Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!
Tear off those robes, expose me naked, then robe me with Thy Love, Oh Arunachala!

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— Editor.

GRACE IN WORDS: The Verses (UPADESA SARAM) in Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece is the facsimile of Sri Bhagavan's own handwriting. The translation is a new free rendering into English by Prof. K. Swaminathan.

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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.

Contributions for publication should be addressed to 'The Editor, The Mountain Path, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State'. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH is dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
28. Having known one's nature one abides
   As being with no beginning and no end
   In unbroken consciousness and bliss.

29. Abiding in this state of bliss
   Beyond bondage and release,
   Is steadfastness
   In service of the Lord.

30. All ego gone,
   Living as That alone
   Is penance good for growth,
   Sings Ramana, the Self.

—BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARshi
SERVICE AS SADHANA

According to the Bhagavad Gita this world is action-bound and everyone who has not realised his true state is driven helplessly to perform actions by the energies born of Nature. For such action and the performance of their duty is superior to inaction. Those qualified for action should not abstain from it for it is action that sets the wheel of the world going. So long as a man has not got the aptitude for steadfast sadhana and meditation on the path of jnana (self-enquiry), pure contemplation, surrender or devotion, let him practise devotion to action which will lead him on to selfless action fused with the other paths ultimately not divorced from each other. Buddhist ethics emphasise the importance of cultivating an investigating, vigilant mind, starting from the commonplace of going about one's daily duties with meticulous care. Peace of mind results from the satisfaction of having thus performed one's duty.

If action is performed in a spirit of selfless service without thought of reward it becomes nishkrama karma which purifies the mind and is sadhana per se. Ramana Maharshi said that work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect the doer and does not create new karma. He is even while working in solitude. What is to be given up is not action but the sense of doership. Then it becomes spontaneous and ceases to be binding.

The teaching of service to mankind is a salient feature in all major religions. In the Judeo-Christian scriptures service to mankind is equated with service to God. Christ made it explicit speaking of helping the helpless: “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me.” And even more so in the oft quoted saying: “Love thy...
neighbour as thyself." Compassion to all sentient beings and selfless service are prominent features in Buddhism. In the Quran it is expressed: "No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself." Islam lays great stress on surrender to God and service to mankind and it is incumbent on true believers to spend one-tenth of their income to relieve the distress of the poor and needy.

This is the age of indiscipline and rejection of authority enhanced by speakers or teachers who do not seem to realise the far-reaching repercussion of their words out of touch with the reality of human nature in Kali Yuga. Young people and not so young, insecure in revolt against the established order, seek a meaning to life, the truth, and above all freedom from all restraint and limitations. One can well understand and sympathise with their seeking and its cause. Freedom and happiness is our true state which we strive to gain knowingly or unknowingly through many peregrinations like a drop of water in the ditch or rainbow heading for its source, the sea. But true freedom cannot be gained by neglecting whatever activity falls to our lot and not pulling our weight in the running of the wheel of the world set in motion. Thus when one abstains from work or duty under the mantle of spiritual seeking and when only those tasks are performed which are pleasant or unavoidable, inherent human inertia gains the upper hand. The mind gains neither concentration, nor strength, without voluntarily undertaken discipline of work and duty. The accumulated energy finds an outlet in 'Wanderlust' in search of diversions — this time spiritual diversions, just as dispersive. One also comes across an attitude of taking full advantage of what the rejected established order has to offer to make life easier. Even when fortunate enough to find a path recognised as true and valid the necessary fortitude and one-pointedness is often lacking to follow it steadily. In contrast, meditation or spiritual discipline, so necessary particularly in the beginning stages until it becomes effortless, may be more of a strain than is usual. On the other hand in the midst of worldly activity one can always set aside time, if only a few minutes, for meditation or sadhana which with practice becomes a source of relaxation. It is effort and work that lead to effortlessness and freedom of the spirit when the mind has become purified enough to let Grace take over. We are never out of its operation, but earnest effort is necessary to know its existence. Such effort never fails says Ramana Maharshi and those who have tried it and persevered. Ramana Maharshi's path can be practised in the life of the world which need not be a hindrance nor binding. Self-enquiry and practising the Presence can be pursued amidst worldly activity. In this light one can understand why Ramana Maharshi usually advised young people desirous of renouncing the world to first perform their duties in life. It may also happen that such a man late in life may start wondering whether he had not missed too much. Whereas one who has undergone the trials of life knows full well what he has given up and may not have such regrets. Of course there are exceptions, but these are very few and far between. When a man is ripe to devote his whole life to sadhana or pure contemplation, things fall into place of their own accord and he spontaneously adopts a life of renunciation. It is good to spend some time in an ashram or retreat to recharge the batteries, so to speak, and then resume sadhana and work in the world. Ian van Ruysbroeck held that the inner mystical life must be balanced by an outward life of charitable and helpful action. This expressed itself in a search for opportunities of service, especially most humble service, so vividly described by Marie Byles in her article on Takubatsu practised in Japan. A man gains spiritual strength not through a life of ease but through voluntarily accepting the limitations ordained by duty and by determining for himself what his duty is under given circumstances.

1 See elsewhere in this issue.
Such an attitude frees one from the bondage of duty.

Realisation of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity. A jnani or realised man is active far more so than one can conceive. But his action is spontaneous action in inaction — he is not touched by it, just as the sun remains untouched by all the multifarious activities due to its rising. The very Silence of such a sage is eternal activity of benefit to the whole universe. The jnani sees no difference between himself and others. This is expressed succinctly in the Chan and Zen Teaching of Wu Teng Hui Yuan:

"True Wisdom works for the Welfare of all beings."

Ultimately,

"It matters not whether the body is active or inactive,
Since all its actions end in utter inaction at last
As all force is reduced to rest.

"It is pure intellect within me that is always the same, i.e., ever active and undecaying,
And which loses nothing from the loss of body
Or by want of bodily actions.

"Whether I am doing or not doing, and whether my acts are proper or improper,
I have nothing to desire here
Nor anything desirable that I have to expect from them."

— YOGA VASISHTA.

The Maharshi taught that whichever path is followed it should be combined with action. In other words, he expected those who followed his guidance to do so in the conditions of domestic and professional life. The change has to be made in the mind, he used to say; you will only exchange the thought 'I am a householder' for the thought 'I am a sadhu'. What has to be done is to get rid of both and remember only 'I am'.

Creating an artificial vacuum for the mind by depriving it of its natural occupations is usually actually harmful. Therefore he said that difficulties increase greatly in the new surroundings. If, in the course of our spiritual progress, changes in professional or family life become necessary, they will take place without our planning them.

