a tremendous evil which he was powerless to combat and yet felt he must resist. His peace of mind was restored when God suddenly spoke to him in a verse from an old hymn:

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread,  
Are big with mercy, and will break  
In blessing on your head."

Then he realised that instead of dreading and resisting the experience, he had to accept it and trust God, knowing that only good could come out of it.

This implied complete surrender to God, and from then on that was the very core of his teaching. This decision to change, and teach the necessity to "give all to life" instead of a method of "getting on in life" cost Hamblin a great deal, for it meant the withdrawal and destruction of all his old books and courses of instruction and the issue of new ones. Above all, of course, was the enormous amount of energy and time required to set forth his new teaching. Throughout it all, however, he was remarkably upheld by that Infinite Love Whose behest he was obeying. Many of his old students and followers left him because they could not accept his new teaching. They had grown accustomed to using spiritual powers in order to overcome difficult experiences and "get on in life", whereas Hamblin was now teaching the necessity to accept the "disciplines and chastenings" of life, work through them and learn as much as possible from them, leaving the outcome entirely in God's hands. As he himself wrote: "My one desire now is to help aspirants to find God and enter into Divine Union.".

Hamblin's own spiritual development was obviously going on apace at this time, but soon he was to enter a period of darkness such as he had never known. With the outbreak of war in 1939 he found himself violently assailed by those Dark Forces whose object is to destroy the Children of Light. Instead of the consciousness of communion with God to which he had been accustomed it seemed impossible to find God or realise His Presence. "I could no longer retire into the Inner Chamber of my soul and find God there as Infinite Joy, Peace and Bliss indescribable. There was nothing but darkness and the seeming despair and lamentations of countless millions of lost souls... I seemed..."
to be in the grip of all the Powers of Darkness from which there seemed no way of escape."

This was the beginning of a long series of psychic attacks, during the course of which he was visited by evil presences that made every hair of his head literally stand on end. Eventually, however, he found that to make use of the name of Jesus was an infallible way of dealing with them. Jesus proved to be literally a saviour to him, and lifted him up to a new consciousness of the Divine Presence and of freedom. In his later years his teaching on prayer frequently stressed the power in the Name of Jesus and advocated using it constantly in our prayers. He himself became a Jesus-dedicated man, following Him even to the extent of not trying in any way to side-step, or wipe out by affirmation and realisation any of the tests and trials with which life confronted him. He came to regard some form of Gethsemane experience as inevitable if we wish to attain the highest spiritual development, and himself did not escape or seek to escape it. "The object of these experiences is to bring us into God's peace . . . everything is designed for our good and in order to bring us into His perfect peace . . . God's inward peace is Heaven's most precious gift, for if we possess it we possess all things. The Divine Will is good; hence we eventually learn that all we need pray for is for the Divine will to be done, whether we are concerned with our welfare or that of others. The Perfect Order continues; that is, it is always in a state of 'presentness'; it is always in the Eternal Now and it does not wax or wane. What is needed is that we should conform to it . . . We belong to the Eternal and interiorly we are one with That which changeth not; the interior Order flows ceaselessly, in perfect harmony." 9

When one met H.T.H. one was always aware of the deep peace and love which pervaded his entire being and emanated from him. One eventually learned, too, that he had a pronounced sense of humour. I was highly amused when he told me the story of how some man had approached him to enlist his support for a film project intended to portray the life of Jesus. "But," said H.T.H. "I sent him away with a flea in his ear"! The gleam in H.T.H.'s eye and the chuckle and glee in his voice as he recounted it to me is still a joy to remember. "I was not going to have anything to do with putting Jesus on a film," he concluded.

His regard for Jesus did not prevent him from appreciating the writings and teachings of Eastern writers, particularly Lao Tse, whom he quoted occasionally in his writings. Indeed, he sometimes remarked that what he had discovered for himself had long ago been taught by others. He was no narrow sectarian and had friends in various shades of religious thought. A few years before he died he had a visit from Swami Ramdas which was eminently satisfying to both men. Truth is truth no matter by whom spoken, and each recognised the spiritual stature and sincerity of the other. Men such as these are the "little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump" in the crass materialism of this world.

Yet Hamblin was nothing if not human. He knew all about the trials of every-day life and the mistakes we are all liable to make. One day we were talking about past mistakes when he quietly said to me: "I don't take much notice of my past mistakes now. You see, I know now I had to come that way". The man who said that had in earlier years known heart-searching remorse and regret, but in the meantime he had acquired that wisdom that can come only from the realisation of the Divine Omnipresence and all that that implies.

In H.T.H. I salute one who had attained the capacity to abide in the realisation of the Divine Omnipresence, and who was to me a much loved teacher and friend.

1 Ibid., page 109.
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HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

THE GOLDEN FLAME

BHAGAVAN Sri Ramana Maharshi personifies, to many devotees, the Universal Father. Instances are many when devotees felt that they were looking at their own father when they saw Bhagavan. I vividly remember a friend of our family, who had accompanied us to Sri Ramanasramam in 1947, exclaim in delight, as soon as he saw Bhagavan, "Here is my father, just as he looked in his later life!" Far back in 1933, when my own father was drawn to Bhagavan Ramana for the first time, he actually saw 'his father', with the same physical traits. And as recently as 1966, after the passing of my father, I cannot but be touched by the striking resemblance between his and Bhagavan's appearance, although such an impression was not altogether new to me. Indeed, Bhagavan Sri Ramana is the embodiment of "Fatherhood", that is at once universal and transcendental.

On the sacred occasion of the Mahakumbabhishakam of Sri Bhagavan's shrine, many an illustrious pen poured forth its spontaneous homage to His Lotus Feet. Before them, mine is like a candle before the splendour of the sun. Nonetheless, the inner urge to share an experience of mine, I would call it the most sacred and valuable experience in all my life, blots out my hesitation. It is just an insignificant parijata flower in the midst of thousands of fragrant roses.

Experiences with Sri Bhagavan and His Grace used to be recounted very often by my father together with other incidents in his life, rich with spiritual lessons. A boy of about twelve then, I used to listen avidly and as a result, these narrations took a deep root in me, ripening into an incessant desire to have Bhagavan's darshan, to touch Him and to be always near Him. During my daily prayers, my mind used to fix itself on the frontispiece photograph of Bhagavan Ramana, appearing in his books and fervently ask for his darshan. As time rolled by, the yearning intensified but no call came. Once or twice I ventured to ask my father about it, but he used to simply brush it aside with the remark, "If and when Bhagavan calls you, you will go."

1 Performed on 18-6-1967 — a detailed account of which is published, with photographs, in our issue for July, 1967.
Then one day the first experience came. I think it was in 1945. One night, during deep sleep, I dreamt that I was sitting in the corner of a room, waiting for somebody. I then saw Bhagavan Ramana slowly enter the room and held Him around the waist with both my hands, crying and sup­plicating. But Bhagavan simply passed on with apparent unconcern. I woke up and thought of it for a long time. It seemed so disappointing that there was no response from Him. However, I felt confidence since at last I had seen Him and touched Him, which proved that He had not forsaken me.

Now I began to think of Him more and more. Yet again, for a long time nothing happened.

Once more I was becoming desperate and losing hope. Then one dark night, He appeared and initiated me out of His boundless love. This time it was more of a vision than a dream. I was half awake and felt myself rising from bed and walking into the court­yard of our house. Total silence enveloped the entire surroundings. The blanket of darkness was accentuated by the twinkling stars above. I found myself standing still on a mound of sand, facing westward, looking, looking, look­ing. Slowly out of the darkness emerged the outline of a hill, shaped exactly like the Holy Arunachala. Emerging, it steadied itself into a discernible silhouette, by remaining darker than the dark background. After a few minutes, a small flame leapt out of the apex of the hill. In the beginning, it was just like an eye in vertical position, but very swiftly it grew and grew until it became a pillar of light, with extraordinary brightness, having the hilltop as its base and origin. Its height touched the very heavens. Its splendour was beyond description. It was just the shape of the flame of a lamp when it burns steadily golden coloured, shining as if a thousand suns had arisen together. Its golden rays fell on my body. I was riveted to the spot and found that I could move neither hand nor foot. I stood there as one totally hypnotised, oblivious of anything else but the burning golden flame. My mind was in raptures, throbbing with an ecstatical joy, which seemed to burst out of my body. How long I stood like this I cannot say, for time seemed to stop altogether. Then I became conscious of the scene, and felt that I was not alone, in that spot. With an effort, I turned my face to the right and found Bhagavan Sri Ramana was standing there, looking at me. On his lips played the most bewitching smile, while his eyes poured out boundless compassion and love. When I saw Him, I forgot the Jyothi and everything else and tried to fall at his feet. But He gently stopped me by placing His Divine Hand upon my head. Joy of joys! My whole being, inner and outer, thrilled to that Divine touch from the hand of one who is no other than God. Waves of bliss and tranquillity took possession of my whole being. He raised his fore­finger and pointed at the Golden Flame and asked me in a voice resembling the sound of silver bells, "Child, do you understand what the Jyothi is? This is the real Karthigai Deepam."

Suddenly I was wide awake, ushered by consciousness into the care and worry-ridden world. Subsequent visions have followed, all of them showing Bhagavan as the personifica­tion of supreme love, but none could ever match the splendour of this first vision and initiation.

I no longer felt dissatisfied at not being able to go to the Ashram in a physical sense, though I must confess, occasionally the desire did arise.

In 1947, I was proceeding to Madras from Coimbatore. The train was speeding along some hills in the night when a prayer to be allowed to visit the Ashram took shape in me. As I was accompanying my father, who did not entertain ideas from children, I did not talk of the prayer to anyone. A few days later, when we were to return to Coimbatore, my father suddenly asked me how I would like to go to Ramanasramam and have darshan of Sri Bhagavan. I am not ashamed
to record here that I broke into tears on hearing this, as this was a prayer so graciously granted by Sri Bhagavan.

The next day, we were in our home—Sri Ramanasramam. It was a Friday and a New Moon day. As I entered the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Ramana, I felt that I was submerging in a sea, only this was a sea of bliss of tranquillity.

We were there the whole of the forenoon and excepting for a swift, piercing look that Sri Bhagavan blessed me with, nothing happened. Nothing mattered any more.

When I heard later that Sri Bhagavan had shed His mortal frame, a few tear-drops rolled down my cheeks, but my father sternly said, "You are a fool. Where can Bhagavan go?"

Years have rolled by; still the Torch burns on, gathering more and more brightness. It is the torch that He, out of His boundless Grace, lit in my heart. Now my children, in their turn, ask me: "Father, when will Bhagavan Thatha come to us?". I feel too full to reply to them, yet sometimes say, "All in good time, children. Learn to labour and to wait."

When the messenger comes, carrying the authority of inexorable time may my heart surrender to Him and may my lips whisper, "Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya".

_Bhagavan_: Creation is neither good nor bad; it is as it is. It is the human mind which puts all sorts of constructions on it, as it sees things from its own angle and as it suits its own interests. A woman is just a woman, but one mind calls her 'mother', another 'sister' and still another 'aunt', and so on. Men love women, hate snakes, and are indifferent to the grass and stones by the road side. These connections are the causes of all the misery in the world. Creation is like a peepul tree: birds come to eat its fruit, or shelter themselves under its branches, men cool themselves in its shade, but some may hang themselves on it. Yet the tree continues to lead its quiet life, unconcerned with, and unaware of all the uses it is put to. It is the human mind that creates its own trouble and then cries for help. Is God so partial as to give peace to one and sorrow to another? In creation there is room for everything, but man refuses to see the good, the healthy and the beautiful and goes on whining like the hungry man, who sits beside a tasty dish and, instead of stretching out his hand to satisfy his hunger, he prefers to lament. Whose fault is it, God's or man's? But fortunately for man God, in His infinite mercy, never forsakes him. He always gives new chances by providing Gurus and Scriptures to guide him to find the errors of his ways and ultimately gain eternal happiness.

—From Guru Ramana.
IN his pursuit of Wisdom the student of heavenly lore passes from exotericism to the inner heart of esotericism where he receives knowledge of the transcendent Truth of Unity. This Unity cannot be realized on the external level where a multiplicity of traditional religious forms exist; it is only when these forms are transcended that a beautiful harmony is revealed where the religions of the world appear as a heavenly rainbow issuing from One uncoloured Light.

He who adheres to the outward aspect of the Tradition often allows error to cloud the truth, namely, that it is the selfsame Spirit which vivifies all forms of religion. This lack of understanding gives birth to prejudice and intolerant dogmatism which is responsible for the belief that other religions are false and one's own the only true faith. Yet spiritual blindness cannot last, for Wisdom visits all sincere hearts. In the words of Sri Rama-krishna: 'An ignorant man considers his own religion to be the best, but when true understanding illumines his mind, all differences melt away. He knows that the one Sat-Chit-Ananda (Absolute Existence — Intelligence Bliss) is named God by some, and Hari, Brahma and Allah by others.'

The spiritual aspirant should therefore strive towards a closer understanding of other religions, for they are many rays emerging from the same luminous Source — rays which as Tennyson wrote:

'... are but broken lights of Thee, And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.'

To the four corners of the earth have been given divine truths, garbed in the regal robe of simplicity.

Gautama the Buddha taught in Asia: 'Hatred does not end by hatred at any time, hatred ends by love. This is an old rule.' (Dhammapada 5).

'Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us. Among men who hate us let us be free from hatred.' (Ibid. 5).

Jesus the Christ taught the children of Israel: 'Ye have heard that it was said Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy', but I say unto you 'Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you'.' (St Matthew V, 43).

In China the venerable Laozhu said: 'Selflessness belongs to the truly wise. They make the people's needs their own. The good are treated in kindly fashion, likewise are the bad; this is called the goodness of Teh. The faithful are treated with faith; the faithless receive like treatment, this is called the faith of Teh ... These wise ones regard all people as their own.' (Tao-Teh-King 49).

Sri Krishna instructed Arjuna thus: 'In truth, he is beloved and near to me, who harbours no ill-will or malice towards any being or thing; who is a lover of Nature and her friend — who is compassionate, humble and free of vanity and selfishness — who suffers wrongs and injustices patiently . . . with mind ever fixed on Me.' (Bhagavad-Gita XI).

In Arabia the prophet of Allah, Muhammad, taught his people: 'It is the duty of every Muslim to practise charity. If he has nothing to give, let him perform a good deed, or refrain from doing an evil one.' (Hadith 48).

'Do not say I will be good to those who are good to me, and oppress those that oppress
me. But instead, be good to those who are good to you but oppress not those who oppress you.' (Ibid 181).

Filled with the spirit of discernment Origen wrote: 'There exist diverse forms of the Word which reveals itself to its disciples, conforming itself to the degree of understanding of each one according to the degree of their spirituality. (Contra Cels. iv. 16).

Truly then, the Word of God has manifested itself in many lands, and where the holy feet have trod Truth has taken root and blossomed forth.

In the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead' is written: 'Behold, my powerful and sacred Word will I send forth into all places, that it may give birth to every right thing.'

The Bhagavad-Gita gives voice to beautiful song: '*I am the Father of this Universe . . . I am the Wisdom of the wise. I am the sacred Word AUM . . . Seated in the heart, I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all.*'

St. John the mystic records in the New Testament: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

Universal Substance (Prakriti) plays an important part in World Religions. In Egypt the Mother of the World is depicted as the Virgin Isis with the infant Horus in her arms. Upon a temple dedicated to her is graven: 'I am all that hath been, that is or that will be — no mortal hath yet removed the veil that shades my divinity from profane eyes.'

The Compassionate aspect of God is symbolised in China by Kwan Yin, she who carries a pitcher from which fall the Waters of Life. The willow spray with which the Mother is depicted denotes that aspersing with heavenly dew which awakens and purifies the soul.