— ARTHUR OSBORNE in The Essential Teaching of the Maharshi.
As so many of the greatest Masters pointed out and than which nothing is more radical:

As long as there is a 'you' to imagine that 'it' can be enlightened,

There is then a conceptual 'you' to experience a conceptual 'state' of 'enlightenment', which is only a phantasy in mind.

Whereas it is precisely the abolition of the concept of that 'you',

Which reveals what-you-are and which is what is called 'enlightenment', or which reveals 'enlightenment' as being what-you-are.

For there was never any 'state' such as 'enlightenment',

Nor any factual entity to experience any such 'state'.

---

Atmanusandhana has been compared to churning curds in order to make butter, the mind being compared to the churn, the heart to the curds, and the practice of concentrating on the Self to the process of churning. Just as butter is made by churning the curds and fire by friction, so the natural and changeless state of nirvikalpa samadhi is produced by unswerving vigilant concentration on the Self, ceaseless like the unbroken flow of oil. This readily and spontaneously yields that direct, immediate, unobstructed, and universal perception of Brahman, which is at once knowledge and experience and which transcends time and space.

This perception is Self-realisation. Achieving it cuts the knot of the heart. The false delusions of ignorance the vicious and age-long tendencies of the mind which continue this knot are destroyed. All doubts are dispelled and the bondage of karma is severed.

Thus in this crown-gem of discrimination has Sri Sankara described samadhi or spiritual trance which is the limitless Bliss of Liberation beyond doubt; and duality, and at the same time has indicated the means for its attainment. To attain this state of freedom from duality is the real purpose of life, and only he who has done so is a Jivanmukta, liberated while yet alive, not one who has a mere theoretical understanding of what constitutes purushartha or the desired end and aim of human endeavour.

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From the Introduction to Vivekachudamani, by Ramana Maharshi.
An aristocratic lady looking very intelligent though pensive asked: "I am young and a grihini (housewife). There are duties of grīhastha dharma (the household). Is devotion consistent with such a position?"

Maharshi replied: "Certainly. What are you? You are not the body. You are Pure Consciousness. Grīhastha dharma and the world are only phenomena appearing on that pure consciousness. It remains unaffected. What prevents you from being your own Self?"

Devotee. Yes. I am already aware of the line of teaching of Maharshi. It is the quest for the Self. But my doubt persists if such quest is compatible with grīhastha life.

Maharshi. The Self is always there. It is you. There is nothing but you. Nothing can be apart from you. The question of compatibility or otherwise does not arise.

D. I shall be more definite. Though a stranger, I am obliged to confess the cause of my anxiety. I am blessed with children. A boy—a good brahmachari—passed away in February. I was grief-stricken. I was disgusted with this life. I want to devote myself to spiritual life. But my duties as a grihini do not permit me to lead a retired life. Hence my doubt.

M. Retirement means abidance in the Self. Nothing more. It is not leaving one set of surroundings and getting entangled in another set, nor even leaving the concrete world and becoming involved in a mental world.

The birth of the son, his death, etc., are seen in the Self only.

Recall the state of sleep. Were you aware of anything happening? If the son or the world be real, should they not be present with you in sleep? You cannot deny your existence in sleep. Nor can you deny you were happy then. You are the same person now speaking and raising doubts. You are not happy, according to you. But you were happy in sleep. What has transpired in the meantime that happiness of sleep has broken down? It is the rise of the ego. That is the new arrival in the jagrat (waking) state. There was no ego in sleep. The birth of the ego is called the birth of the person. There is no other kind of birth. Whatever is born, is

1 An extract from Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi.
2 These talks took place in Sept. 1936.
bound to die. Kill the ego: there is no fear of recurring death for what is once dead. The Self remains even after the death of the ego. That is Bliss — that is Immortality.

D. How shall I reach the Self?
M. There is no reaching the Self. If the Self were to be reached, it would mean that the Self is not now and here, but that it should be got anew. What is got afresh, will also be lost. So it will be impermanent. What is not permanent is not worth striving for. So I say, the Self is not reached. You are the Self. You are already That. The fact is that you are ignorant of your blissful state. Ignorance supervenes and draws a veil over the pure Bliss. Attempts are directed only to remove this ignorance. This ignorance consists in wrong knowledge. The wrong knowledge consists in the false identification of the Self with the body, the mind, etc. This false identity must go and there remains the Self.

D. How is that to happen?
M. By enquiry into the Self.

D. It is difficult. Can I realise the Self, Maharaj? Kindly tell me. It looks so difficult.
M. You are already the Self. Therefore realisation is common to everyone. Realisation knows no difference in the aspirants. This very doubt, “Can I realise?” or the feeling, “I have not realised” are the obstacles. Be free from these also.

D. But there should be the experience. Unless I have the experience how can I be free from these afflicting thoughts?
M. These are also in the mind. They are there because you have identified yourself with the body. If this false identity drops away, ignorance vanishes and Truth is revealed.

D. Yet I feel it difficult. There are disciples of Bhagavan who have had His Grace and realised without any considerable difficulty. I too wish to have that Grace. Being a woman and living at a long distance I cannot avail myself of Maharshi’s holy company as much as I would wish and as often as I would. Possibly I may not be able to return. I request Bhagavan’s Grace. When I am back in my place, I want to remember Bhagavan. May Bhagavan be pleased to grant my prayer!

M. Where are you going? You are not going anywhere. Even supposing you are the body, has your body come from Lucknow to Tiruvannamalai? You had simply sat in the car and one conveyance or another had moved; and finally you say that you have come here. The fact is that you are not the body. The Self does not move. The world moves in it. You are only what you are. There is no change in you. So then, even after what looks like departure from here, you are here and there and everywhere. These scenes shift. As for Grace — Grace is within you. If it is external it is useless. Grace is the Self. You are never out of its operation. Grace is always there.

D. I mean that when I remember your form, my mind should be strengthened and that response should come from your side too. I should not be left to my individual efforts which are after all only weak.
M. Grace is the Self. I have already said, “If you remember Bhagavan, you are prompted to do so by the Self.” Is not Grace already there? Is there a moment when Grace is not operating...
in you? Your remembrance is the forerunner of Grace. That is the response, that is the stimulus, that is the Self and that is Grace.

There is no cause for anxiety.

D. Can I engage in spiritual practice, even remaining in samsara?

M. Yes, certainly. One ought to do so.

D. Is not samsara a hindrance? Do not all the holy books advocate renunciation?

M. Samsara is only in your mind. The world does not speak out, saying: "I am the world". Otherwise, it must be ever there — not excluding your sleep. Since it is not in sleep it is impermanent. Being impermanent it has no stamina. Having no stamina it is easily subdued by the Self. The Self alone is permanent. Renunciation is non-identification of the Self with the non-self. On the disappearance of ignorance the non-self ceases to exist. That is true renunciation.

D. Why did you then leave your home in your youth?

M. That is my prarabdha (fate). One’s course of conduct in this life is determined by one’s prarabdha. My prarabdha is this way. Your prarabdha is that way.

D. Should I not also renounce?

M. If that had been your prarabdha, the question would not have arisen.

D. I should therefore remain in the world and engage in spiritual practice. Well, can I get realisation in this life?

M. This has been already answered. You are always the Self. Earnest efforts never fail. Success is bound to result.

D. Will Maharshi be pleased to extend Grace to me also!

Maharshi smiled and said: "Um! Um!" With blessings and salutations, the interview came to a close and the devotee departed.

— From A Buddhist Bible by Dwight Goddard.
GARLAND OF GURU’S SAYINGS

165. Seeing the outer and not inner beauty
Leads to ruin dire.
Don’t rush moth-like towards external brightness
Or play with the spread, swaying cobra’s hood.¹

166. What else is Death
But straying from the primal state
Of immortality,
Of wholeness and abidance in the Self,
Home of eternal love and bliss supreme
And heaven of true Awareness?

167. Birth in the body is the death to fear.
Avert this by the guru’s grace
Through service earned.
Recovering from alienation,
Cling to the Self, cling firm and fast,
And win life’s crown of immortality.

168. In the heart from falsehood free
The jiva² dwells. There, nowhere else,
The vasanas⁴ also make their home.
If their kindled fires keep burning
In the brain, not in the heart,
The brain destroyed, they too must cease to be.⁵

169. Since both the serpent⁶ flame ascending
And the nectar stream down flowing
Seek the heart, this is the common fount
Of nectar from the mind divine
And the fierce serpent’s maddening power.

170. In whichever chakra⁶ one assumes
The Self as present, there it seems to be.
Such is the power of thought.
But the sole centre
Where ‘I’ arises and subsides
Is the heart we make so much of.

171. Whoso ignores the heart,
The home of every mode of being,
And thinks of ‘I’ as seated
In some other centre,
Lingers sore bewildered there,
Missing the bliss of true Self-knowledge.

¹ The last line also mean: "Or sport with that fierce, hooded serpent, Sex."
² The lines also mean: "But straying from the perfect state Immutable and hence immortal."
³ The individual soul.
⁴ Tendencies.
⁵ Here Bhagavan refutes the theory that the brain or sahasrara is the seat of the jiva and its vasanas.
⁶ Kundalini.
⁷ A wheel, a Yogic centre of concentration.

All scriptures without any exception proclaim that for attaining Salvation, the mind should be subdued; and once one knows that control of the mind is their final aim, it is futile to make interminable study of them. What is required for such control is actual enquiry into oneself by self-interrogation ‘Who am I?’ . . .

To enquire ‘Who am I that am in bondage?’ and to know one’s real nature is alone Liberation. To keep the mind constantly turned within and to abide thus in the Self, is alone Atma-vichara (Self-enquiry), whereas dhyana (meditation) consists in fervent contemplation of the Self.

The Collected Works, p. 85,
IT is said in the Mandukya Karika that creation is the very nature of the Effulgent Being — why then should we try to escape from it? Rather should we use it for our spiritual advancement. It was of old a tendency of those who were out to live a spiritual life to take the path of renunciation and retirement to some quiet spot, often a forest or secluded temple. This has been the traditional path laid down for Indians since known time, whereas in the West the monastery was entered and a quiet and protected life away from life's allurements was sought as a prelude to spiritual advancement. However, times have changed. It is now few who are able to turn away from the world so entirely; conditions for a sannyasin are so difficult that it is almost impossible for him to live such a life without some private source of income. The old ideal of total renunciation of all property and especially of money has become almost impossible. Besides, family obligations may hold back for no renunciation is valid which shirks any of our obligations. That would be escapism and the act of a coward, while a spiritual aspirant must be a hero. He must be prepared to fight, not run away.

Modern conditions have created another picture and few recognised Gurus now preach the necessity for complete retirement from the world. Be in the world but not of the world, the seeker is usually instructed, though nobody should think that to do this is easy. For all no sadhana can be easy. Tapas it is called; tapas means a burning away and such a burning is literally a fire consuming the ego which naturally resents the process.

Tapas or sadhana can be carried out perhaps even better or more successfully living in the world in our usual surroundings than by escape, though doubtless it is only the strong and bold who will win out. With nothing to fight against we are urged on to make greater efforts. And we have something solid to surrender; for the first lesson of any sadhana is detachment, and certainly if we can be detached while living in the world we have won an initial victory. Actually when we have achieved complete detachment there is no more to do. Sadhana is finished.

Ramana Maharshi taught Vichara of Self-enquiry, but he never encouraged people to leave the world or to take the ochre robe. And what is to prevent us from practising Self-enquiry on every occasion — getting into a bus, sitting down at our desk or performing any one of the hundred tasks that daily confront us? "Who is it that thinks he is doing this?" "Who is the real 'I'?" behind the apparent actor?" At all times and under all conditions this is always possible, but unfortunately we forget. We become so engrossed in our acts, we so identify ourselves with the actor of the part we are playing that the permanent observer behind it all is forgotten and we sink deeper and deeper into the illusions which bind us.

But if we can only make a habit of Self-remembrance, no school is better for us than our day-to-day life. Submitting to the discipline of daily life then becomes the greatest of all Sadhanas, though this submitting must always be a conscious one. What do we actually gain by the conventional retirement from the world? Peaceful conditions and fewer immediate temptations, maybe. Even this is doubtful, for the mind left to itself in such conditions often becomes more active, and turns over and over the memories of the
past: what it has done, what it might have done and what it would like to do in the future. It continues to build its castles, and to think ‘now I am living retired from the world’ instead of ‘I am living with my family’ thus only substituting one thought for another, which gets us nowhere. For the great enemy is the mind, whatever may be its occupation. Rather are we inclined to stagnate, for the retired life, too, has its pitfalls; it is not so easy as it appears to the onlooker. Materially it may be an ideal condition but the mind is such an unruly horse that conditions of freedom often make it more difficult rather than easier to control.