The Western world reveres Maria, Madonna of Graces. From Her flow innumerable blessings, and to Her are directed the cries of afflicted hearts:

'To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears, Turn then most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us.' (Hail Holy Queen, Catholic Missal).

Solomon the Sage wrote: 'Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.' (Prov. 3.17).

Those yearning for tenderness and love have been universally directed towards the gentle heart of the World Mother.

Harmlessness (ahimsa) figures prominently in the teachings of the wise. And although true harmlessness aims at the perfection of Good Thought, Good Word and Good Deed, it necessarily includes benevolence towards all creatures.

A beautiful saying of Muhammad is found in Hadith 31. 'It happened one day that an adulteress passed by a dog at a well. Seeing that the dog held out a thirsty tongue, the woman removed her shoe, tied it to the hem of her robe and drew water for the dog to drink. For this act of compassion, her sin was forgiven her.'

The Mahabharata relates how Yudhishthira, arriving at heaven's gate, refused to enter therein until he had gained assurance that his dog as well as his wife and brothers were permitted entry.

Buddha stood firm against the practice of animal sacrifice, as did Zarathustra. Likewise did David the Sage-king, who wrote: 'O Lord . . . thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart.' (Ps. 51. 16-17).

Because the essentials in world religions have been bypassed, and the inessentials stressed, the perennial wisdom has become obscured by sectarianism. Too much emphasis has been laid on the differences existing between religions, while too little importance
has been given to the Universal Love which unites them.

Ibn Arabi said: 'I am an adherent of the religion of Love — wherever his camels take me, I follow.'

The wise Buddhist Asoka wrote in his Rock Edict: 'Asoka does not value wealth or fame as highly as he does the promotion of understanding between religions . . . A man must duly respect other religions on every occasion — to be in harmony is wisdom. It is Asoka's desire that all sects should be full of knowledge and should aid one another.'

The 'living waters' are to be found in all faiths. On the journey to the Summit, pilgrims should refresh themselves at these fountains of Peace.

The heart which wakens to the beauty alive in other religions experiences a sweet stirring within, as many facets of Truth are revealed, and, like the mystic, perceives in all places of worship One Shrine alone.

When the truth-seeker receives knowledge that all hymns of Love are directed towards the One God, he will not hesitate to share in the prayers of mankind.

Just as in ancient Egypt the neophyte communed with Amen-Ra-Ptah the heavenly Father whose abode is the Quiet-Heart, so the pilgrim will compose his own prayer when visiting an Egyptian temple:

'Hail to Thee, whose Love flows sweetly through all things. Thy Song is enshrined in the heart of every creature, plant, mineral, and in the whisper of the breeze. My heart's Mother! Like Hapi the Nile Thou sendest forth thy life-sustaining coolness to all. When the choking, barren dust of ignorance rises within me, I call on Thee. May my heart-soul drink its fill at Thy Well of Truth,' And journey safely through the field of stars to Amenti.

Glorious Luminary! banish the darkness within me. So that when I stand before Lord Osiris in the Judgement-Hall My heart may sing: 'I am pure — I am pure.'

When the pilgrim enters the precincts of a Jade Monastery perched high above the valley, and stands with a Taoist beside a waterfall, he will utter this silent prayer springing spontaneously from the heart:

'O Nameless Tao, Thou who dost operate ceaselessly in unbroken rhythm, My heart bows to Thee in wonder. Thou hast sent a river of quiet into my depths. Thou hast given wisdom to my tongue, so that where before it spoke because it did not know, Now it is silent before the known. Wondrous Tao, Thou art Knowledge beyond that of the intellect, And art perfection in Thy impartiality. O Thou, which art the Essence of my being, may sincerity be the lighted lamp leading me away from hypocrisy and error.'

Observing a Hindu devotee performing puja before a shrine, the pilgrim may be stirred to sing his own song in the silence:

'Lord Shiva, still my mind, purify my heart. So that I may enter the tranquility of sacred Stillness. Blue-throated Shiva, King of ascetics, strip me of attachment to worldly things; kindle in my breast the cleansing fire of renunciation. Lift Thou the veil of Maya from before my inner eye. May understanding illumine my mind.'
And lead me to Self-Knowledge.
Guru within my secret heart—holy
Beacon of Light!
I take the dust of Thy Feet.
Om. Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

And when the call to prayer issues forth from the muezzin and the faithful prostrate their bodies, the pilgrim will also be invited to commune with Allah in his own spirit-tongue:

'Praised be the Name of the Most High
Who caused Heaven and earth to come into being,
Through His mighty Will.
To Thee am I self-surrendered, and therefore a Muslim.
At Ramadan, may my heart abstain from feeding on worldly attachments,
Thus may my fast be pleasing to Thee.
In my dealings with others, may I see Thee mirrored in my brother’s face,
And so in Peace abide.

Finally, kneeling before a candlelit altar at the side of a Christian, the pilgrim will fix his ardent gaze upon the crucifix, and compose his own Canticle to the Prince of Love.

'Radiant Heart of Life!
I am encompassed by Thy tender understanding.
When the indifference of men scourges me, I hear Thy Love-Song which administers healing.
When the ego-foes jeer and mock me as I fall upon the Way,
Thy strong arms bear me up, and I feel Thy compassionate
Kiss of forgiveness upon my tears.
As an infant nestles close to its parent, so do I find refuge in Thy Sacred Heart.
Amen.

How joyfully and harmoniously earthly flowers grow side by side! Likewise in the Celestial Garden, the different blooms of Religion form One fragrant Bouquet, for the seeds have been sown by the Hand of God.

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Devotee: What is the purpose of creation?
Bhagavan: Can the eye see itself?
D.: Of course not. It can see everything else but not itself.
B.: But if it wants to see itself?
D.: It can see itself only reflected in a mirror.
B.: That is it. Creation is the mirror for the eye to see itself.
Another devotee: Does Bhagavan mean ‘eye’ or ‘I’?
Bhagavan: You may take it figuratively as ‘eye’ and literally as ‘I’.

--- From Ramana Reminiscences.
I have just been reading a book which declares that Christ was not what the Hindus mean by ‘Avatar’ but something much more. There is no need to give the title of the book or the name of the author, because it is by no means alone in its declaration. Many Christian writers have said the same. This, of course, raises the question what the Hindus do mean by ‘Avatar’. The explanation given was so vague and perfunctory that it prompted me to turn to the Bhagavad Gita and see what Krishna himself meant by it. Reading that, I began to wonder whether the author of the book I mentioned had ever read it himself and what he meant by ‘something much more’. Here are some of the statements of what it means:

“Supporting this whole universe with a fragment of Myself, I remain as I am.” (X, 42)

“I am the Self dwelling in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all beings.” (X, 20)

“Knowing Me to be the Source of all and all to emanate from Me, the wise worship Me with understanding.” (X, 8)

“No action is incumbent on Me in the three worlds, nor is there anything unattained for Me to attain, yet do I act. . . If I ever ceased from action, these worlds would fall in ruin.” (III, 22-24)

“Though I am the Unborn and Deathless Self, though I am the Lord of all beings, yet, resorting to My Nature, I take birth through My own Power.” (IV, 6)

“Whenever righteousness decays and wrong prevails I incarnate. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil and for the establishment of right, I take birth from age to age.” (IV, 7-8)

“In whatever way men approach Me, in that way do I come to them. All the paths men follow lead to Me.” (IV, 11)

“I shall not be lost to him who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, nor will he be lost to Me.” (VI, 30)

“Out of thousands, perhaps one strives for perfection; out of thousands who strive, perhaps one knows Me as I am. I am the origin of the whole universe and also its dissolution. There is nothing higher than Me. All this is strung on Me like beads on a string.” (VII, 7)

I had thought of going systematically through the Gita and picking out such declarations, but is there any need? Is this not enough to make the “something much more” sound like a vulgar bazaar cry of “My religion is better than your religion”?
THE Maharshi is recorded as having stated: "Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware. No one is ever away from his self and therefore everyone is in fact self-realised; only — and this is the great mystery — people do not know this and want to realise the Self."

Further, he is stated to have said "Realisation consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realised. It is not anything new to be acquired. It must already exist or it would not be eternal, and only what is eternal is worth striving for."

"To remain without question or doubt is your natural state . . . the Self is always here. You have only to remove the veil obstructing the revelation of the Self."

I have italicised the passages to which I shall particularly refer.

Let us analyse the above, briefly: "Consciousness" and "Self" are concepts — objectifications in mind, and of 'being-conscious' nobody can be conscious, for 'being aware' is not objective knowledge of state of awareness but is subjective awareness as such.

II

"The veil obstructing revelation of the Self" is precisely this situation in which identities find themselves, whereby their relative aspect of mind is constitutionally and forever (in space-time) unable to conceive its own wholeness in terms of its relative concepts.

They have only to look? No doubt: the Maharshi implies that this is so, and he surely knew. But they could never see their own wholeness by means of relative reasoning. They must look from whole-mind wherein there is no 'they to look nor any 'thing' to be seen. Therefore we can assume that the Maharshi's doctrine, which may be summarised as asking 'Who am I?' is, metaphorically, an abandonment of conceptual thinking in favour of direct apprehension in mind undivided into subject/object-reasoning by the comparison of opposing concepts.

Whole-mind, however, cannot be supposed to answer this question, for to whole-mind there can be no question — since the answer must be what is asking. Being no question, there can be no answer, or at any rate no

1 "Consciousness" as such is a noun and therefore denotes an object, whereas here what is implied can have no objective quality whatever. For this reason the implication can only be suggested by the present participle of a verb, i.e. 'being conscious'.
answer other than 'I' or 'I-I'—which can be understood as the answer to all questions.

Is there anything further that can be said? Or anything further that can be done? Since there is evidently no one present or absent to do it, all 'ones' being objective concepts, any attempt could only be an exercise of the volitional aspect of an I-concept, and very perfectly futile.

But what does the question "Who am I?" imply? Is it not a symbol, a prayer—of course in the noumenal sense of 'communion'? 'The noumenal sense' implies exclusion of the concept of one entity 'communing' with another conceptual entity, and requires absolute integration.

III

In greater detail, the reason why there is no answer to the Maharshi's question is that conceptually there cannot be anyone to understand, anything to be understood, or any material for imaginative activity. What we are is very precisely what we are now and forever, and nothing else at all, and for the excellent reason that anything else must be an objective concept and so could not be what we are. Indeed THIS cannot be 'thought' about at all, and the question is its own answer.

"The Self is always here", he states. Yet, indeed, and the "veil obstructing the revelation of the Self" is precisely the effort, any and every effort, to objectify what is "always here". The words "To remain without question or doubt is your natural state" reinforces the crystal clarity of this understanding, for what could there be to question or to doubt when the suchness of what I am is evident?

To complete this analysis of the Maharshi's total statement as quoted, his remark "This is the great mystery—people do not know this and want to realise the Self" is hardly likely to mean that it was a mystery, let alone a 'great' one, to the Maharshi, but just that it appears to relative mind to be a great mystery but is not such at all. Therefore it should imply that if people knew this they would not try to realise the 'Self'—which he has just said is already 'realised'.

Why, then, is this 'wanting to realise the Self' not in fact a mystery? Surely because 'people' do not understand that the 'wanting' is due to the volitional aspect of their divided mind which 'wants' to do something by means of its pseudo 'self', and 'wants' that pseudo-self to 'realise' another 'Self'? But there is no 'other Self', there is no 'self' at all—the phenomenal 'self' being an object volitionally assuming an imaginary subjectivity, and the noumenal 'Self' being a conceptual image in the mind of divided consciousness.

The Mystery, then, is the result of this inherence in relative mind whereby a conceiver is assumed and every thought must be an objective concept, which process could never result in what is somewhat unhappily termed 'realisation' of what-I-am, since what-I-am could not have any objective quality whatever.

'Mystery' is a term indicating something that has not been understood and which, once understood, is no longer a mystery. It is only necessary to cease the absurd endeavour to objectify what we are as being the answer to the query "Who am I?", since this necessarily is already 'realised', for it is nothing that could be realised conceptually, and I am THIS 'I Am'.

Therefore, finally and absolutely, the understanding that there can be no one to understand and nothing to be understood IS understanding "what I am"—for the Sought is then found to be the Seeker.

IV

To suggest that the indication of this process was an exclusive invention of the Maharshi would surely do no honour to his memory, for all the Sages of all the ages have sought to point out to us the way to integration, and their indications have necessarily been in the
same direction. The Christian and Sufi saints were conditioned to use terms such as ‘Godhead’ and ‘Allah’, rather than ‘Self’, and the Buddhist Sages asked “Who is it who is repeating the name of the Buddha?”. Since all point in the same direction, and since all proved the efficacy of their teaching, the value of that teaching is enhanced by the evidence of each, for the variation in presentation is a matter of contemporary conditioning and the environment in which the teaching was given.

Nevertheless it may well be asked whether any of these great teachers presented their experience and their counsel with the conscience and clarity of the Maharshi’s statements quoted above. For the world of to-day these few lines of his may surely be regarded as revelatory and complete to a degree that is unique in history. But it is for us to understand them correctly — since what is being pointed at has never been said, is not said here, and never will be said as long as mankind is obliged to reason by means of the relative aspect of mind.

Note: The phenomenal incidence of disidentification is commonly associated with sudden consciousness of a superior and permanent psychic condition. This readjustment, consequent on revelatory understanding, is outside the scope of this technical analysis.

But it may be asked ‘How does this happen?’ One may suggest that at the moment of ceasing to look for himself, of ceasing to regard what he is, as an object, at that instant at which the searcher ceases to assume that he is what he is not and could not be, a spontaneous readjustment occurs. He is disidentified in his time-sequence and his intemporal non-entity remains.

Can that be so? Rather let us ask whether it can be otherwise. Presumably because the cessation of the volitional objectivisation-process leaves him revealed as all that he has ever been, in the perfect equanimity of non-duality. The temporal sequence of perpetual objectivisation has been interrupted and intemporality has supervened. In a geometrical image, the horizontal sequence of his ‘time’ has been cut and the verticality of his intemporal dimension has been recovered. He has ‘died’ like Lazarus, and found that he is still alive, but more fully than he had ever imagined could be possible.

A devotee wrote a question on a piece of paper and gave it to the Maharshi Bhagavan read it and smiled broadly. It was a question on Time and Space.

_Bhagavan_: May I know who is putting this question — Space, yourself or Time?

_Devotee_: Of course I.

_B._: Do you know that I?

_D._: Leave the I-question to the philosophers and answer my question.

_B._: What? Is Time or Space dearer to you than your own Self? (Seeing the visitor non-plussed) — All these questions are superfluous. One thing you must bear in mind that no question can be asked without self-knowledge. On the realization of the Self everything becomes clear and all problems are solved.

—from Guru Ramana.
ISLAM holds a peculiar place in history, being the concluding enunciation of religion for this cycle. This is indicated in the Quran in the saying that Mohammed is the 'Seal of the Prophets'.

The Semitic tradition begins with the pure monotheism of Abraham, from which both the Jewish and Arabic trends descend. "Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but an upright man and a Muslim." The word 'Muslim' here obviously has its simple meaning of 'one who is submitted to God', and its application to Abraham represents a viewpoint from which Islam is more primordial than either Judaism or Christianity. These were two moulds into which the original pure monotheism was later cast; and Abraham, being prior to them, was subject to neither. Nor was Islam which, coming after them, returned to the original pure monotheism. "Indeed, the closest to Abraham are those who follow him and this Prophet (Mohammed) and who believe."

The pristine purity of a people and its religion declines in course of time. Stringent regulations become necessary to hold people to what was once followed freely. Thus the Law of Moses became necessary for the Jews. To say that it was a degeneration from the freer and less formal tradition of Abraham does not imply any criticism of Moses. It was what had become necessary. Similarly when the Jews adopted kingship at a later stage it was clearly stated in their scriptures that this was a concession made necessary by their spiritual and moral decline.