Strange words for one who lives in an Ashram, my friends may justly say; strange words, but nonetheless very true. Perhaps after all the world is for the strong and the Ashrams for those who are not able to face life. However, by upholding life in the world as Sadhana I have no wish to belittle the value of meditation. Without meditation nobody is likely to progress. Even the householder should devote some regular time daily to Self-enquiry, best in the early morning hours before he begins the duties of the day. In this way, Sri Ramana used to say, a current is started which will go on automatically throughout the day though we may be unconscious of it.

To live the life of the world otherwise than as a conscious Sadhana is nothing—this is what the majority of human beings already do—but to live the life of the world consciously as the observer is everything, and the greatest Sadhana of all. The trouble is that we forget to remember and so become lost in the part we are playing. So then let us always remember that Life itself is the best Sadhana.

In reply to a question about the method of effortless and choiceless awareness as distinct from that of deliberate concentration Sri Bhagavan explained:

“Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain it in that state, it is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation, all the age-long vasanas (inherent tendencies) carry the mind outward and turn it to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward. For that effort is necessary for most people. Of course everybody, every book says ‘Be quiet or still’ but it is not easy. That is why all this effort is necessary. Even if we find one who has at once achieved the mouna (silence) or Supreme state indicated by ‘Be still’ you may take it that the effort necessary has already been finished in a previous life. So that effortless and choiceless awareness is reached only after deliberate meditation. That meditation can take any form which appeals to you best. See what helps you to keep away all other thoughts and adopt that method for your meditation.”

In this connection Bhagavan quoted from Thayumanavar. “Bliss will follow if you are still. But however much you may tell your mind about this truth, the mind will not keep quiet. It is the mind which tells the mind ‘Be quiet and you will attain bliss’. Though all the scriptures have said it, though we hear about it every day from the great ones, and though even our Guru says it, we never are quiet, but stray into the world of maha and sense objects.” That is why conscious, deliberate effort or meditation is required to attain that mouna state or the state of being quiet.

—Day by Day with Bhagavan. p. 113.
SUPPORT THE NEEDY

(Rigveda X. 117)

The Devas have not given hunger to be our death,\(^1\)
Even to the well-fed man death comes in many shapes.\(^2\)
The wealth of the liberal never wastes away,
He who gives no protection finds no consoler.

He who, possessed of food, hardens his heart against
The weak man, craving nourishment, and suffering,
Who comes to him for help, though of old he helped him —
Surely such a one finds no consoler.

He is liberal who gives to one who asks for alms,
To the distressed man who seeks food, wandering;
Success comes to him in the challenge of battle,
And for future conflicts he makes a friend for him.

He is no friend who does not give to a friend,
To a comrade who comes imploring for food;
Let him leave such a man — his is not a home —
And rather seek a stranger who brings him comfort.\(^3\)

Let the rich man satisfy one who seeks help,
And let him look upon a longer pathway;
Wealth revolves like the wheels of a chariot,
Coming now to one, now to another.\(^4\)

In vain does the foolish man acquire food;
It is — I speak the truth — verily his death;\(^5\)
He does not cherish a comrade or a friend,
He is all sin who eats all alone.

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1 Hunger should not, like disease, be accepted as a natural cause of death.
2 Men who do not have to face starvation cannot be said to be immune from death.
3 *home* — belonging to an inhabitant of the land, bound by ties of kinship. A home is not meant only for its members but also for others in need of food and shelter.
4 The rich man should take a long view of life and realise he may also one day become poor and need another’s help.
5 *death* — moral death; pursuit of the path of sin.
The ploughshare ploughing produces the food,
While a man rambles along the road on foot;
The Veda-knower who speaks is better than one who does not;
So the liberal kinsman surpasses the illiberal.\(^6\)

He who has one foot outruns the biped,
The biped leaves the three-footed behind,
The quadruped comes at the biped's call,
And stands looking where five meet together.\(^7\)

Two hands are alike but their work is not alike.
Two sister cows do not give milk alike.
Of two twins the powers are not similar,
And two kinsmen are not equally pleasing.\(^8\)

\(^6\) As people doing their duties in pursuit of their vocations are superior to those who remain idle, so the liberal man is superior to one who shows consideration to the nearby members of the society.

\(^7\) The quantity of wealth is no indication of a man's worth. The less wealthy are often better than the more wealthy.

\(^8\) This is a criticism of the kinsman who does not show the proper interest in a distressed member of the clan.

Cool Spring

By Charles G. Reeder

Watching you drink life-waters
From the cool spring that flows
From the mountain's heart, I know
That we are going home together,
Joy, like new leaves!
WORK AS SERVICE

In the January 1970 issue of The Mountain Path, the very understanding reviewer of Tenko-San’s A New Road to the Ancient Truth suggests that ‘doing Takuhatsu in the West would have probably resulted in more strikes and labour trouble’. This might well be so if the menial labour offered voluntarily conflicted with industrial awards. But Japan is a modern sophisticated country and I found no evidence of this.

Further, the Takuhatsu that Tenko-San taught applies to all work. Work is usually done for self-interest and self-gain. Tenko-San taught that it must be done in a spirit of humility and service with a constant awareness that the doer is doing it for the sake of Light and in gratitude to Light.

Tenko-San has thousands of lay disciples throughout Japan and many of them were and are leaders of industry. I asked the head of the Noritake China Company how Tenko-San had altered his life. He said that Tenko-San had taught him humility and service; Japan loves and respects the V.I.P.; he now refused to be this, but simply an ordinary man refusing no menial work, and even stooping to pick up a piece of dirty paper which he would formerly have scorned to do. I next met him and some of the employees of the factory at a Takuhatsu expedition to the Nagoya Castle where we weeded the footpaths and cleared up the rubbish that picnickers had left.

The following is the account of Bunji Sakaguchi-San, a director of the huge Kanebo spinning works whose silks you will find on the counters of all the leading shops of Japan. Sakaguchi-San was 27 years old when he joined the branch of the Kanebo Company in Tenko-San’s native town. While working there he heard his lectures and read his books. He says that thereafter he looked to Tenko-San for guidance, and claimed that because of his advice and the faith imparted by him, he was able to serve his company in a time of financial crisis, so that the company itself was in a sense reborn. What follows is a paraphrase from a talk he gave to Ittoen’s members in the summer of 1960. He died of cancer a year or so later after having been a faithful follower of Tenko-San for nearly thirty years.

Owing to the depression in 1958 the Company’s books showed a deficit of one billion yen over a period of six months. That is to say, a deficit had mounted at the rate of six million yen per day.