The next transformation brought about in the tradition was that of Christ, and to some extent it was a return to Abraham, since it replaced the rigidity of law by the flexibility of love. However it was never completed; it remained a world-renouncing path for the few, not a world-sanctifying religion for the whole community. Once again, it implies no criticism to say that it remained incomplete, because Christ himself said so. In his final message to his disciples he told them: "I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now." Then when? obviously not in this lifetime because his teaching for this lifetime was being brought to an end. In fact he specified that it was not he who was to complete his message by teaching them the 'many things' that still remained but the 'Comforter' who was to come after him. Who was this 'Comforter'? And how was he to teach? Christ gave the necessary clue when he elucidated that he would not speak of himself but only what he heard or what was revealed to him. Christians declare that he was referring to the coming of the Holy Ghost, but that does not tally. The Holy Ghost is held to be one of the three aspects or Persons of God; and how can it be said that God does not speak of Himself but only what is revealed to Him? The only person whom the prophecy does fit is Mohammed. In fact the particular characteristic of Mohammed among the Prophets was that he did not compose the Quran ('speak of himself') but heard it revealed piecemeal in states of trance and, on awakening from the trance, recited what he had heard—exactly as Christ had prophesied. It is a remarkable confirmation of this (if any were needed) that the Greek word 'Paraklete', which is translated

1 XXXIII, 40.
2 Qur'an, III, 66.
3 Ibid., III, 67.
4 cf. Bhagavad Gita, IV, 1 and 2.
5 St. John, XVI, 12.
6 Ibid., 13.
as 'Comforter' is equivalent except for one letter to the Arabic 'Ahmed', which is the more esoteric form of 'Mohammed'.

Thus we see that Islam was not only the consummation of the Semitic monotheistic tradition which arose with Abraham but also, more specifically, the first stage in the completion of the original Christianity, transforming it from a world-renouncing path for the few into a world-sanctifying religion for a whole community. I say 'the first stage' because a second and final stage of completion (which also Christ prophesied) is to be the Second Coming of Christ.

How does Islam stand with regard to this? The Quran says nothing about it, but there are hadiths or sayings of the Prophet referring to it. The common Western idea that the 'Mehdi' expected by Muslims is the same as the Second Coming of Christ is incorrect. He is to come as the forerunner of Christ and is therefore more equivalent to John the Baptist. It is prophesied in the hadiths that Christ is to reappear in the Middle East and as a Muslim.

This points to a very urgent problem: The Jews did not recognize the first coming of their Messiah in Christ; the Christians did not recognize the first stage in the completion of Christianity in the institution of Islam; what likelihood is there that either Jews or Christians will recognize the final consummation of their religion in the Second Coming of Christ? Or that Muslims will either? If Abraham, through whom the Semitic monotheism had its origin, is referred to as a 'Muslim' in the sense of 'submitted to God' although he lived centuries before the religion known as 'Islam' was instituted, what more likely than that he through whom this monotheism is to attain its consummation should be a 'Muslim' in the same informal sense? In that case, is it not to be expected that once again only those few who, as Christ put it, "have ears to hear" should recognize the new Messenger and his Message and the orthodox in all three religions reject it?

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A devotee complained to Sri Bhagavan that although he had riches, power and every material comfort, he could not find peace.

_Bhagavan_: Why do you want peace? Why can't you be as you are?

_Devotee_: Because I don't feel happy otherwise.

_Bhagavan_: It is like this. A man suffering from headache will not rest quiet until he has taken the right medicine and got rid of the ailment. For health is our nature, and not illness. Likewise peace is our nature. Indeed we are peace. But forgetting that, we seek peace from external sources. It is an impossible quest and causes all this trouble. The moment you withdraw your mind from external objects and turn inward, you taste real peace and feel happy.

—from _Ramana Reminiscences_.

This is the first time that Arun Sharma has written for us, but his father was the late T. K. Sundaresa Iyer who was one of the earliest devotees and one of our first contributors (for whom see our obituary on page 136 of April 1965). We are glad to see Arun following in his father’s footsteps.

WILL Durant says in his ‘Story of Civilization, An Oriental Heritage’ . . . since the real problem of life is not suffering but undeserved suffering, the religion of India mitigates the human tragedy by giving meaning and value to grief and pain.

Does it? On the one hand the West no less than the East, has brooded over suffering, deserved and undeserved, while on the other hand it is obvious that human tragedy cannot cease to be tragedy until a man discovers the imperishable and therefore invulnerable element in him. In order to do so the human element in him has to be killed out to the point that there will not exist any one to experience grief or pain. Unless the experiences go the experience of pain will continue. When asked about suffering, Bhagavan Ramana used to say that you can only destroy suffering by destroying the sufferer, that is the ego who mistakes himself for you. When body identification has been killed grief and pain are accepted as phantasmagoria, as the shadows of a dreamland. Karma, karta and karmaphalam, the deed, the doer and the outcome of the deed, are bleached of reality the moment the real karta, that is the Self, the real doer of the deed, is realized. He, the Atma, puts an end to the illusory self and his claim to be the doer and enjoyer of the action. Then no problem of karma remains. This is the solution offered by Bhagavan Ramana and Shankaracharya and the sastras. No other solution goes the whole way or answers the problem.

A solution is also offered on the basis of bhakti, which solves the problem by surrender, and indeed, Bhagavan himself used to say that there are two ways, to enquire into the Self or to surrender; but this second method is not as different from the first as might appear. In terms of Jnana we speak of the Inner Being, while in terms of bhakti we speak of the Lord who bears the whole burden. But recognizing the Inner Being as the Lord is also surrender, while seeing the Lord to be the Inner Being is also Jnana.
There is also the question of whether one finds the worship of images or a Personal God necessary. Kapilacharya found that the strong root of avidya or ignorance-of-Self could best be eradicated by insistence on a Personal God, a possibility stipulated by the Brahma Sutras. Shankaracharya was not opposed to this, though his personal experience had led him to the way of the Absolute, which he found to be the most far-reaching. Having found it to be so, he offered it in the first place, just as did Bhagavan Ramana, but, again like Bhagavan Ramana, when he found that the aptitude for it was lacking he directed the seeker to what was within his competence; and this was likely to be the path of Saguna Brahman, the Personal God, leading to heavenly beatitude. Bhagavan Ramana did not reject the conception of a Personal God any more than Shankaracharya did. Arunachala was God and Guru for him and he gave us the incomparable mystical love poem ‘Arunachala-Siva’. In the same way, Shankaracharya gave his Guru Govinda Pidacharya as the Personal God for his devotees, and from this worship came the ‘Bhaja Govindam’.

Visitor: In the lives of the Western mystics we find descriptions of what is called the mystic way with the three well-marked stages of purgation, illumination and union. The purgatory stage corresponds to what we call the sadhana period. Was there any such period in the life of Sri Bhagavan?

Bhagavan: I know no such period. I never performed any pranayama or japa. I know no mantras. I had no rules of meditation or contemplation. Even when I came to hear of such things later, I was never attracted by them. Even now my mind refuses to pay attention to them. Sadhana implies an object to be gained and the means of gaining it. What is there to be gained which we do not already possess? In meditation, concentration and contemplation what we have to do is only, not to think of anything but to be still. Then we shall be in our natural state. This natural state is given many names, Moksha, Jnana, Atma, etc. and these give rise to many controversies. There was a time when I used to remain with my eyes closed. That does not mean that I was practising any sadhana then. Even now I sometimes remain with my eyes closed. If people choose to say that I am doing some sadhana at the moment, let them say so. It makes no difference to me. People seem to think that by practising some elaborate Sadhana the Self would one day descend upon them as something very big and with tremendous glory and then they would have what is ‘Sakshat-karam’. The Self is sakshat all right, but there is no karam or kritam about it. The word karam implies one’s doing something. But the Self is realised not by one’s doing something, but one’s refraining from doing anything, by remaining still and by being simply what one really is.

—From Ramana Reminiscences.
It was in 1946 that a friend told me in Bombay about Maharshi Ramana who was considered to be the Lord personified. Something in me was thereafter always reminding me to visit Bhagavan early, but on account of the partition of India and the problems arising from Independence I could not do so. I first came to the Ashram in June 1949 and stayed for two days. I had my own problems which I wanted to lay before Maharshi. But, as I had been told that replies to problems came automatically to your mind when you sat in His presence, I decided not to speak and to remain quiet. Replies to all problems came in one word ‘Destiny’. Bhagavan was speaking something in Tamil to the ladies and there were smiles and happy feelings all round. I asked a gentleman sitting next to me what Bhagavan was saying, since I did not know Tamil. He said that it was about ‘Destiny’. During my stay this word ‘Destiny’ came to my ears several times. I purchased two small books from the Ashram bookstall and the first word that I saw in them, to my surprise, was ‘Destiny’. I thought that if it was only a question of destiny what was the use of coming here so far. Anyway I liked and remembered the look of Bhagavan which he gave me as I entered the Hall and walked towards Him. During my short stay I tried to sit always in the view of Bhagavan in the Hall and during meals.

On my return I could feel that something had started working within me. But my difficulties and worries increased manifold. For eight years I was in wilderness. In 1958 one day I was looking casually at the books in a bookstall in Bombay V.T. Suddenly I noticed Bhagavan’s name and His photograph on a book written by Mr. Arthur Osborne. A current passed through my body and I immediately purchased the book. Thereafter my life began to be transformed. Bhagavan’s active assistance was now noticeable in all matters and samadhi became easy and part of my daily routine. I visited the Ashram in 1959 and 1960 and stayed over a month each time. It now became clear that Sri Arunachala was attracting me like a magnet and I was eager to come to the Ashram again and again.

Once in 1961 I was in samadhi at Bhagavan’s shrine during Veda Parayana. The time was about 17.35 hrs. Suddenly I felt that all my limbs were forcibly controlled by a power and I could not even open my eyes. I became helpless although I was conscious and could clearly hear the recitation of Vedas, I felt myself increasing in size. I could clearly
see in me the Hill and sea. Simultaneously the sound ‘I’, ‘I’ arose overpowering everything. I was frightened. I could feel that physical heart was beating very fast and the body perspiring. I felt I was going to die. The sound ‘I’ continued to sound with the same force caring for nobody. I shouted ‘Ramana, Ramana’ loudly and made every effort to come out of the state. When I finally opened my eyes the Arati was just over. I was expecting the people standing around me to enquire why I was shouting so loudly, but nobody asked me. Externally nothing had happened. Major Chadwick and others were just getting up to go. Immediately I prostrated before Bhagavan’s shrine. The world had an entirely different look at that time and I could see the people moving about like figures on a screen. I could feel a continuous current flowing throughout the body, giving me eternal peace and a blissful feeling. The current lasted till 04.00 hrs. next morning. I did not feel like talking to anybody and wanted to go into samadhi again. Since I was leaving the Ashram early the next morning I wanted to discuss my experience with some of the old devotees and find out its significance. I spoke to some but received no satisfactory reply. Then I thought that it must be an experience which old devotees must have had in one form or another and that I had better keep quiet. During my visits in the subsequent years I discovered to my surprise that that was not an ordinary experience. It was something which occurred on account of the special grace of the Lord. I was actually face to face with ‘Reality’.

In the year 1967 I was one day sitting at the base of the Hill in a convenient asan looking intently at Sri Arunachala. Suddenly I found myself absolutely free of thoughts. I was completely drawn to Sri Arunachala, my body having become absolutely light. This blissful state continued for 45 minutes. I wanted to go down early to the samadhi room for samadhi. But a voice within said: “What is this you are in now?” I realized that I had been magnetised by Sri Arunachala. I prostrated, prayed and wondered saying: “Lord, this state you have shown me without any effort on my part. It is so blissful and is all peace. Then why this trouble of sitting consciously in samadhi? Is it not possible to remain like this always?” The following stanza of Sri Bhagavan came to my mind:

“I have discovered a New Thing! This Hill, the lodestone of lives, arrests the movements of any one who so much as thinks of it, draws him face to face with It, and fixes him motionless like Itself, to feed upon his soul thus ripened. What (a wonder) is this? Oh Souls! Beware of It and live! Such a destroyer of lives is this magnificent Arunachala which shines within the Heart.”

— Five Hymns to Arunachala.

During the India-Pakistan conflict in September 1965 the Lord gave me the privilege of remaining throughout at the front and taking part in various attacks. From the way He handled the situations and the way He saved me there was no doubt left that He saves those who have full Faith in Him.

If chasing one’s shadow seems foolish
What if the shadow is chasing the Self
Asking “Who am I?”

SHEN HUI
Lord Krishna gives us this warning in the Bhagavad Gita:

"The wind turns a ship
From its course upon the waters:
The wandering winds of the senses
Cast man's mind adrift
And turn his better judgement from
its course."

Meditation is a life-long adventure, and no one should take to it in the expectation of attaining Self-Realization within two months or two years. Self-Realization, Nirvana or Samadhi... call the goal by whatever name you like... is deliverance from time into the Eternal Now. Any emphasis on "when, when, when" can serve only one purpose: to trap us in time. Sings the Sufi mystic Jalal-uddin Rumi:

"Past and future veil God from our sight;
Burn up both of them with fire. How long
Wilt thou be partitioned by these segments, like a reed?
So long as a reed is partitioned, it is not privy to secrets,
Nor is it vocal in response to lip and breathing."

The goal may be distant, but the change in direction will show itself in increasing health, security, concentration and awareness of the indivisible unity of all life. In order to build our life on Meditation we do not have to go to the Himalayas or the High Sierras. We can begin it here and now in the bosom of our family, in the midst of our community. We can begin it here and now, in the kitchen or at the desk, at the counter or on the campus.

As pointed out by the great spiritual teachers of all religions, the only barrier between us and Reality is ahankara, a precise Sanskrit term which may be roughly translated as the ego, self-will or separateness. For the vast majority of mankind the gradual removal of this barrier can most effectively and least violently be undertaken in the midst of society, in the very bosom of our family. Pines and oaks are beautiful, but they do not cross our will nor force their opinions upon us. It is in the give and take of family life that we can find a continuing context for developing forbearance, forgiveness, compassion and respect for those who differ in outlook. One of my young friends told me after his spiritual sojourn in the Sierras that he had attained Cosmic Consciousness. "Why don't you go home and convey this good news to your parents?" I asked. When he told me that he could not get on well with them, I had to remind him that Cosmic Consciousness includes one's parents also!

As the householder sage Yagnavalkya explains to his wife Maitreyi in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad:

"It is not for the sake of the husband, my beloved, that the husband is dear, but for the sake of the Self. It is not for the sake of the wife, my beloved, that the wife is dear, but for the sake of the Self. It is not for the sake of the children, my beloved, that the children are dear, but for the sake of the Self."

When we forget our own happiness in promoting the happiness of those around us, we are expanding our consciousness to include our parents, partners, children, friends and eventually our enemies. "Treat your husband like a king tonight" runs a local advertisement. "Treat your husband like a king every night." I recommend to every wife who wants to be a queen.
Side by side with this practice of putting the welfare of the other person first must come the discriminating restraint of the senses. This is not a plea for sense negation, but a practical program for taming and training the wild horses of the senses so that we may be their master and not their victim. In our “sensate” civilization we are subjected by the mass media around us to a ceaseless barrage of propaganda persuading us to yield to the clamour of the senses in order to find abiding joy, security and fulfilment. By yielding to the clamour of the senses we are living on the lowest level of consciousness, the physical or animal, where separateness is expressed in its strongest form. The animal does not have the capacity to break out of its separateness because it has no choice but to obey the call of the senses.