Obviously some revolutionary change in the management would have to be made. None of the managers clung to his position, but we could not see how a mere change of managers would do other than lead to confusion. What change then should we make?

Just at this time the labour unions decided to agitate for an increase in wages. Nonetheless we decided that the first measure was to lower wages ten per cent all round. We talked to our own labour union and gave them our word that wages would be lowered for one year only. The other nine labour unions were most indignant, and there was much anxiety even in our own union lest we should fail to keep our word.

The second measure we decided to take was to close down four spinning mills, those at Hakata, Makatsu, Osaka and Kyoto; and the third was to give one year’s leave of absence to all employees of over fifty years of age. Naturally all these measures would lead to hardships.

\[1\text{One thousand yen is approximately equal to 2.80 American dollars.}\]
We invited newspaper representatives to our office on the second of September and told them frankly what our plans were. Next day they came out with large headlines and comments in large type. By way of remembrance I've kept all the newspaper cuttings in a scrap book! Although I knew Kanebo's position among the spinning mills, the sensation among the newspapers was beyond all my expectations. One spoke of great Kanebo and its rationalization, saying how one of its leaders, presumably myself, talked about putting the company on its feet again by reducing wages all round, and without firing a single employee, but in point of fact the company could not even pay its retiring allowances. It went on to say how normally the company could borrow millions from the banks but that now no bank would lend anything at all because everyone was afraid the company was going into liquidation. I was terribly depressed as I read the newspapers and tears even came to my eyes.

There were many twists and turns in what followed. Shortly after the public announcement a committee was formed representing the spinners of the union. Its four leaders came to investigate and asked to see me as the one they thought responsible. My colleague said I should not accede to their request, thinking I might be won over to their point of view and make some irretrievable mistake. But I could not evade seeing them by pretending I was not in the office. I saw them on my own — four to one!

They started by accusing me of being the man responsible for the distress of so many workers. I admitted my responsibility, telling them that I was always prepared to die if need be, since at any time I lived only by the permission of Light. I went on to tell them what I had learned from Tenko-San, and that under his guidance I had done Takahatsu for many years. I heard afterwards that Takayama-San, the president of the Committee, in reporting the meeting with me, said that for several hours they had heard of nothing except Ittoen.

On the 30th of October our negotiations ended in complete agreement. Exactly the opposite happened in the tragic struggles in the Oji Paper Manufacturing Company and the Mitsui Coal Mine Company.

After that I went around to every one of our spinning mills throughout the country, begging not only their managers but also their employees who were suffering, to forgive me, and pleading with them to make every effort for just one year. I should never have thought of doing this had it not been for Tenko-San.

Despite criticism we stopped taking part in the various tournaments — baseball, football, volleyball, and pursued every possible measure of economy.

By April 1959 we had reduced our deficit to about three hundred million yen. In September, the financial crisis was over. We were in credit and we were increasing our credit at the rate of ten million yen per day. We were able to fulfill all our promises to the Union. Then I again went around to every spinning mill to thank all the employees who had understood the difficulties of the company so well and had co-operated so loyally. The effort made by each individual may have been small, but the result of all working together was enormous. I have always believed that human relationships in a mill — or in society as a whole — must be based upon face to face meeting, for it is only from this that love and compassion can arise.

In October 1959, we put our notices in the newspapers that our counter measures against our depressed condition had been successful. Several newspaper representatives came to get further details, and the Shukan Shinsho devoted several pages to reporting the matter. But all the reports were very superficial. The writers just did not understand that the secret of our success and the rebirth of the company was
due to the mutual trust that had been engendered.

Now mutual trust on this large scale can come about only when individuals constantly adopt a trustful attitude in their ordinary social and domestic life. It can never come by talking about it, but only by constantly taking it for granted that other people can be trusted, for example as between husband and wife. For the last two years I have been coming home late from work. If my wife did not have implicit trust in me she might suspect that under the pretext of office work, I was merely enjoying myself elsewhere and our happy family relationship would have been destroyed.

When one is accustomed to this attitude of trust it can be carried over into the relationship between capital and labour. This means that despite all difficulties the management always fulfils its promises and does not make promises it cannot keep. Then, despite heated arguments, mutual trust deepens. This is what happened in 1958, in the Kanebo Spinning Company.

The mutual trust that Bunji Sakaguchi-San brought into being was the result of sincerity and frankness as well as willingness to admit that he was to blame and his refusal to treat any one lightly. He refused to be the V.I.P., that Japan expects, but went among the workers and spoke to them as friend to friend. His frankness won confidence and when the company got out of its troubles, he saw to it that all promises were fulfilled.

(Note: 'Sakaguchi-San' story originally appeared in Hikari (Light), the official journal of Ittoen community, and is published with the permission of the elders of Ittoen. It was translated by Makoto Ohashi-San and put into idiomatic English by Marie B. Byles).

What is to be done O Moslems? for I do not recognize myself.
I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Gabr, nor Moslem.
I am not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land nor of the sea;
I am not of Nature's mint, nor of the circling heavens.
I am not of the earth, nor of water, nor of air, nor of fire;
I am not of the empyrean, nor of dust, nor of existence nor of entity.
I am not of India, nor of China, nor of Bulgaria nor of Saqsin;
I am not of the kingdom of Iraqun, nor of the country of Khorastan.
I am not of this world, nor of the next, nor of Paradise, nor of Hell;
I am not of Adam, nor of Eve, nor of Eden and Rizwan.
My place is the Placeless, my trace is the Traceless;
'Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.
I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one;
One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.

— JALAL'UD-DIN RUMI, Shamzi Tabriz.
ARUNAGIRI prayed to Lord Muruga and was granted the boon of chanting Tiruppugazh and other songs with fervour and devotion and in a wondrous rhythm and voice. Among others he had a vision of the Lord standing on the peacock, both dancing, at Tiruttani.