To illustrate this from our food habits, there is a Zen proverb that only one-third of what we eat benefits us; the remaining two-thirds benefit the medical profession. In other words, we have to learn to distinguish when we are eating to nourish the body and when we are eating because we are unable to resist the demands of the palate. Most of us, in moments of frustration, have tried to find our fulfilment in hot fudge sundae or lemon meringue pie, little realizing that what we are doing is adding a few more pounds to our body, leaving the frustration intact. Instead of letting the mind play games on us through the palate, we can learn to play games on the mind by asking it to wait an hour for its sundae or pie. That hour can be usefully spent in the repetition of the mantram, and we need not be surprised if by the end of it our mind has flitted on to something else. Thus skillfully saying “no” to the senses, we have begun to exercise some control over the mind.

The establishment of our complete sovereignty over the mind can be achieved little by little, day by day, step by step. Infinite patience and intelligent practice are required for steady progress in meditation, and there is only one failure in meditation: the failure to meditate regularly. A Hindu proverb says, “Miss one morning’s meditation and seven are needed to make it up.” Or in the words of St. John of the Cross, “He who interrupts the course of his spiritual exercises and prayer is like a man who allows a bird to escape from his hand; he can hardly catch it again.”

The continuity of our meditation can be maintained and fostered by the repetition of the mantram or spiritual formula on all possible occasions, even though it may be for only two minutes at a time. The mantram should be so close to us that we will be able to pick it up even during a short break in our activities. We can make the mantram an integral part of our consciousness by using it on our walks, while waiting for appointments and, of course, while going to sleep.

The conquest of the world within requires as much training, planning and wise guidance as the conquest of outer space. We would not dream of putting a man in orbit ill-equipped, poorly trained and unguided. The sustained practice of meditation takes us through many unchartered areas of the mind where the wise suggestions of a guide, drawing on his own experience, are invaluable. During arid intervals, which occur from time to time on the path of meditation, it is difficult to persevere without the sustained enthusiasm and unfailing support of a guide.

This relationship between the traveller and the guide leads not to dependence, as it sometimes misunderstood, but to utter self-reliance. It may be remembered that Patanjali, the illustrious author of the ancient manual on meditation, calls the goal of meditation by the term _kaivalya_ which means total independence in which the body, senses and mind obey the Atman or Inner Ruler. This Inner Ruler is the real Guide, but until we become aware of Him in our own heart, we need the assistance of a temporary guide.
The first chapter of the Muktika Upanishad is of considerable contingent interest since it serves as a sort of introduction to the whole series, and we therefore published it in our issue of January 1968. We were obliged to omit the second chapter, which is of more doctrinal interest, for reasons of space, so we are publishing that here. The reference to the Monkey King is due to the fact that it is supposed to be the teaching of Sri Rama to his servitor and disciple Hanuman (Maruti).

CHAPTER II

Then Maruti again asked Sri Ramachandra: "What actually is the attainment of That, and what is the purpose and use of it?"

Sri Ramachandra replied: It is the nature of man's mind to enslave him through its tendency to cause suffering owing to the alternation of pleasure and pain. This is due to the belief that he is the author of his actions and the harvester of their results. Jivanmukti or Liberation while still in the body is the cessation of mental qualities. This is followed by Videhamukti or Liberation without the body on the exhaustion of prarabdha karma. This is like the space inside a jar becoming one with the space outside it when the jar breaks. The 108 Upanishads are evidence and authority for the occurrence of Jivanmukti and Videhamukti.

The purpose of it is the attainment of everlasting bliss through elimination of the thought that one is the author of one's actions. This can be achieved by human effort. Just as one obtains a son by the putrakameshti sacrifice and wealth by commerce and heaven by the jyotishtoma sacrifice, so one can attain Liberation through union with the Infinite brought about by right understanding: and this can be done by personal effort. It is to be achieved by the abolition of all vasanas. The following stanzas explain this.

1 Human activity is of two kinds, individualistic and scriptural: the former leads to unhappiness and the latter to divine happiness.

2 As long as attachment to the world (social contacts), to scriptural study and to the body persists true enlightenment does not appear.

3 The vasanas in a man are of two kinds, beneficent and harmful. If you are influenced by the former

4 You will gradually and even rapidly attain My station. On the other hand, if you are cast into trouble by the harmful vasanas

5 That is due to your own past karma and therefore the tendency must be overcome by your own effort. The stream of vasanas flowing through good and bad channels

1 This refers to the formal heavens which, unlike Liberation, can be attained by prescribed courses of religious activity.

2 That is to say that if the obstructions to Liberation are removed Liberation is there.

3 There are good and bad tendencies. First the bad tendencies have to be turned in the right direction so they impede Liberation while the good ones hasten it; but ultimately all tendencies, good and bad alike, have to be stilled and only pure abidance remains. See, for instance, verses 31 and 70.
Should be directed by human effort into only the good and auspicious channel: what has entered the inauspicious channel should be redirected into the other.

Vasanas that are redirected from the harmful to the beneficent channel become beneficent and vice versa. Thus by your own effort you should nourish and educate your mind, like a child.

When your vasanas begin to be habitually controlled in this way, then indeed the results of your practice should appear, Oh Slayer of the Enemy.

Even when in doubt, act always in the beneficent direction, O Son of Maruta. If the balance swings too much to that side there is no harm in that.

Destruction of vasanas, true understanding and elimination of the mind practised simultaneously bring good results, Oh wise one.

Unless they are practised repeatedly and together the final goal of Bliss cannot be attained even in a hundred years.

Even if practised well and for a long time but separately they do not produce the final result, just as mantras said out loud do not.

By practising them together and for a long time all the shackles of the heart get broken, however strong, just as do the fibres in a lotus stem when it is cut.

Worldly attachments, though unfounded, are strong through having been nourished during a number of births. Therefore they cannot be destroyed without sufficient long practice.

Therefore give up beforehand all desire for enjoyment and practise only these three methods with discretion and manly effort.

The wise regard a mind yoked to vasanas as bound. It is when relieved of them that it is said to be Liberated, Oh Monkey Lord. Hasten, then, to rid the mind of its vasanas.

Vasanas are eradicated by deep thought and upright conduct. Then the mind becomes steady like a clear lamp.

He who remains constant, renouncing all vasanas and abiding in Me, is one with Me who am pure Consciousness; he is perfect Bliss.

One who has eradicated all desires from his heart is Liberated whether he remains in samadhi or not and whether he performs actions or not.

He whose mind is free from vasanas has no loss from inactivity nor gain from activity, not even from ritual or the chanting of mantras.

There is no higher state than Silence utterly free from vasanas.

The eyes and other senses by themselves are in fact free from vasanas, but they
run after outer objects, and it is the vasanas that cause them to do so.

23

Just as the eye fails without attachment on things that come involuntarily within its range, so does a valiant person behold things and actions.

24

The silent Sages know the vasanas of personal desire and those arising out of natural forces and how to still them.

25

The mind, being stimulated and thrown into activity by desires which move it strongly, becomes the cause of old age and death.

26

It is the vasanas that provoke the movements of the life-breath, and these in turn provoke vasanas. Thus the seed in the mind is produced and again produces as happens with plants.

27

The mind has thus two seeds, breathing and vasanas. When one of them ceases the other does also.

28

The mind is to be stilled by performing activities without attachment, by not ascribing reality to worldly affairs and by appreciating the perishability of one’s body. This prevents vasanas from arising, and the prevention of vasanas annuls the mind.

29

When the mind gives up thought, due to prolonged freedom from vasanas, there ensues mindlessness which brings perfect peace.

30

Oh Maruta, you should practise the methods prescribed by your guru and by the scriptures until you have attained this state, overcoming the imperfection of your mind.

31

Then, when your objective has been attained, your purified mind should give up these practices, though they are good in themselves, as it previously gave up the stream of vasanas.

32

The state of mindlessness is of two kinds, one with physical form as a Jivanmukta, and the other without form when the body also disappears.

33

Now listen carefully to what I say about the sacred state of mindlessness.

34

When you attain this state you certainly enjoy complete peace and benevolence. That is the state of a Jivanmukta and is free from all possibility of rebirth.

35

This is the mindlessness of Jivanmukta and is called sarupa (with form). The arupa (formless) kind arises after the body falls away.

36-37

The mind is the root of the world-tree with its thousands of buds, branches, fruits and leaves. Intentions constitute the mind and the mind constitutes the intentions and is the root of the world-tree.

38

So wither the mind quickly in order that the world-tree also may wither. The only way to do this is to control one’s own mind.

4

Mindlessness does not imply the darkness of inanimate objects but the Light of pure Consciousness.

5 The Sanskrit word is sankalpa.
39 The rise of the mind is man's fall, and
the fall of the mind is man's rise. The mind
of the wise succumbs, for the mind is a fetter
to the wise.

40 Until the mind is mastered by the practice
of Oneness the vasanas dance about in the
heart like night-time devils.

41 Only when the vanity of the mind has
gone and the senses, which are the enemy,
are mastered, does the inclination to enjoy­
ment wither like a lotus in winter.

42 The first thing is to conquer your own
mind, clenching your fists, gritting your teeth
and tensing your limbs for the battle.

43 The mind cannot be conquered by sitting
alone and thinking endlessly about it, but
only by practising the one perfect, well-
established method.

44 Just as an inebriated savage elephant
cannot be mastered without use of the goad,
so the mind cannot without recourse to
Vedantic studies.

45 There are indeed potent methods for
subjugating the mind, such as renunciation of
desires and control of the breath.

46 In spite of these methods, those who
seek to control themselves by force are using
a magic ointment to hunt in the darkness
instead of making a light.

47 The foolish attempt to conquer the mind
by force (through hathayoga) is like trying
to bind the inebriated chief of elephants with
the fibres of a lotus stem.

48 There are two seeds of the mind-tree
which bears the whole multitude of activities:
one is the act of breathing and the other
powerful inclinations.

49 The latter is in fact all-pervading energy
which is activated by the process of breathing.
Therefore concentration of mind is said to
lead to enlightenment.

50 The way to this is by meditating as
instructed. Even without complete success in
concentration, the practice can be duly
developed and leads towards success, so
meditate only on enlightenment, which is
Bliss-Consciousness.

51 The pause made by yogis between the
completion of out-breathing and the com­
mencement of in-breathing is known as
kumbhaka.

52 When the in-breathing of air from out­
side is completed and the outbreathing has not
yet begun there is the pause of equalised air
pressure known as outer kumbhaka.

53 The flow of mental activity in the state
of Oneness free from I-sense is samprajnata
samadhi. This samadhi is awakened by the
practice of meditation.

54 When it becomes involuntary and the
mind has grown steady it confers the utmost
happiness. This involuntary samadhi is dear
to yogis.

55 It is much prized by silent Sages, as
it is free from mind and intellect but immersed
in pure Consciousness, from which it never departs.

56 Complete in its beginning, complete in its end and complete in the middle, this samadhi is highly to be valued, bringing Oneness with Universal Being.

57 Acceptance of something (as real or desirable) without due consideration is called a vasana.

58 A man becomes one with whatever powerfully occupies his mind, Oh best of Monkeys. He becomes that to the exclusion of other vasanas.

59 When overcome by vasanas he becomes one with them. He considers his desire all in all and therefore perfect.

60 The Essence does not in fact change its state on account of man's varying vasanas, but one who regards it from the wrong viewpoint sees it as changing, like a drunken man.

61 There are said to be two kinds of vasanas, the pure and impure; the latter cause rebirth while the former avert it.

62 The wise say that impure vasanas, which are strongly united with ignorance and vanity, bring about rebirth. What is desirable is that the vasanas, the seed of rebirth, should be free from impurities like a burnt seed (which cannot sprout).

63 Oh Maruti, what is the use of chewing over the already chewed and ragged stories of the scriptures? Better to turn one's energy to search for the Light within.

64 Oh, Lion among Monkeys, one who gives up seeing and not-seeing alike and sits quietly withdrawn is indeed Brahman and the knower of Brahman.\(^6\)

65 Even repeated study of the four Vedas and the Scriptures does not enable a man to understand the Principle of Brahman, just as a ladle does not know the taste of the soup.

66 What further incentive to renunciation can be prescribed for the man who is not disgusted with the unwholesome smell of his own body?

67 The body is extremely impure, the Atman in it extremely pure. Once we grasp the difference between the two we know what needs to be purified.

68 Bondage means bondage to vasanas and Liberation the destruction of vasanas, so give up all vasanas, even the desire for Liberation.

69 First give up inner cravings for gratifying the senses and then develop pure vasanas such as friendship.

70 Then give up even these good vasanas, although manifesting them outwardly towards the world, and abide in pure Consciousness with inner peace and with equal friendliness towards all.

71 Giving up even that which operates the mind and the intellect, Oh Maruti, abide firmly

\(^6\) This refers to the Upanishadic saying that the knower of Brahman is equivalent to Brahman Himself.
in Me, with the powerful well-being that remains.

72
Oh, Son of Pavana (the Wind-god), abide permanently in Me that am formless and inexhaustible, without sound or taste or touch or odour, without name and without category, in Me the reliever of misery.

73
I am OM, the fully Liberated, the One without a second, which appears to the eyes (in the form of the world) as the lofty expanse of the sky, which shines forth uniformly, which is the unborn and indestructible, unattached and omnipresent.

74
I am indeed the Seer; I am the Pure and the Unchangeable; I have neither qualities nor purposes; I am before and behind, above and below; I am everywhere, Infinite, the Greatest: thus should you think.

75
You should feel: I am the unborn and the deathless, the ageless and immortal, self-luminous, omnipresent, inexhaustible; I am neither the cause nor the action; I am unaffected and ever content.

76
When time takes away the body, the Liberated gives up the state of jivanmukti and enters that of Videhamukti just as the wind that stops blowing becomes still air.

As the Rik stotra declares: That is the Supreme State of All-pervading Vishnu which the Sages always see, like seeing the heavens with open eyes. It is that with which the Liberated and fully Awakened unite. That indeed is the supreme state of Vishnu. This is true; thus says the Upanishad.

Invocation

OM. That is full; this is full. This fullness has been projected from that fullness. When this fullness merges in that fullness, all that remains is fullness.

OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

7 Refers to Sri Rama who is regarded as Brahman.

In the age when Life on earth was full, no one paid any special attention to worthy men nor did they single out the man of ability. Rulers were simply the highest branches on the tree, and the people were like deer in the woods. They were honest and righteous without realizing that they were "doing their duty". They loved each other and did not know that this was "Love of Neighbour". They deceived no one yet they did not know that they were "men to be trusted". They were reliable and did not know that this was "Good Faith". They lived freely together giving and taking, and did not know that they were "generous". For this reason their deeds have not been narrated. They made no history.

— From The Way of Chuang Tzu
(Translated by Father Thomas Merton)
OF WHAT RELIGION WAS SAI BABA?

By P. S. V. IYER

Apart from being the Secretary of the Calcutta Sai Samaj, and editing its monthly bulletin, Sri P. S. V. Iyer also participates actively in Ramana Jayanti celebrations in Calcutta. He has also helped in bringing out a Bengali publication called Sree Ramana Geetika containing the life and some of the works of the Maharshi.

Sai Baba gave no indication of his belonging to any particular religion, but he was intensely religious. He showed no preference to any community, yet he favoured religious practices. He tended the holy fire after the Hindu and the Zorastrian. He passed for a Moslem in his dress and his ways and he reverenced Dutta and Sri Ram. He spoke of Allah Malik with the fervour of a devout Moslem, and he ordered the observance of the holy Guru Purnima.

Sai Baba came in 1838, as a youth to Shirdi, a barren and neglected village in Rahate subdivision of Maharashtra. He chose this uninteresting spot to carry on his experiments in communal harmony. Hindu and Moslem families lived then, as they do now, as neighbours in that village. They were often quarrelling with each other.