Saint Arunagirinathar

Ancient writers on Arunagirinathar praised him as one who cannot be equalled in the exquisite choice of words in the Tamil language, in the art of stringing them together and in the faultless beauty of expression. This gift was bestowed by Lord Muruga and he was thereafter called Arutkavi meaning that his songs were divinely inspired. It was in Tiruvannamalai at the sannidhi of Lord Muruga at the entrance to the gopura that he was commanded by the Lord to express his devotion in song. Arunagirinathar felt unequal to the task, not having received the upadesa of the mantra 'AUM'. It is from 'AUM' that speech derives its origin and it is AUM that must be recited at the beginning and end of every Name and Mantra. The Lord then began the first lines in santha Tamil "Muthaliththaru, . . . " He then asked Arunagirinathar to proceed further with the song which he was then able to do. Arunagirinathar thereafter began singing Lord Muruga's praises in every shrine and before every Gopura of the Arunachala Temple in Tiruvannamalai and went out singing in the streets of Tiruvannamalai. Not content with this, he began to travel all over India visiting shrines and singing the praises of Lord Muruga. One may say that the seed of Tiruppugazh was planted in Arunagirinathar by the Lord at Tiruvannamalai, was watered and manured at Vayalur but it was at Vallimalai that the plant began to flower and bear fruit by the combined grace of Lord Muruga and Valli (T-253). At the shrine of Muruga in Vayalur near Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, the title of his songs Tiruppugazh meaning lofty or excellent was confirmed. In Tiruchengode, Arunagirinathar expressed his gratitude to Lord Muruga for the praise and popularity his Tiruppugazh had received in all quarters as a result of His blessings though at the time he had sung only a few (T-384). Perhaps after he had sung almost the sixteen thousand songs of Tiruppugazh, he again went and stood before the Lord of Tiruchengode to express his gratitude: "By your precious gift.

1 Continued from our last issue.
to me of singing the song so beautifully named Tiruppugazh, I have been blessed with that eternal wisdom that knows no decay or diminution and also with insight into the truth enunciated in great writings. Deeply sunk in ignorance, this heinous sinner, by the merit of singing Tiruppugazh has crossed the ocean of desire and reached a place indescribable by speech. It has earned me great fame, has made me traverse the seven worlds and a mere wish of mine once expressed carries the weight of a king's command. Leaving all these aside, how can I forget You for that very precious gift which has taken me beyond the ocean of sorrow, beyond the three gunas, beyond all vasanas and freed me from rebirth for ever " (T. 113).

Acclaimed as a Great Saint

The fame of Arunagirinathar as the greatest saint of his time, was established on two occasions. The first occasion arose during a contest with one Villiputhurar, a learned but very arrogant pandit, who went about the Tamil country challenging every pandit to a contest of pandityam (scholarly skill) with the condition that the loser should have his ears cut off. In Arunagirinathar he not only met someone who was head and shoulders above him in learning, but was also the personification of the truth vidya vinaya sampanne (humility and learning). Though defeated Villiputhurar's condition was not put to effect. That was why he is called Karunaikku Arunagiri (meaning Arunagiri the embodiment of grace).

The next event was more dramatic. Prabuddha Deva Raya invited him personally and Arunagirinathar, touched by his devotional nature, came to the palace and was suitably honoured. Sambandandan seeing in Arunagirinathar a potential rival to the chieftain's favour persuaded him to invite Arunagirinathar to a contest in which he and Arunagirinathar should each undertake to manifest their Ishtha Devata (Personal God) before him and that he who failed in the attempt should leave his domain for good. Arunagirinathar agreed to the proposal.

The contest took place in the courtyard of the Arunachaleswarar shrine and was attended by Prabuddha Deva Raya, his consorts and other nobles. Sambandandan began his ceremonies with great pomp but failed. When Arunagirinathar's turn came he sang three Tiruppugazh songs with such fervour and devotion that all were entranced by the melody and the bhava (spiritual vibration). Arunagirinathar's prayer was granted and Muruga bursting one of the pillars of the Mantap open came out of it on his peacock dancing and gave darsan to the assembled people. But Prabuddha Deva Raya, unable to bear the brilliance of Muruga's manifestation, lost his eyesight. The foregoing is one of the accounts of that great event of which there are many variations. But the central theme derives its authenticity from the poem of Arunagirinathar himself — Athala Sedanarada (T. 1056). The song is a supplication to Muruga to appear on His vahana, the Peacock, both dancing. When Muruga dances, the earth and its tallest peaks tremble, and all creation joins in the joyous dance.

Vallimalai Satchidananda Swami sensed in the song 'Devendra Sanga Vaguppu' not just a song in praise of Kali but a maha mantra capable of conferring on him who resorts to it as a parayanam (recitation) with unwavering faith and devotion, the power not only of attracting God's compassion and help in mundane affairs, but also of leading him on the path to Realisation of Parabrahman. For
the Paramatman sends forth His Sakti the Mahamaya or Kali to create the universe of multitudinous names and forms and allows Himself to be completely enveloped by Her creations. Muruga as the Paramatman cannot be realised unless one is able to transcend Mahamaya (T. 1052). She cannot be transcended by just ignoring Her or by rejection as an illusion. By love and love alone can She be won, leading to complete absorption. This is the teaching of Arunagirinathar in 'Devendrasanga Vaguppu' and the seekers after Reality according to him and Sri Vallimalai Swami can do no better than engage in the study of it with devotion and faith. Even a worldly man can resort to it for spiritual salvation. For, by the practice of reciting it with faith and devotion, the screen of the ego-mind disappears, the bondage of senses is loosened and God's Grace flows unobstructed until He manifests in the Heart of the devotee.

In some books about spiritual practices a distinction is made between the paths of bhakti and jnana. Sri Sankara is represented as the Acharya who propounded the superiority of jnana over the other path and Sri Tulsi-das as extolling the path of bhakti. Neither of these statements is valid when taken out of context. Suffice it to say that there has hardly been a great saint or sage in India who has not followed both paths of bhakti and jnana. Vallimalai Satchidananda Swami is reported to have said that where the heart predominates over the intellect, men prefer at the start the path of bhakti, similarly the man whose intellect predominates over the heart prefers the path of jnana, and the one in whom neither predominates prefers the path of karma. The distinction among the paths is only apparent at the start; in the end all the paths coalesce. Arunagirinathar being a bhakta from the very beginning, emphasizes the merit of bhakti or the emotional approach to God. "Pray to Lord Muruga," he says, "to come on a green peacock and grant you bhakti and thereafter to lead you to moksha" (T. 312). He was a believer in krama mukti, that is to say that the ultimate state cannot be obtained unless one practises step by step the various disciplines of sadhana. Achara Puja must be performed without intermission to the chosen God or Ishta Devata. By Achara Puja he meant that Puja which is not accompanied by offering the flesh of animals or of intoxicating drinks or of bhavas and actions that are on the border-line of ethics and morality. The object of the external puja to the Ishta Devata is to draw the mind away from sensual pleasures and to fix it in the well-being derived from the performance of puja with devotion (T. 66 & 100). "Before I go down the steps of the bhakti ghat" says Arunagiri, "to bathe in the sea of ananda, the restless waves of the mind must first subside." (K. Alan. 35) The attachment to wealth etc., are hindrances to spiritual progress. Unless they are given up, progress towards liberation is not possible. "Riches are like the swirling waters of a jungle stream that come quickly and disappear as quickly, giving rise to alternate joy and sorrow." Addressing his mind, Arunagirinathar continues, "Why do you not run away from them? How are you going to get moksha unless you pray to Lord Muruga? Seek His aid that He may use His sharp vel 4 to pierce and destroy the passions that curtail the freedom of your mind (K. Alan. 36)." Side by side with meditation, he advocates the practice of ashtanga yoga 5 to attain chitta suddhi. By charity, festivals and ritual worship of God, study of scriptures, control of the senses, purity of thought and action, observance of dharma, by rendering personal service to the Guru, one soon attains Chitta Saddhi (T. 100). Arunagirinathar's dedication to his Ishta Devata did not make him narrow-