As a stranger Baba treated the sick among them with herbs, and then he shared in their labours. Apart from the services he rendered to them, Sai Baba could, by his stature and the spiritual powers he had gained from the grace of his guru Venkusa, and stored by dint of his penance and sacrifices, arrest their attention and compel their admiration. By his very presence, therefore, he was able to get these simple rustics to understand the fruitlessness of dissension. They had to walk miles to bathe or fetch fresh water from the Godhavari. He excavated for them a fresh water well in the village and laid out a garden by getting the villagers work shoulder to shoulder. He showed them how by working intelligently and together they could make Shirdi a better place to live in.

In the village Sai Baba occupied a Mosque, which he called Dwaraka Maayi. In this mosque he lighted a fire with three logs, which is burning to this day. The ashes of this fire are found to work miraculously in curing diseases. It is in this mosque that Sai Baba blessed those who came to him, granting them
all kinds of benefits, temporal and spiritual. Here he spoke words of wisdom which Narasimha Swamiji has compiled in his masterpiece "Charters and Sayings of Sai Baba". Sharing his favours in common these devotees who belonged to different communities looked upon each other as brothers in faith.

Sai Baba delighted in singing songs of Kabir Das, who had his digs at the Hindu and Moslem fanatics. Baba showed amazing proficiency in Hindu scriptures and the Quran. He bade Abdullah Bhai recite the Quran, Mahalsapathy read Bhagavatham and Nana Saheb Chandorkar study Bhagavad Gita. Under Baba’s loving care these and other devotees grew in wisdom and spirituality.

Once a Moslem brought before Sai Baba a convert, and felt proud of his work. But Sai Baba rejected it. He asked the convert if he had changed his father. He would never countenance any man changing over from the faith into which his past Karma had caused him to be born. Sai Baba recognized the justification and necessity for the existence of the major religions in the world. He did recommend bhajan, a meditation and self-enquiry to his devotees, but he was averse to any of these interfering with their respective religious injunctions.

Sai Baba allowed the holding of a fair called urs in Shirdi during Ramanavami festival. Moslem traders were given opportunities to participate in the fair. In the wrestling matches held in this festival Hindu, Moslem and Sikh combatants, as well as those belonging to any other community are allowed. The victor, to whichever community he may belong, carries away the prize. In the Ramanavami procession the Hindus carry banners and the Moslems take out salvers containing sandal paste. These practices go on even now in Shirdi. Thus, by bringing members of sister communities in commerce, sports and colourful festivities, Baba achieved wonderful communal harmony.

When Sai Baba attained Mahasamadhi on 15th October, 1918, dispute arose between Hindus and Moslems in Shirdi over the manner of disposing of his remains. A plebiscite was held 36 hours after, in the presence of an official who deputized for the District Collector, and it was decided by majority that his remains should be interred inside a temple which Gopal Rao Butty had built for worshipping Krishna. To this building the body was carried in a procession and laid to rest in a sepulchre constructed for the purpose. The body had remained fresh, without decomposition or rigor mortis all these hours. The temple housing the remains of Sai Baba is called Samadhi Mandir. In this place one feels the living presence of the Master. Here Baba's devotees gather in their multitudes, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality to attend the services arranged day and night.

It is a touching sight to see the devotees belonging to different communities join in chanting the Maharli hymns at the arati (closing part of the service) which is held twice daily, once at noon and again in the last hour of night. One may observe, on this occasion, how devotion to Sai Baba brings heart to heart people of diverse faiths the world over.

The owl calls, I hear,
The owl's " I " is it's calling.
My " me " is my hearing.
What is that which is both calling and hearing?

SHEN HUI
In the January 1968 issue of *The Mountain Path* we published an article on Yoga Vasishta and promised to serialise a condensed version of it at a future date. We publish below the first chapter of one of the condensed versions known as the *Yoga Vasishta Sara* (The Essence of Yoga Vasishta). The remaining chapters will be published in the subsequent issues. The translation was made by Swami Suresananda of Vijnana Ramaneeyam, Palghat, but has been considerably modified.

**CHAPTER I**

**DISPASSION**

1. Salutations to that calm effulgence which is endless and unlimited by space, time etc., the pure consciousness which can be known by experience only.

2. Neither one who is totally ignorant nor one who knows it (Truth) is eligible to study this book. Only he who thinks ‘I am bound; I must become free’ is entitled to study it.

3. Until one is definitely blessed by the Supreme Lord he will not find either a proper Guru or the right scripture.

4. Just as a steady boat, O Rama, is obtained from a boatman, so also the method of crossing the ocean of samsara is learnt by associating with great souls.

5. The great remedy for the long-lasting disease of samsara is the enquiry, ‘Who am I?, to whom does this samsara belong?’, which entirely cures it.

6. Not a day should be spent in a place which does not possess the tree of a wise knower of Truth with its good fruits and cool shade.

7. The sages are to be approached even if they do not teach. Even their talks in a light vein contain wisdom.

8. The company of sages converts emptiness into fullness, death into immortality and adversity into prosperity.

9. If sages were concerned solely with their own happiness with whom could those tormented by the sorrows of samsara seek refuge?

10. That which is imparted, O good soul, to a worthy disciple who has become dispassionate is the real wisdom; it is the real
purport of the sacred texts and is also the comprehensive wisdom.

11. Following the customary method of teaching is only for preserving the tradition. Pure awareness results solely from the clarity of the disciple’s understanding.

12. The Lord cannot be seen with the help of the sacred texts or the Guru. The Self is seen by the Self alone with the pure intellect.

13. All the arts acquired by men are lost by lack of practice, but this art of wisdom grows steadily once it rises.

14. Just as an ornament worn round the neck is considered lost through forgetfulness and is gained when the mistake is realized, so also the Self is attained (when the delusion is removed) by the words of the Guru.

15. He is indeed an unfortunate person who, not knowing his own Self, takes pleasure in sense-objects, like one who realizes too late that the food eaten by him was poisonous.

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

17. Even the slightest thought immerses a man in sorrow; when devoid of all thoughts he enjoys imperishable bliss.

18. Just as we experience the delusion of hundreds of years in a dream lasting an hour, so also we experience the sport of maya in our waking state.

19. He is a happy man whose mind is inwardly cool and free from attachment and hatred and who looks upon this (world) like a mere spectator.

20. He who has understood well how to abandon all ideas of acceptance and rejection and who has realized the consciousness which is within the innermost heart — his life is illustrious.

21. On the dissolution of the body the ether (consciousness) limited by the heart (hrdayam) alone ceases to exist. People lament needlessly that the Self is extinct.

22. When pots, etc. are broken the space within them becomes unlimited. So also when bodies cease to exist the Self remains eternal and unattached.

23. Nothing whatever is born or dies anywhere at any time. It is Brahma alone appearing illusorily in the form of the world.

24. The Self is more extensive than space; it is pure, subtle, undecaying and auspicious. As such how could it be born and how can it die?

25. All this is the tranquil One without beginning, middle or end which cannot be said to be existent or non-existent. Know this and be happy.

26. O Rama, it is indeed nobler to wander begging about the streets of the outcasts (chandalas), an earthen bowl in hand, than to live a life steeped in ignorance.

27. Neither disease nor poison nor adversity nor any other thing in the world causes more suffering to men than such stupidity engendered in their bodies.

— To be continued in the next issue.

Married or unmarried, a man can realise the Self; because That is here and now. If it were not so, but attainable by some effort at some time, and if it were new and had to be acquired, it would not be worth pursuit. Because, what is not natural is not permanent either.

— Sri Maharshi.
WHEN did I first hear of Bhagavan? It is difficult to imagine a time when one had not. Yet I think it was from Brunton’s book *Message From Arunachala* (first read in the late 40’s), and many good talks with a friend of Brunton’s. Then in 1950 there was the article in an American magazine describing Bhagavan’s last days.

These sources gave no more than an elusive awareness of something I wanted avidly to learn more about. A pilgrimage to Arunachala became—and remains—an unaltering and deep desire. Imagine my feelings around ten years later when my beloved sister De Lancey Kapleau was able to do just that! And was good enough to write fully about it and send me Osborne’s book on Bhagavan’s life!

I read through her description of her stay at the ashram with mounting excitement; read and reread it. Then devoured the book. The last chapters were read late at night, when the children and my husband were all asleep, and my heart nearly burst for joy, while grateful tears sprang from my eyes. When I closed the book I sat still for some time, then quite spontaneously prostrated myself in gratitude. Later, in bed, thinking of my sister’s letter, I felt an earthy pang of envy that she, not I, had reached the ashram. You know the sort of thing: “Oh how wonderful—just imagine—I wish it had been I.” The jealousy surprised me, a little, but when I recognized and acknowledged it I had to laugh at the jealous one, and said to myself: “But you fool, if your sister went there of course this was part of her karmic pattern. For you, and for anybody, if Arunachala exists anywhere it must exist most truly in the hearts of those who are open to it. So the significance is always within oneself.”

At this the field of my vision was lit by a great glow of golden light, and my heart expanded in almost unbelievable joy. The joy deepened and glowed into an incredible depth of peace, which wells up again as I write this.

A few weeks afterward I was thinking still of Osborne’s book, and particularly recalling the beautiful experience of the disciple who felt the pressure of Bhagavan’s hand on his heart, in blessing, while far from the ashram and Bhagavan. Again a swift little pang of envy, and again a self-scolding: he to whom it happened had made himself ready for the reception of such Grace, and it could happen only to the heart which was ripe for it.

The darkness of the night around me became utterly black, and in my mind’s eye I caught a fleeting glimpse of Maharshi’s
wonderful face. At the same moment I felt a sharp pressure in the chest, just to the right of the breastbone. Everything merged into utterable peace. I was able to dwell in that peace for several days, during which time errors, disharmonies, misunderstandings, impatience and fatigue became impossible, and my family, who knew nothing of what had happened, responded radiantly in an unbroken harmonious and loving glow. The peace gradually receded, of course, but from that time, conscious effort is opening my heart to Bhagavan and I could almost always restore it.

Around this time my mother was taken to a hospital, where she lived for her last three remaining years. Having small children, no household help, and the vagaries of public transportation made it difficult for me to visit her regularly. I have always been deeply fond of this loving mother, and grateful to her for her warmth and enthusiasm. As her body weakened she was much in my thoughts. I was concerned that for years she had feared death, and while my grasp of spiritual things was tentative, I felt that somehow perhaps one might help. So often at nights or in quiet moments I would think of her, wishing her love and peace with all my heart. I nearly trembled with the intensity of effort. At one point she opened her eyes. As I looked at her it was not my mother's hazel eyes into which mine locked, but Bhagavan's deep brown ones. And from them flooded peace and love without measure, unfathomable wisdom and bliss, until everything disappeared into a vastness of love and peace. There was no mother, no daughter, no hospital room — only that profound peace which passeth all understanding.

One afternoon on a hospital visit my mother, who had been rather ill, drifted in and out of sleep while I was with her. I sat very close by, cradling her head in my arms, and while she drifted off, wishing her love and peace with all my heart. I nearly trembled with the intensity of effort. At one point she opened her eyes. As I looked at her it was not my mother's hazel eyes into which mine locked, but Bhagavan's deep brown ones. And from them flooded peace and love without measure, unfathomable wisdom and bliss, until everything disappeared into a vastness of love and peace. There was no mother, no daughter, no hospital room — only that profound peace which passeth all understanding.

Slowly — I don't know when — it receded. But at that time I knew that my mother was soon to die, and would pass in peace. And I believed that it would be granted to me to be with her at the end. It took place within a week, and I was by the bedside watching a frail body struggle its last, while strongly aware that its soul watched with me, wondering but unafraid. How deep was my gratitude!

It has not been my privilege to have known Bhagavan while he was among us as a man, nor as yet to visit the ashram or to walk on Arunachala. But Bhagavan, the ashram and Arunachala are eternally ready to fill me whenever I truly turn my heart and open it to them.

Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect the doer. He is, even while working, in solitude. To engage in your duty is the true Namaskar... and abiding in God is the only true Asan.

— BHAGAVAN.
Bhagavan has said, “First find out who you are then all these things will be known to you.”

How can I find the Self?
The Self which many seek is a hypothetical, theoretical non-entity and is thus non-existent. It is merely a concept erroneously sought by those who believe that if they can become that which does not exist, then when identity with the non-existent has been established all other troubles will vanish in the non-existence of this false identity. You cannot identify the Self with anything which either is or is not and still be the Self. So why try?

But there must be some point in seeking the Self?
Ah yes, there would be if there were anything to seek, but there is not. If you have no desire for anything and withdraw from your mind any desire either to have or not to have a thing, feeling or thought then you are quite unaffected whether you have any thing or no thing. In reality there is nothing.

But what has this got to do with the Self?
Nothing, I am only talking about something which is not you so that you will not go looking for that which you are not.

Then can I find the Self?
No, you can’t, that’s the point. When you get rid of all your desires and attachments to all these things together with their functions then what is left is the Self. It cannot be sought because it is the seeker looking everywhere for itself instead of just being the self. Isn’t it rather foolish to think that you are what you are not, and to look for yourself among those things which are not the Self?

Yes, I suppose so, but how can one become the Self?
You can’t and you don’t.

But if I do not desire, and do not identify myself with these things then I am the Self?
Certainly not. You are getting warm, but you are only being not-desiring and not-identifying in relation to those things.

Then what shall I do? It seems quite hopeless.
It isn’t, really it is quite simple. When the functions of the mind cease to either desire or not to desire, or identify or not identify, and this is followed by the falling away of the functions themselves then the Self alone is, and this is just Being . . . BE THAT.

Bhagavan puts this much more clearly than I can. “Is there anyone who does not know the Self? Each knows yet does not know the Self. A strange paradox.”
TEARS OF ECSTASY

I was a broker whose business took me all over India. Once, when I was in Kashmir, I came to hear of Sri Bhagavan and his greatness. So, soon after my return to Madras, I came to Tiruvannamalai and proceeded to the Ashram. When I saw Sri Bhagavan he was sitting on a bench inside a long room thatched with coconut leaves put up over his mother’s tomb. This was in January 1928 when the Ashram consisted practically of this and nothing else. The moment I saw Sri Bhagavan I was overcome by an inexplicable feeling of joy and devotion. I burst into tears immediately and could not stop them for a long time. I had had a chequered career and had never known peace of mind. But in Sri Bhagavan’s presence I experienced complete peace of mind. I also experienced extraordinary bliss. The next day I was fortunate enough to have darshan of Sri Seshadriswami.

Although I had to return to Madras my heart was with Sri Bhagavan. So I came back again in 1930 and was blessed by Sri Bhagavan with a smile and a piercing look. This time also I was overcome by an uncontrolable flow of tears of joy. The same thing happened when I visited the house at Tiruchuzhi in which Sri Bhagavan was born. The moment I entered the house I could not resist my ecstasy and tears, to the surprise of everybody there. None of them had the least idea of Sri Bhagavan’s greatness. They had been thinking that Venkataranan had merely become a sannyasin and gone to Tiruvannamalai like other sannyasins and sadhus. When I explained his greatness to them they were all greatly impressed.

On all my subsequent visits to Sri Bhagavan I experienced the same bliss and flow of tears. Sri Bhagavan himself noticed this. Once a tender calf came running and prancing to

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1 Introduced to our readers in the issue of October 1968, p. 311.
at Bhrigu Dara, I could not stay there. So I returned to Tiruvannamalai. At Varamasi I had been advised to wear ochre robes, the recognized dress of sannyasins, as a means of obtaining alms easily. I had continued to wear them, but, when I came before Bhagavan in them, he burst out laughing and said: "Giving up the ego is the real sannyasa, not the wearing of ochre robes." At once I discarded them and have since then worn only white.

Having been convinced that Sri Bhagavan was the substratum of the universe and the most glorious avatar that has been witnessed till now, I felt that it was my duty to make his greatness known everywhere. With this object in view I resigned my post of a broker in the well-known firm of Bombay Co. at Madurai, much against the wishes of Sri B. V. Narasimha Swami and others. I next proceeded to celebrate Ramana Jayanti (Bhagavan's birthday) at various places with puja, music, discourses, processions, etc. I even proceeded to Ceylon, Burma and Malaya and celebrated Ramana Jayanti or Ramana Mela or installed Ramana's portraits at all the places I visited.