4 Lance, Muruga's weapon.
5 The Yoga with eight limbs, viz., yama, cultivation of principles of good conduct; niyama, observance of rules of good conduct; asana, posture; pranayama, regulation of breath; pratyahara, restraint of mind; dharana, holding and fixing the mind; dhyana, meditation; samadhi, fruition of meditation — a state transcending the mind, can be experienced but not described.
6 Mental purity.
minded. He worshipped with devotion other forms of God in the temples he visited and he sang about them. There is another aspect in Arunagiri's devotion which puts him in a class all his own. He chose as his *Ishta Devata* Lord Muruga who has His abode on every hill-top in the Tamil country. He is in the midst of men and can be reached through devotion. Similarly, Valli's abode is on the hill called Vallimalai in the Tamil country. She was to Lord Muruga what Radha was to Sri Krishna. Muruga became Valli's constant companion — Arunagirinathar has often sung about this. Here is one such song:

"Her wondrous and animated beauty
Was like that of a dancing peacock.
Dark were Her eyes and lively
Like those of a frightened deer.
She wore a thing of bark
Hemmed with peacock feathers,
A rare piece of hunters' art
Was it fancy? She reflected tender green,
Young in years, her loveliness beyond compare."

Lord Muruga was the most popular amongst the gods with the earliest Tamilians, and His image used to be taken around the streets of the port of Korkai on the Cauvery every day in procession, people crowding to have His darshan. Arunagirinathar in his song on Lord Muruga praises His great compassion for all living creatures, His love for the Tamil language and for music and fine arts. He is the destroyer of evil and ignorance and in charge of the divine force; friend and protector of Devas and Brahmans and Vedic Yagnas. He is most beautiful in form and colour, and His pre-eminent quality is that He is most easily pleased by true devotion and comes unfailingly to the help of His bhaktas.

"If you will meditate on Lord Muruga
With love single and true,
You will surely attain
That unsurpassed state of Supreme Bliss."

One might well say that Arunagirinathar had established a new religion for the Tamil speaking people, the worship of Lord Muruga by men of all castes, in their mother tongue (Tamil) to pour out their hearts in devotion and to make known their wants and sufferings and to offer puja in simple ways known to them. The recourse to Agamic practices and to the Sanskrit language which most people did not understand was no longer compulsory. The great merit of Arunagiri to which we referred earlier, was that he did not fall a victim to the fanaticism that characterises the protagonists of a new creed. His object had been merely to rescue the Hindu religion from being smothered by its age-old creeds and rituals, so as to emerge once again as a living religion among its votaries. He himself made abundant use of Sanskrit words in his poems, affirmed his loyalty to Vedic teachings and upheld orthodox practices. The path and disciplines he expounded were those of the Upanishads and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Whatever his caste at birth might have been, Arunagiri was certainly a "True Brahmin", if the word "Brahmin" were to be given its correct connotation, as referring to one who is truly and solely devoted to the attainment of *Brahma Inana*.

Arunagiri started on the path of bhakti and soon reached the Ultimate State. He was able to perceive that all other ethical paths also led to the same goal; though some appeared more difficult than others.

"The Ultimate State" says Arunagirinathar, "cannot be experienced by persons without compassion or by those engaged in endless discussions or by those of asuric temperament or by eaters of flesh of animals killed cruelly or by men of evil propensities, who under the guise of religion go about stirring up trouble, do not mind the path of Dharma, and preach unethical paths to seekers after God.

"But if with mind overcome by love for God, one were to approach the Lord, Grace will surely be granted. Thereafter, one should give up the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. One can pray then to Lord Muruga "When will You bless me so that I may experience the state of ananda which the Vedas pro-
In another song Arunagirinathar gives an account of his own spiritual progress. “The appointed day of Yami’s coming having passed, the desire to be always sporting with women having left me, my three gunas destroyed, leaving behind the twin states of birth and death, and having cut asunder the troubles caused by the five senses, I began to sing the glory of Your Lotus Feet. I meditated upon You, O Lord of Tiruchendur, and having come to know You, wisdom dawned upon me. Oh Kanda Vele, having known You, known You well, and going along the path of inner experience leading to the ultimate state, sense of ‘I am the doer’ destroyed, I attained true knowledge” (T. 47).

Next he sings about the temple of Mowna (Silence) which has no length or breadth and the extent of which cannot be comprehended by anyone, where everything becomes clear.

Arunagiri then seeks the state of TuHyatita or the primal Brahmic state. “Pray tell me, O Muruga about that adode of grace which is beyond the reach of Vedic language, which is not perceivable by those devoted to moral conduct and Achara Puja, not within the reach of those in Yogic Nirvikalpa Samadhi…” (T. 1052).

Arunagirinathar in the end offers his salutations to his Lord and Guru for all He has bestowed on him. Swami Vallimalai Satchidananda used to recite the poem as a Guru Stuti. The writer was advised when he first met him: “Do not go after this or that holy person. Recite this poem (he wrote it on a piece of paper and gave it to him) and the Guru will seek you of His own accord at the time appropriate for you.”

One cannot do better than to conclude this article with the prayer that Arunagirinathar addressed to Lord Muruga of Tiruchengode, a prayer that should be recited by every devotee once at least every day, “I will never forget You,” affirmed Arunagiri before the Lord. “Pray come to me at the time of this body’s death and take hold of me,” (K. Alan. 23).