There were several instances in which Sri Bhagavan's grace was particularly bestowed upon me. Once I met Sri Bhagavan on his way up the hill and prostrated myself before him and said: "I have now had Sri Bhagavan's darshan, I can go." Upon this Sri Bhagavan smiled and said: "Whose darshan to whom? Why don't you say that I had your darshan?" This has been recorded in "Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi" also.

On another occasion I was trying to meditate in a small Siva temple at Gokarnam. I was feeling frustrated because I could not continue to make the enquiry 'Who am I?' successfully. Suddenly I felt that my body had become exactly like that of Sri Bhagavan as it appears in the tri-colour photograph in the book Self Realization (old edition). I fell into a trance and did not know how long I remained in that state. When I regained consciousness I wrote to Sri Bhagavan quoting a well-known song of Ramalinga Swamigal beginning with the
words, "I cannot endure my torments any longer." But, without waiting for a reply, I left for Tiruvannamalai where I arrived two days before Mahasivaratri. When Sri Bhagavan asked me why I had come away from Gokarnam when thousands of people were going there on the sacred occasion I replied that Sri Bhagavan was my Lord Siva and that I had, therefore, come for this darshan.

I used very often to bring with me some superior honey when I came to the Ashram. On such occasions Sri Bhagavan used to remark: "I have just been thinking of honey and you are bringing it!" Once, when I came from Madurai, Sri Bhagavan asked me whether I had brought 'sellu', a special preparation which is offered to the deity at Alagar Kovil and then distributed as prasadam to devotees. I immediately rushed back to Madurai without informing anybody and came back quickly with a large quantity of 'sellu'. When some of it was served on Sri Bhagavan's leaf-plate next time he said to me: "I asked you only in a casual way whether you had brought any and now you have gone all the way to Madurai and got it."

On another occasion my brother-in-law sent, at my instance, from Tiruchendur a dealwood box of sugar candy made of palmyra juice which I thought was good for Sri Bhagavan's asthma. When Sri Bhagavan saw it he observed: "I just thought of this kind of sugar candy and here you have already got it for me." I used to obtain jack fruits from Panruti and mangoes from Salem and Sri Bhagavan used to see that they were properly cut and distributed.

I had obtained for Sri Bhagavan's use an easy chair specially made with a foot rest by Curzon & Co., the well-known furniture makers of Madras. It is now used on the day of the Deepam for placing Sri Bhagavan's portrait. But, when I got his sofa repaired without his knowledge, he refused to sit on it for a long time. It was only when he saw my extreme distress that he relented and agreed to sit on it.

It is Sri Bhagavan's grace which has finally brought me to the Ashram to spend my last days near him. Salutation to Sri Bhagavan!

As one enquires for whom is this realization one's individuality goes and the delusion that the Self has yet to be realized leaves him. This alone is the Grace of the Guru. The Guru can only dispel the delusion that the Self has not yet been realized. But to grant Self-realization is impossible not only for the Guru but even for Iswara (God). To pray for the grant of Self-realization is like asking 'give myself to me'! Because of identification with the body there arises the delusion that I am an individual. That creates the further delusion that Guru is an individual other than myself. Really Guru is not other than the Self.

― From Ramana Reminiscences.
THE VEDAPARAYANA

TATTTHIYA UPAHISHAD

(Continued from our last issue. This second part of the Upanishad is entitled Ananda Valli or the Section dealing with bliss the previous part being the Siksha Valli or the Section dealing with the Science of Phonetics.)

May (Brahman) protect both of us (the Guru and the disciple). May (Brahman) sustain us. May we work together intensely. May our study be illuminating. Let us not bear ill will towards each other. OM Peace, Peace, Peace.

He who knows Brahman attains the Supreme (state). This has been stated clearly by the following saying: "Brahman is Being, Consciousness and Infinite. He who knows (realizes) that it exists within the cave (heart or intellect), in the highest ether (the Unmanifest), enjoys all his desires along with the omniscient Brahman.

From that (Brahman) or from this Self (Atman) ether (akasa) came into existence; from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water the earth, from the earth herbs, from herbs food and from food man. He is indeed this man consisting of the essence of food (annantasamaya). This indeed is his head. This is his right wing (side). This is his left wing. This is his trunk. This is the tail (the nether limbs) forming his support. There is also this stanza (explaining it):

"From food are born all beings, those that depend upon the earth. They live on food and into food they enter when they die. Hence it is regarded as the universal (the most important) medicament (aushadha). Those who meditate on food as Brahman truly obtain all the food. For food is the first among created things. Hence it is called the universal medicament. All beings are born of food. Having been born they grow on food. It (food) eats, and is eaten by, beings. Therefore it is called Annam."
Different from this (body) consisting of the essence of food (annarasamaya) is the body consisting of the life forces (pranamaya). By this that (annarasamaya) is filled. This (pranamaya) is (also) regarded as having the form of a man. It is imagined in the form of a man on the analogy of the other (annarasamaya). Prana is indeed his head. Vyana is his right wing. Apana is his left wing. Akasa (ether) is his trunk. Prithvi (earth) is the tail which supports him. There is also the following stanza about it:

"The Devas breathe (live) because of Prana; also men and animals. Prana is truly the life-span (ayuh) of beings. Therefore it is spoken of as the universal life-span. Those who meditate on Prana as Brahman attain (live) the full span of life. Prana is the life-span of beings and is therefore called the universal life-span (survayushham). This pranamaya is truly the inner self of that which was mentioned earlier (annarasamaya). Different from this pranamaya is another body consisting of the mind (manomaya). By this that (pranamaya) is filled. This is (also) regarded as having the form of a man. It is imagined in the form of a man on the analogy of the other. Yajus (sacred incantations) is his head. Rk is his right wing. Samen is his left wing. Adesa (Vedic injunctions) forms his trunk. The (hymns) of the (sage) Atharva Angirasa form the tail which supports him. There is also the following stanza about it:

"He who knows the bliss of Brahman from which speech turns back along with mind, unable to reach it, does not fear at any time."

This is truly the inner self of that which was mentioned earlier (manomaya). Different from that which consists of mind (manomaya) there is another body consisting of intelligence (vijnanamaya). By this that (manomaya) is filled. This is (also) regarded as having the form of a man. It is imagined in the form of a man on the analogy of the other. Sraddha (reverence for the Guru and the scriptures) is his head. Rtvun (eternal law of the universe) is his right wing. Satyam (Truth) is his left wing. Yoga is his trunk. Mahat (the Unmanifest) is the tail which supports him. Regarding this also there is the following stanza:

"Vijnanam (intelligence or understanding) offers sacrifice. It also performs the various karmas (religious rites). All the Devas meditate on vijnana as Brahman, the eldest (and the most important). If one meditates upon vijnana as Brahman and does not swerve from it he leaves aside in the body his sins and fully enjoys all (his) desires."

This (vijnanamaya) is the inner self of that which was mentioned earlier (manomaya). Different from this (vijnanamaya) there is another body consisting of bliss (anandamaya). By this that (vijnanamaya) is filled. This one is (also) regarded as having the form of a man. It is imagined in the form of a man on the analogy of the other. Priya (love) is his head. Moda (joy) is his right wing. Pranmoda (delight) is his left wing. Bliss is his trunk. Brahman is the tail which supports him. About this there is (also) the following stanza:

"If a person thinks that Brahman is non-existent he truly becomes non-existent (a non-entity). If he knows that Brahman exists he will be known (by the wise) as existent (one who has realized Brahman). " This (anandamaya) is the inner self of that which was mentioned earlier (vijnanamaya).

Now these questions arise: "Does one who has not known (Brahman) experience (Brahman) on leaving this world? Does one who has known (Brahman) experience (Brahman) on leaving this world?"

He (Brahman or Self) desired: "May I be born as many." He performed tapas (thought intensely). Having thought intensely he created all this — whatever is here (in the world). After creating it he entered into it. After entering into it he became the Being.
(sat) and the Beyond (tyat). He became that which can be defined and that which cannot be defined, that which has a basis and that which has no basis, the sentient and the inert, the real (satyam) and the unreal (anrtam). He became the real. Whatever exists is called the real (satyam). There is (also) this stanza about it.

"In the beginning this was indeed non-existent. From it there arose existence. It made itself by itself. That which is well-made is rasa (joy, bliss). Obtaining this joy one becomes blissful. Who, indeed, could breathe in or breathe out if this bliss were not in the akasa (ether)? Indeed it is this alone that produces bliss. When one finds a support in this invisible, bodiless, indescribable, abodeless (state) he reaches the state of fearlessness. When one makes even the slightest distinction in it he is subject to fear. That itself is the cause of fear to the learned person who does not think deeply." There is also this stanza about it:

"For fear of It (Brahman) the wind blows, for fear of It the Sun rises, for fear of It Agni and Indra and Death, the fifth, run (to do their allotted work)"

Now this is an enquiry into the nature of bliss (ananda): Let it be supposed that there is a youth, a good and learned youth full of desires (ambitions), resolute and strong, and that to him belongs this entire earth full of riches. That is one unit of human joy. One hundred of these units of human joy make a unit of joy of Manushya Gandharvas (men who have acquired supernatural powers). One who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires also (possesses the same joy). One hundred such units of joy of Manushya Gandharvas constitute one unit of joy of Deva Gandharvas (celestial beings). It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of the Devas who are Ajanajas (those who are born in the world of the celestials). It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of the Devas who are Ajanajas constitute one unit of joy of Karma Devas, those who have become Devas by virtue of their karma (actions). It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of Karma Devas constitute one unit of joy of Devas. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of the Devas who are Ajanajas constitute one unit of joy of Indra constitute one unit of joy of Deva. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of Indra constitute one unit of joy of Deva. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of Deva constitute one unit of joy of Brahma. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of Brahma constitute one unit of joy. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires.

He who is in this man and he who is in the Sun are one and the same. He who knows this transcends, on departing from this world, the self which is annamaya, transcends the self which is pranamaya, transcends the self which is manomaya, transcends the self which is vijnanamaya, transcends the self which is anandamaya. There is also this stanza about it.

"He who knows the bliss of Brahman from which speech turns back along with mind, unable to reach it, experiences no fear from
THE MOUNTAIN PATH

January

any source. The (thoughts) "why did I not do good? Why did I do evil?" do not torment him. He who knows this regards these two as his Self. These two truly fortify the Self of him who knows this. This is the secret (Upanishad).

May (Brahman) protect both of us. May (Brahman) sustain both of us. May we work together intensely. May our study be illuminating. Let us not bear ill will towards each other.

OM! Peace, Peace, Peace.

Transcendence and Immanence

By WEI WU WEI

I am not in front of you, I am not behind you,
Nor am I outside, or inside,
I am not above, nor am I below.

I am neither here nor there,
Neither near or far,
I am not anywhere, nor am I nowhere.

For where could there be any 'where'
Wherein I could be?

I have never come nor shall I ever go,
I know no before, nor any after,
I am not old, and I was never young.

For whenever could there be a 'when'?
During which I could be?

I am not any thing, nor no thing,
For what thing could there be
That I could be, or not be,
Since there is no 'I'?

Note: It is interesting to remember that when Sri Ramana Maharshi was dying, he asked why people were weeping and was told that it was because he was leaving them. He answered, in apparent surprise, "But where do they think I could go to?" Is there record of a greater 'last word'? It would seem that its supreme significance is not yet very generally understood. But to 'explain' it would reduce its stupendous import.

1 From his latest book: Posthumous Pieces, pub: Hong Kong University Press.
Sri Bhagavan Said:

1. The asvattha (tree) with roots above and branches below is said to be imperishable. The Vedas are its leaves. He who knows this knows the Vedas.

(The asvattha is the pippal tree sacred not only to the Hindus but also to the Buddhists and others. It means literally ‘ever-changing’ or momentary; yet it is said to be imperishable as it has neither beginning nor end. ‘Roots above and branches below’ indicates that the ultimate source of everything is the transcendental Being manifesting itself also on the physical plane).

2. Its branches spread above and below, growing well on gunas (the three qualities of Prakriti). The objects of the senses are its foliage and its roots stretch below in the world of men leading to actions which are binding.
Its (real) form cannot be ascertained here, nor its end, nor beginning, nor support. After cutting this deep-rooted asvattha tree with the strong (unfailing) sword of non-attachment that state should be sought on attaining which one does not return (to this world), saying “I surrender myself completely to that Supreme Being (Purusha) from which this ancient activity (of creation) began to flow”.

(Apart from its source, Brahman, the world has no existence. It is perceived because of the senses and the mind and is thus the creation of the mind. To make the mind quiescent by detachment and to direct it towards enquiry is the only way to attain the Self—the Brahmic state).

The undeluded, those who are free from pride and ignorance, who have overcome the evil of attachment, who are ever devoted to the Self, who have turned away from desires and are entirely beyond the dualities of pleasure and pain, attain that imperishable state.

Neither sun, nor moon, nor fire illumine this state on attaining which one does not return. And this is My supreme abode.

A fragment of Myself, eternal (like Myself) becomes the jiva (the individual self) in the world and attracts to itself the six sense-organs, including the mind, based on Prakriti.

When the Lord (Isvara) takes a body and also when He leaves it (lit. ascends) He takes these (the six organs) and departs, like the wind that (takes and wafts) scents from their receptacles (flowers, etc.).

Presiding over the ear, the eye, the skin, the tongue, the nose and the mind He enjoys the sense-objects (so long as he is in a body).

The extremely deluded persons do not perceive Him (as the indwelling Self) when in association with the gunas He ascends (from a body) or dwells (in one) or experiences (sense-objects); only those who have the eye of wisdom see.

With great effort Yogis see Him dwelling within themselves, but unenlightened persons, even if they strive, cannot see Him.

The lustre in the sun which illuminates the whole world and that which is in the moon and the fire, know that to be My lustre.

Entering the earth I support (all) beings with (my) power, and as soma, the strength-giving juice (moon), I nourish all plants.

Having entered, as fire, into the bodies of living beings and uniting with the Prana and the Apana (life-forces moving upward and downward), I digest the four kinds of food.

Moreover, I reside in the hearts of all; from Me come memory and knowledge as well as their loss. I am He to be known by all the Vedas. I alone am the author of Vedanta as well as the knower of the Vedas.

When the Lord (Isvara) takes a body and also when He leaves it (lit. ascends) He takes these (the six organs) and departs, like the wind that (takes and wafts) scents from their receptacles (flowers, etc.).

There are two Persons (Purushas) in the world—the perishable and the imperishable. The perishable (comprises) all creatures; the imperishable is what is immutable.

But there is another over and above (these), the Highest known as the Supreme Self (Paramatma). He is the imperishable Lord who, entering the three worlds, supports them.
18
Since I transcend the perishable and am the imperishable I am known in the world as well as in the Vedas as the Supreme Person (Purushottama).

19
The undeluded person who knows Me thus as the Supreme Person is all-knowing and worships Me with his whole being, O Bharata.

20
I have revealed to you, O sinless one, this supreme secret. One who knows this becomes wise and attains the goal of his life, O Bharata.

Here ends the fifteenth chapter entitled The Yoga of the Supreme Person.

A prisoner in his cell
Watches a spider spin her web.
If his heart were really quiet,
If his eyes were really open,
Would he any longer be a prisoner?
So are we prisoners of our own personalities.

SHEN HUI

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THE RESTLESS QUEST OF MODERN MAN: W. G. Cole: Oxford University Press, New York: Price: $ 3.50. A student of Paul Tillich, a stimulating teacher of Religion and author of a scholarly and candid work on “Sex in Christianity and Psychoanalysis”, Dr. W. G. Cole in this book describes at length the modern malady of “meaninglessness” and prescribes in persuasive terms a well-tried and infallible remedy. The main argument is carried forward with mathematical precision and logical continuity, while the felicitous phrasing and copious, apt quotations help to cover this firm skeleton with warm flesh and blood.

The crisis of our time, cultural, political and economic, stems from the inability of men and women to find a satisfying “meaning” in their individual or collective lives. Faith in the essential goodness of man has been destroyed by Hitler, Stalin and the nuclear terror; Freud and Marx have between them undermined human reason. In the advanced countries “God is dead. Losing faith in God, men have lost faith in one another and have become cautious, uncommitted, unheroic. In the effort to convert basic anxiety into “manageable fear”, they turn to conformity, mass ideas, mass movements and herd culture. A regimented mouse, man has forgotten the way to the Temple, his true home, where alone he can enjoy dignified freedom and serene security. Sex, mammon-worship and subservience to the nation-state have reduced him to heteronomy; he is controlled and devoured from without. Men flee from the frightening freedom proffered by Christ into the comforting arms of Mother Church, where all they learn is docility, the piety which silences by pretending to answer the deep questions they dare not ask. Thus far the diagnosis, the concession made, the word spoken, to “the cultured despisers of religion.”

What follows is a desperate attempt to argue intellectuals into heroism by pointing to them a God who is “Truth and Personhood and Love.” In the process, poor Hindu mythology receives ironic blows from the massive ignorance of an affluent society: “the cult of Shiva the destroyer, and of Mother Kali, the Black Goddess of Death, represent worship of the dark ground . . . generally regarded as pathological and psychotic” (p. 67). Again, missionary enterprise is lauded for having converted Pacific islanders from cannibalism and the comforting conclusion is drawn: “whatever may be said of contemporary Christianity qualitatively, it is quantitatively on the march both in numbers of adherents and in geographical spread.” (p. 94). That such “herd Christianity” should be recommended as the panacea for the modern evil condemned as “herd culture” goes only to show that the old Western Imperialism is very slow a-dying and can on occasion mislead even a learned and tolerant writer like Dr. Cole even while engaged in the legitimate and difficult task of explaining to modern man the inner metanoesis prescribed by the Lord Jesus and other Seers as the infallible remedy for the restlessness of samsara.

RENASCENT HINDUISM by D. S. Sarma: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay: Price: Rs. 10. This selection compiled by Professor D. S. Sarma himself contains the cream of his voluminous writings published during four decades in various books and journals. Besides the 24 items intended for the general public, there is an Appendix for younger readers, which includes four charming tales charmingly retold. Taken all together, this carefully chosen miscellany provides a comprehensive and illuminating survey of Hinduism past and present. The first essay is thoroughly rationalistic, critical and forward-looking; it stresses the urgent need for bridging the gap between faith and rituals and between morality and religion in contemporary Hinduism. Other essays deal with the long history and the many magnificent achievements of Hinduism, with the Gita in all its aspects, with the Ramayana and its relevance to modern man, with leaders like
Ramakrishna and Gandhi, and with the universal significance of the Gayatri mantra and of Sri Krishna's religion of love. At once scholarly and deeply sincere the volume holds between its covers the best of Professor Sarma's life-work and deserves to be seriously studied by all those genuinely interested in living Hinduism.

K. SWAMINATHAN.


This little book is a much-needed reprint: of one of the most lucid and profound Zen classics. Master Huang Po, who flourished during the most vital period of Ch'an Chinese Zen (he died around 850 A.D.), taught that there is only One Mind and nothing else. Once you stop conceptual thought, this Mind appears clearly to you as formless, void, bright, spotless, silent. "Only awake to the One Mind, and there is nothing whatsoever to be attained. This is the real Buddha. The Buddha and all sentient beings are the One Mind and nothing else."


There is no more scholarly authority on Mahayana Buddhism than Dr. Conze, who in this reprint provides a convenient guide to the main themes of the vast (and mostly still untranslated) Prajnaparamita literature. Even with Dr. Conze's help, this teaching is extremely difficult, however — partly because it is intrinsically so profound, and partly because the authors (writing between, say, 100 B.C. and 300 A.D.) employ a highly specialised expository style abounding with paradoxes. Actually, these scriptures are in essence perfectly simple and straightforward: that is indeed their trouble — they are altogether too simple for our confusion-loving minds. Their theme is that all things are, in themselves, quite empty. So long as this proposition is tackled from the outside by the intellect, it remains baffling, if not absurd. But when one takes an inside view, when one comes round actually to seeing that "here, form is void", that the very Spot one always occupied is indeed perfectly empty (and therefore capacious of all things) then the whole puzzle suddenly makes sense. The one sample piece of the universe which one is fully qualified to look into having at last looked into itself, all other things are thereby looked into; and the inside story of them all is manifestly this One Void.

D. H.


The sudden religious revival during the past decade makes it necessary for any earnest student of religion to study the implications of this spurt, not in the sterile style of sensation of fanatics, but rather in the calm, judicious atmosphere of serious scholars of a new science of philosophy. For this serious job Hiram Elfenbein seems to be eminently fitted as he has the zeal of a crusader, being a well-known lawyer fighting for civil liberties on behalf of one and all, regardless of his personal sympathies with their views and sometimes when he was diametrically opposed to their programmes. Here in this book, he has presented a persuasive discussion of formal worship of God; and as it is written in a layman's style without any highbrow philosophical terminology, it is a lucid layman's argument for thoughtful laymen.

After describing in detail the taboos, reticence, false standards, hypocritical cant, "utter nonsense", mental cowardice, and time-and-money-consuming effort which envelop this elementary subject of religion in the present day world, the author wonders how one can expect to bring mankind to sober and intelligent consideration of such earthly questions as the Atom Bomb, Population Explosion, the organisation of a human society that could provide plenty for all, or the elimination of poverty. A study of the book leaves the reader with the conviction that a person imbued with such fearful superstitions about 'here and hereafter' cannot be fully objective in his contemplation of philosophy, economics or education and morals, and therefore, he would not be surprised at the crisis of character in modern civilization.

If secular events are banal and unfulfilling, leading nowhere in the perplexities that beat upon the personal life or in the patterns of cultures that appear to have no goal save self-perpetuation, organised religions have fared no better, and it is, therefore, inevitable that the "God-is Dead" thesis has penetrated even religious student bodies. According to him, "the great obstacle to intelligent discussion about formal religion among the masses is the non-meeting of the minds on the "facts" between the adherents and the dissenters of the organised creed, which is involved in the inside story of them all is manifestly this One Void."
in the disagreement. Where these persons who are disillusioned rely on abstract philosophical or historical texts, not available or easily verified, say, for the advocates of Christianity, the learned dissertations citing these erudite sources are tragically lost on the people who take the Good Book reverently as the LAST and ONLY TRUTH on the subject. These blindly faithful souls can be led out of their self-imposed dark­ness only if we join with them in an argument which tentatively accepts the root allegations of their Holy Bible as if true in "fact", and then only if we reason with them from these assumed "facts" to the real truth which is, of course, the untruth of the Old and New Testament pre­mises. We certainly cannot count on the literal bible-believers to undertake research for facts by delving into the archives of the Vatican, for instance, to find the historical record of events. Nor can we expect them to take our word or opinion of what these historical sources reveal. All such argument on our part is futile. In order to convince church-goers, in order to present them with a convincing line of reasoning, on the other hand, the only practical course is to show them that the proof of their error and of Christianity's error lies not in the literary shrines of great philosophical writings but in the erratic Old and New Testaments which they have in their own homes or can readily find in their own churches."

If such Chapter titles as "God's First Command­ment : Thou Shalt be Ignorant "; "God, What a Nightmare!"; "The Hallmark of Hypocrisy"; "Christianity — The Biggest Show on Earth"; etc. etc. are daring, the author goes further in trying to prove that the foundation of all the crusades, expulsions, exterminations and persecutions of major importance of the world is organised religion itself. Although a Jew by descent, he has been, to quote his own words, looking on " Ministers, Priests, Rabbis " as being categorically either fools or hypo­crites — fools if they believed the inanities of their Holy Bible as if true, "fact", and then only if we reason with them from these assumed "facts" to the real truth which is, of course, the untruth of the Old and New Testament premises. We certainly cannot count on the literal bible-believers to undertake research for facts by delving into the archives of the Vatican, for instance, to find the historical record of events. Nor can we expect them to take our word or opinion of what these historical sources reveal. All such argument on our part is futile. In order to convince church-goers, in order to present them with a convincing line of reasoning, on the other hand, the only practical course is to show them that the proof of their error and of Christianity's error lies not in the literary shrines of great philosophical writings but in the erratic Old and New Testaments which they have in their own homes or can readily find in their own churches."

In his brilliant analysis of the trend of thought in the Upanishadic Age, Dr. Ranade shows how the older thinkers grappled with the same meta­physical and psychological problems as hold the field even today. "The elan vital which, in Bergson, wears no much more than a physiological aspect, appears in Aruni as a great organic force, only much more psychologised and spiritualised. The pyramidal depictions of Reality as on the basis of Space and Time with the qualitative emergence of Life and Mind and Deity in the course of evolu­tion which we meet with in Alexander and Lloyd Morgan, is present in those old Upanishads only with a stress on the inverted process of Deity as the primary existent from which came forth Mind and Life and Space and Time in the course of devolution. The very acute analysis of the episte­mology of Self Consciousness, which we meet with in the Upanishads, can easily hold its own against any similar doctrine even of the most advanced thinker of today." (P. xiii)

Incidentally, the author effectively rebuts the charge of Pessimism against the philosophy of Upanishads.


Ever since this solid work of Dr. Ranade was published some four decades ago, it has held its premier place among the most authentic expositions of the Upanishadic lore to appear in modern times. The author's approach has been both philological and philosophical in a manner that is acceptable to Western scholarship, but at the same time doing justice to the supra-intellectual content of the Upanishads. As he points out in his long introduc­tion, there is not one system of philosophy in these texts, but a number of systems leading to one Absolute Reality.

The Upanishads restate in their own terms the perceptions of the older seers clothed in the symbolic language of the Vedic Hymns ; basing themselves upon this foundation, they fathom the depths of the Soul, and scale the heights of the Spirit with the aid of an intuitivised intellect. The results of this adventure of theirs are recorded in a system of points as it were. They are not expositions in the modern sense of the term. They see more in the nature of graphs with notes wherever necessary. This is so especially with the older Upanishads — thirteen of them — which form the subject matter of the present study.

The Upanishads.
BOOK REVIEWS

physics, Ethics, and Mysticism. Each chapter is supplemented with the original texts cited in the argument. A whole chapter is devoted for tracing the roots of later philosophies in the Upanishads. An attempt is made — necessarily tentative — to trace the development of the theories of Transmigration, Ethics, Monism etc. There is also a Bibliographical note at the end giving a historical account of literature that had appeared till 1926 on the Upanishads.

A most satisfying book in which the scholar and the mystic in Dr. Ranade join hands.


This is a clear and concise account of the teachings of the Buddha based upon the Sutta Pitaka and allied literature. The discussion in the form of parables, dialogues, proceeds around the central theme of the Four Noble Truths and the Path to Deliverance.

The Truths are : the truth of Suffering, the truth of the Origin of Suffering, the truth about the Extinction of Suffering, and the truth about the Path leading to that extinction. This Path is eightfold : Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right bodily Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration. These eight constituents of the Path are divided into three divisions viz., Wisdom (the first two), Morality (the next three), Concentration (the last three).

The discipline leads through seven stages of Purity which are : Purity of Morality, Purity of Mind, Purity of Understanding, Purity of Escaping from Doubt, Purity of the Knowledge and Vision of the Progress, Purity of Knowledge and Vision.

The writer assembles together various expositions of these concepts and adds his own notes for clarification. While on the subject of Right Speech, for instance, he notes : 'Four kinds of speech in positive language : true speech, reconciling speech, mild speech, and wise speech.' (P 16) The book is both a guide to an understanding of the Thought and a manual for the practice of the Discipline of the Buddha.


In this account of the talks of Swami Ramdas in Europe, during the first ten days of his World-tour, we have an exposition of the philosophy and practice of God-life at first hand. For in every discussion with his callers Swamiji proceeds from his own experience and not on the basis of Sastras. The questions asked are of various kinds, some of them embarrassingly personal but he is untruffled and answers from his poise in the Divine Love which is more real to him than anything else in the world.

When he set out on his tour he made it clear that he was not going abroad as a teacher but as a servant of God, God in Humanity. The essential problem of the world, he said, is the problem of disharmony and that can be solved only by each one realising the source of all harmony in oneself, the Divine. Once this Divine seated in the heart of each one is realised, there is an automatic recognition of the same Divine in others and there is a spontaneous flow of Love on the world. There are many ways of realising the Divine, but the easiest, says Rondas, is the Way of Love. And of this Way, adoration of the Name is the key. The Name, the mantra of the Name, to be fruitful must be received from a Guru (P 67) and not just picked up from a book ; only when communicated by one who has already realised the truth of that Name in himself, is the mantra effective. Along with the word, the power of the Guru passes to the seeker.

Not all, however, are attracted to the path of nama-japa. There are many — especially in the West — who are interested in the Kundalini Yoga and some of the pages in this book are devoted to questions on that topic. To take up just one interesting reply : 'When the Kundalini is roused by the contact of a saint, a desire for God-realisation springs up in the person. When the Kundalini comes to any one centre, certain peculiar symptoms are visible in him. From the Muladhara when it rises to the Svadhishthana Chakra, the aspirant develops dispassion for worldly objects and enjoyments. When it reaches the Manipura it is said that the man rejects everything relating to the enjoyment of his senses and his mind becomes more and more resolute upon getting at the Divine. When it comes to the heart centre, the Anahata, he develops one-pointed devotion to God, and love and compassion for all the creatures in the world. Whenever he sees suffering he cannot bear it and he strives to alleviate it. His heart melts at the distress of others. When the Kundalini reaches the Vishuddha Chakra, at the throat, the aspirant is averse to talking about anything but God. From there it reaches the Ajna Chakra between the eye-
brows, and he sees visions of divine forms, lights
and flashes. When it reaches the highest Chakra,
the Sahasrara, at the crown of the head, the
aspirant loses consciousness of the body and goes
into Nirvikalpa Samadhi, in which he realises that
he and God are one." (P 184-5).

There are many observations of value to the
seeker e.g. dangers of Pranayama, dangers of
changing Gurus, ways of concentration, meditation,
absorption, six kinds of Bhakti, three kinds of
Samadhi, the course of Japa Yoga, the manner in
which spirituality can be made dynamic in day-to
day life etc. The author's reminiscences of his con-
tacts with different saints, his experiences in yoga
and above all his disarming simplicity of the Child
of God make the volume highly pleasing and
interesting. We look forward to further volumes
in the series.

RELIGION IN PRACTICE : By Swami Prabha-
Price : 40sh.

Based upon lectures delivered by the author to
American audiences during the last decade, this book
carries the message of practical spirituality to the
common man. The approach is catholic and seeks
to synthesise the best in the traditions of the East
and the West and the discussion proceeds in a
conversational manner with plenty of anecdotes,
stories from Sri Ramakrishna, personal reminiscen-
ces etc.

There are in all five sections dealing with the
Problem of life, the Goal of Religion, the Methods
to arrive at it, the Exemplars e.g. Badsha, Christ,
Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna. Questions and
Answers. Swamiji emphasises that the goal of the
awakened man is nothing short of a perfection of
union with the Godhead and that too here and
now, not somewhere beyond after death. Study,
meditation, work are the means to be adopted under
the guidance of a competent teacher. The Divine
Grace is indispensable but personal effort is also
necessary till the personal will is entirely surrendered
to the Divine Will.

Among the many interesting topics dealt with in
these pages are the question of conscious return
from Samadhi, the standpoint of Zen denying the
necessity of any spiritual discipline, Humanism. The
author's remarks are unexceptionable : It is possible
to carry back the memory of one's experience during
the samadhi if the consciousness is developed and
trained in that direction. Spiritual discipline is
necessary to remove the veil of ignorance that
conceals the Reality within ourselves. (P 122).

Regarding the third subject, he narrates an incident
in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. "One day Sri Rama-
krishna was in a very high spiritual mood, and in
that mood he was, as it were, talking to himself.
There were many disciples present and among them
was young Narendra. Sri Ramakrishna was young at
a well-known teaching of Sri Chaitanya, repeating
over and over again, 'Compassion for mankind!'
Then he said, 'Compassion — compassion — no !
no ! no ! Not compassion — but service.' Naren
listened attentively to these words, and as he left the
room he said : 'I have learned a great lesson today.
If I live I shall some day give this truth to the
world.' (P 230).

The last section contains a number of answers to
questions often asked in this sphere. To cite one
typical reply : "Why is it easier to meditate at certain
hours of the day ? There are four times during the
day and night which are considered especially con-
ductive to meditation : dawn, midday, sunset and
midnight. At these hours, nature takes on an atti-
dtude of calmness. Take advantage of these hours
wherever you can. But after all, where do we med-
itate? In our own minds. Therefore, any time
you meditate is beneficial. Later on you will be
successful in your meditation wherever and when-
ever you meditate. But in order to reach the
stage where you can become absorbed in God
regardless of external circumstances, it is very
important that you practise the spiritual disciplines
regularly at the same time every day." (P 247).

At the same time daily, for there is a rhythm in
the cycle of nature and conditions form themselves
favourably at that hour once the habit of call is
established.

M. P. PANDIT

LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER :
By E. Bharadwaja, Matrusri Publications,
Bapada, Andhra Pradesh, India. pp. 110. Price :
Rs. 1.75.

This small book deals with the life and teachings
of a saintly person whose fame is spreading slowly
and whom her devotees call the Mother of Jillel-
tamudi or simply The Mother. After reading it one
can understand the devotion which she inspires in
a large number of men and women. Born in 1923
in a small out of the way village in the Guntur
district of Andhra Pradesh the Mother is said to
have displayed from her childhood strange wisdom.
The details of her life are rather meagre but what
is available shows that she was a precocious child whose utterances often puzzled the elders about her. Her unusual traits were regarded as signs of something other worldly, but it was only after she married and came to live with her husband in the village of Jillellamudi that she became the object of particular veneration by a growing circle of persons chiefly from Guntur and the adjacent districts. Many of them are said to have had strange and unaccountable experiences after coming into contact with her. They are convinced that she is an Avatar and she, in her turn, looks upon all of them as her children and loves them with true maternal affection.

An institution significantly called the 'House of All' has latterly sprung up around her. Here her devotees move about freely on equal terms and attend to all kinds of work cheerfully without any distinction of high and low. Their selfless work makes them karma yogins, their devotion to Mother makes them true bhaktas, her words are looked upon as the highest wisdom and her grace is regarded as sufficient for their spiritual uplift. Examples of her sayings are:

"I am the Mother and you are the offspring; Reality itself is my state; Motherhood does not mean mere womanhood; Mother is the infinite, the eternal basis of all existence. It is that which is all and cannot be understood; I am not anything now that I was not earlier. If there is a difference it is only in your understanding of me; Mindfulness is real worship; Perfect equanimity at all times and in all conditions is Samadhi; One may remain in samsara, but samsara should not be allowed to dwell in one's heart."

The language is not always elegant and the method of presentation is not quite satisfactory. In spite of these defects the book is bound to be interesting to all those who are spiritually inclined.

M. C. SUBRAMANIAN
HE annual festival of the Deepam or the Holy beacon on the Arunachala Hill, known as Karthigai Festival, was celebrated in the temple of Sri Arunachaleswara in the town from the 25th November to the 3rd December.

The colourful ten-day festival marked by grand morning and evening processions of the gorgeously decorated and bejewelled images of gods and goddesses, mounted on large and artistic vahanams or mounts, like the Nandi (Siva's bull), the Kalpaka Vriksha (the wish-fulfilling tree), the Kamadenu (the wish-fulfilling cow) etc. was held in fine weather and attracted large crowds from far and near. The top of the Hill was free of clouds (which is not always the case at this part of the year) when the sacred beacon was lit.

Devotees of Sri Bhagavan had according to a long-established practice, gathered in front of a large portrait of Sri Bhagavan, placed on the northern verandah of the New Hall facing a tripod with a cauldron containing a large wick standing in the middle of devotive offerings of clarified butter and oil.

Among these were the QUEEN MOTHER FREDERIKA OF GREECE, her daughter PRINCESS IRENE and two of their relations, who had motored all the way from Madras and arrived at the Ashram in time to witness the lighting of the beacon, accompanied and guided by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras.

In the evening, as the hour drew nigh every eye was turned to the top of the Hill and when the sacred flame sprang into view at the stroke of six there arose from hundreds of throats the cry 'Anna-nalikku Aro hara', meaning, salutations to Arunachala, the Hill which destroys sins. This was the signal for the lighting of the Ashram beacon and the chanting of Sri Bhagavan's poem, Aksharamanamalai or the Marital Garland of Letters, to the refrain of 'Arunachala Siva'. The distinguished visitors were visibly moved. The Queen Mother listened to the chanting with rapt attention.

After taking dinner in the Ashram dining hall the Queen Mother retired for the night, while Princess Irene and party proceeded, in the company of a number of devotees from the Ashram, to circumambulate the Hill on foot. The moon was full and the weather was cool. The Princess said later that she had never experienced such happiness and peace before. The next day, as a special case, the Cinemat films on Sri Bhagavan, taken during his lifetime, were shown to them in the morning after they had the breakfast in the Ashram. Before leaving the Ashram, thanking the President,
The Queen Mother Frederika of Greece and her party are received at the Ashram by its President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan is standing first from the right.

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, the Queen Mother said: “The Deepam will ever be lit in my memory all my life. I congratulate you all for keeping up the tradition, serenity and purity of the abode of Sri Ramana Maharshi.”

Besides the Queen Mother and party there were a number of old devotees who had specially come for the occasion. Among these may be mentioned, Dr. Satyanarayana and Mrs. Satyanarayana, Sri Raghubale Rao, Zamindar of Poklapavani, Sri Framji Dorabji, Mr. & Mrs. Sonarao, Dr. W. Radhakrishnayya and Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.

PATALA LINGAM

Readers of Sri Bhagavan’s life will remember that, soon after his arrival at Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramana spent some time in an underground shrine, known as the Patala Lingam, situated in the mantap (raised hall) of the thousand-pillars inside the Arunachaleswara Temple. The lingam in this shrine had long been neglected and no puja was performed at it. About 20 years ago a small tower was raised over it but there was no kumbhabhishekam or ceremonial consecration done. This was performed on 3rd November in the presence of Sardar Ujjal Singh, the Governor of Madras, and some of the district officials and several prominent citizens of the town. Arrangements have now been made by the authorities of the temple to offer puja at the shrine every day.

SAT SANGH

Sri Sadhu Om continues to expound Sri Bhagavan’s works, on Thursdays and Sundays. Aksharamadamalai or The Marital Garland of Letters, is the first work taken up by him, after completing the verses on the importance of Arunachala. After reading the detailed Tamil commentary of Sri Muruganar on each verse he proceeds so give a fuller explanation, in the course of which he brings out not only its spiritual significance but also its poetic beauty. He also points out the parallel verses in the other works of Sri Bhagavan, like Ulladu Narpadu (Reality in Forty Verses) and Upadesa Saram (Essence of Instruction in Thirty Verses) and also from ancient Tamil vedantic works like...
Yoga Vasishtha, Kailvalya Navaneeta and verses from other Tamil saints. His explanations and narrations are both simple to understand, and vast and deep in meaning. Efforts are being made to collect his commentaries on these verses of Sri Bhagavan to be published in a book form, at a later date, both in Tamil and English. Tamil-knowing devotees of Sri Bhagavan cherish these meetings very much.

NAVARATHRI

Navarathri or the Nine Nights Festival, in honour of Devi or the Goddess of the Universe, was celebrated in the Ashram, as usual, in September. The image of the Goddess, Yogambal, was beautifully dressed up and decorated in a different manner every day to the delight of the devotees. There were also special pujas on all the nine nights. As a concluding part of the festival, the goddess was taken in procession round the Mathrubutheswara temple and reinstalled to its original place.

Sri Yogambal taken in procession.

VISITORS AND PILGRIMS

Besides the visitors and pilgrims mentioned under the heading, ‘Deepam Festival’, we have had several others with us during the quarter.

Thus we had Justice K. Veerappa of the Madras High Court and his family among us. They were impressed with the neat and peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram.

Sri Nita Vijiayalaksami Mafatlal, mother of Mafatlal Brothers, the well-known textile magnates, came with her daughter, Smt. Usha, and spent a day at the Ashram in September. She wishes to spend not less than a month and a half at the Ashram and hopes to fulfil this sākala very soon.

Sri Shankerrao Des, a well-known co-worker of Mahatma Gandhi, had visited the Ashram a few years back. He was drawn again although he could not stay for more than a day at the Ashram.

Among pilgrims from abroad were Miss Jacqueline Le Prince and Miss Yvonne Dauguet, about whose last visit we wrote in our April ‘68 issue p. 161. They were drawn to “this freedom-filled and peace emitting Ashram” as they described it and proposed to spend a fairly long time now.

Mr. Roger Henninger from France, referred to in our last issue is still with us. Mrs. Barbara Rose, also referred to in our last issue, came and stayed for several days. Again she is now with us and will be in the Ashram till Jayanthi. She is such an ardent and enthusiastic devotee of Sri Bhagavan that she has been able to communicate her enthusiasm to several of her friends. Among these are, Mr. & Mrs. Earl Rosner, Mr. Neal Rosner, Mr. John B. Dawson and Mrs. Dick Page, all of whom came to the Ashram and stayed some days (Neal Rosner and John B. Dawson are still staying with us). Mrs. Rose who is an adept at Hatha Yoga believes that it helps her in understanding Sri Bhagavan’s teachings better.

Mr. E. Santa Pozes from Colombia, father of Irma de Valera, the artist whose sketch of Arunachala in the Zen style, was reproduced by us in our July ’65 issue, p. 202, had been longing to visit the Ashram, but could do so only lately. During his stay which extended to a month he visited all the places associated with Sri Bhagavan. His devotion was so great that very often he could not keep back his tears when he came to the various spots hallowed by Sri Bhagavan’s stay.

Mrs. Annalisa Rajagopal of Ojai, U.S.A., a life-member of the Ashram and life-subscriber to our journal, and a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, came with three of her friends and spent a few days, in the course of which all of them went round...
Mr. Charles Reeder and Mrs. Anne Reeder, married only in June this year, went to Japan to take Zen lessons. They met our friend, Mrs. Delancy Kapleau (for whom see our issue of Oct. '67, p. 336) and the natural consequence was that they were directed to stay at least a few days at Sri Ramanasramam, in India, before returning home. The merry couple came with an intention to spend a couple of days at the Ashram, but they actually stayed for more than 90 days. They are now convinced followers of Sri Bhagavan!

We should not forget to mention Nagasawa Tetsuo and Hitaka Chicko from Japan, who spent a few weeks here. They were visiting the various Ashrams in India before starting an Ashram of their own in Japan. They have assured to come again.

The following pilgrims from abroad also came during the quarter:

1. Judith Ann Schwartz (U.S.A.)
2. Liesbeth Marleentze Boers (Dutch)
3. Seraphim Francis Martin (Irish)
4. Pieter de Wit (Dutch)
5. Marcella Dean Deeter (U.S.A.)
6. Wadah Konry (U.S.A.)
7. Richard John Hearn (Canada)
8. Rev. Bodhipriya (Spanish)
9. Joseph Skulin (U.S.A.)
10. Bela Gatonvi (Hungary)
11. Arthur Albert Poonman (U.K.)
12. Rev. Fr. Hilarien (U.S.A.)
13. Richard Clancy (U.K.)

How some of them came to hear of Sri Bhagavan's teachings will be seen from the following extracts:

My first steps on the path leading to Bhagavan was taken in Morocco. I was living in the South, and for Christmas 1947 a friend sent me a copy of Paul Brunton's famous book, "A Search in Secret India." For me, as for many others, it proved to be a revelation, a flash of light and life.

Some years later I was given "Studies on Ramana Maharshi" which was the complement of the previous book, though it may be a bit more scientific in its approach, which fitted in quite well with my Theoretical background. On the same occasion I was given Bhagavan's picture, which, more than any of the writings attracted me and evoked a response within.

This picture became the permanent witness of my working hours, of my meditations, of my struggles. "The more you look the more his comeliness increases" it is said in a Tamil poem of Sri Muruganar.

However, because of family and professional reasons—and financial reasons also—I was unable to come to India before the beginning of this year (i.e. exactly twenty years after having read Paul Brunton's book.). After having visited North India and Nepal the end of my journey was Tiruvannamalai which I reached in mid-February.

The serene beauty of the place and the Ashram's warm welcome both attracted me right away. I found some mysterious spell, not only due to the somewhat exotic atmosphere, but to some more subtle cause. Is it due to the fact that it was the place where the Master lived, or due to the closeness of Arunachala, the Red Hill at the foot of which the Ashram lies? I couldn't tell, but it was undeniable that one felt this to be one of the world's most holy places, and that, imperceptibly, one became more and more aware of it.

I had to come here again—it was a must!! and six months later, as a matter of fact, I was back here.

Nowadays enjoying simple happiness in an atmosphere of silence and peace, I seem to be reborn to a new life where the only ultimate concern is Self-Realization.

To reach this goal, the main points of the Master's teachings are orally explained by old devotees who heard and faithfully recollect them, but to follow them is a very individual matter, to be adjusted to each one's own nature.

The Ashram life is freedom itself, and this is its great strength. Nevertheless, no matter how individually orientated the Ashram life is, one can easily feel a deep communal spirit for example at mealtimes, when side by side sit the old devotees of the Master and people from America, Europe, the Far East, and so on, belonging to all religions and from every social background. Somehow a real little society of nations, an example of universal brotherhood, through which one can feel the Guru's everlasting presence.

—RogerHenninger,France
For several years I was a student studying anthropology. My studies were occasionally interesting, but they did not give the answers to what I considered important questions. At the time I held no belief in anything beyond the material world and the individual personality. Beginning in 1965 I had several experiences with the mind-altering substance LSD, and I became aware of something far greater than my little Self. By 1967 I decided that self-discipline and a structured systematic technique was required if I was to increase my awareness of That, and ultimately realize my identity with it. I decided to study Yoga and I was fortunate enough to receive instruction first in hatha yoga and later in the teachings of the higher yoga inclusive those of Bhagavan from an ardent devotee of His, Barbara Rose. My wife, Lois, also became interested and she follows the same path.

Reading of Bhagavan's life, and studying and practising his teaching, we decided to come to visit the Ashram and Arunachala where we have spent a most remarkable three weeks. Our thanks to the Ashram management for their kindness and also to the many ashram residents who have helped make our stay unforgettable. Most important, our gratitude to Bhagavan for drawing us unto Him and for making our visit possible.

— Earl Rosner and Lois Rosner, U.S.A.

As a young teen-ager, I remember my mother came home with three copies of a Dutch translation of Heinrich Zimmer's book "Der Weg Zum Selbst" (the Way to the Self). As the picture of Bhagavan in this book struck me very much — those radiant eyes — I asked my mother for a copy of the book. She didn't want to give it saying it would be too difficult to me. "Very possible", I answered, "But I will need it later, and then you will not have a copy left for me any more". So she gave one to me. It proved to be