That was five hundred years ago and the Lord of Tiruchengode whose lotus feet Arunagirinathar attained, recreated another Arunagirinathar bereft of his great learning, but equally devoted to Him, born under the sign of the Star Moolam in the month of Kartigai, in the year 1870. He was Vallimalai Satchidananda Swami who carried the torch of devotion to Lord Muruga singing the songs of Tiruppugazh in all the four directions of the country. Hail to Arunagirinathar! Hail to Vallimalai Satchidananda Swami!

7 Hymn to the Guru.

T. = Tiruppugazh
K. Alan. = Kandar Alankaram, a work of Saint Arunagirinathar.
IS DEHATMA BUDDHI AN OBSTACLE?

By SRI R. NARAYANA IYER, retired Sub-registrar, (for an account on whom see the Jan. 1968 issue of The Mountain Path) once told me that he asked Sri Bhagavan about too much emphasis being given by Ramana-devotees to the discarding of the I-am-the-body idea and said that this was impossible for him since he was always aware of this body and its creature comforts. Sri Bhagavan graciously remarked: 'Yes, yes. You cannot give up the I-am-the-body consciousness without being first aware of it. There is nothing wrong with that. The giving up of the idea should take place by the Grace of God, for by our own effort it will be very difficult.' This became a complex problem for me.

All that we know or are made to understand is through the mechanism of the five senses, mind or intellect. Our actions spring from thoughts which are conditioned by our past karma. Thus it becomes a vicious circle; which is the cause and which the effect — thought or actions? That which is presented to our limited understanding by the body-mind complex we take for truth, but paradoxically we have no other means of clarification. Arthur Osborne expressed it succinctly in one of his editorials: '... that is why we find it so hard to renounce them.'

Emmanuel Kant said that the moment we know the limits of a circle we have already transcended them. So when we rightly understand the limits of this complex may we not transcend it also?

As far as these limitations are concerned, what do we know about this problem except what has been communicated to us? All our efforts at any time, in any sphere are conditioned by our senses. They communicate the impressions to the mind or intellect which judges them according to its level of understanding arrived at on the basis of past impressions. The mind-intellect recognises or accepts known entities and is baffled by or rejects unknown ones. The past influences the present which becomes past for a future present and so goes on the merry-go-round.

When we come to subtle powers, they are also fundamentally based on our senses as experienced in dreams, and so limited to sensorial perceptions. Hence, on analysis, we conclude that everything we know is based on this body-mind complex and this premise cannot be rejected on the relative plane. Everything is as true as we are to ourselves, says Sri Bhagavan.

In this respect we find a concordant note in Saiva Siddhanta where the body is considered the 'temple' in which the Lord is enshrined. Neglect or torture of the body is condemned without giving it undue importance. Sri Bhagavan also envisages this aspect by stressing the importance of a satvic diet for the welfare of both body and mind. Thus in Saiva Siddhanta, dehatma buddhi is given special significance only to be transcended in realisation of our true state. 'The weak cannot attain the Atman. The physical body (annamaya kosh) is neither to be despised nor neglected' say the scriptures.

To a body-minded votary the idea of transcending it is hard to envisage and he is baffled. Sri Bhagavan said that it is better to be confused than ignorant or indifferent. A state of confusion may induce us to trace its source, in an attempt to clear it up. In this way we may arrive at the understanding that we cannot solve the problem by our own efforts and that the Grace of God or Guru is necessary.
This becomes the incentive for sadhana through Self-inquiry or through devotion or surrender, whichever suits our temperament. We dive deep to seek an answer and ultimately we come to know that by understanding alone it is not possible to transcend this complexity. According to the testimony of sages, Truth can be realised by intuitive experience. How to achieve it? Or is it possible at all? We have for authority Sri Bhagavan’s saying: ‘I-am-the-body’ idea will become extinct only on Self-realisation. With its extinction the vasanas become extinct. (Talks, 1968 Edition, p. 473). This is possible through Grace but Grace is vouchsafed only to him who has made the necessary effort (though the effort however great is as nothing); a drop merging with the limitless sea, in essence the same.

According to Sri Bhagavan the transcendence of the I-am-the-body idea can be best achieved through self-enquiry (vichara) “Who am I?” “To whom is this problem?” We have to transcend it from the level of our evolution. It brings to mind Sri Bhagavan’s suggestion to retain the I-thought in order to destroy all other thoughts, itself finally to be consumed in realising the Self.

Sri Bhagavan said on another occasion: “The body is a mental projection; the mind is the ego; and the ego rises from the Self. For whom is the body or birth? So long as there is a sense of separation there will be afflicting thoughts. If the original source is regained and the sense of separation is put an end to, there is Peace.” (Talks, 1968 Edition, p. 364).

According to a Sufi saint, paradise is only a stage on the way while the world is the road that leads to the abode of love. For the purpose of attaining Godhood the human state is traditionally considered higher than that of an angel.

To attain Self-realisation the ‘I-am-the-body’ idea has to be transcended. Everything has a purpose in this world. The body-consciousness leads on investigation to the comprehension that the all-conscious Self is its substratum. The body also played a part in Sri Bhagavan’s Realisation revealing that we are not the body but the immortal Self. As explained in the Drig Drisya Viveka of Sankara, translated by Sri Bhagavan into Tamil; (i) identification of the ego with the reflected consciousness is natural or innate and (ii) the identification of the ego with the body is due to past karma. So it is not in our power to discard instantly what we have ourselves accumulated or imagine ourselves to have accumulated, after intellectual understanding has come. The body-mind complex supplies all our experience and remains the only means or approach towards transcending it. Sri Bhagavan clearly says that the appearance of the Self as world is “in order that you might seek it. Your eyes cannot see themselves. Place a mirror before them and they see themselves. Similarly with the creation.” (Talks, 1968 Edition, p. 227).

Sri Bhagavan explains: “One should not identify oneself with appearances; one should never relinquish one’s Self. This is the proper means for destruction of the mind (ego) which is of the nature of seeing the body as self, and which is the cause of all misery and obstacles.”

This applies also to the subtle and causal bodies as, according to Sri Bhagavan, it is on the gross body that the other bodies subsist. In the false belief of the ‘I-am-the-body’ are included all the three bodies consisting of the five sheaths. And destruction of the false belief of selfhood in the gross body is itself the destruction of the false belief of selfhood in the other bodies. So enquiry is the means to removal of the false belief of selfhood in all the three bodies.

To conclude: dehatma buddhi has relative importance as an instrument towards transcending itself and realising its true nature. In this light we can understand why it is said in the Puranas that any being in any of the fourteen worlds has to be born on this earth to get Liberation. “In no other birth can the jiva attain knowledge of Truth. A human birth is the stepping stone to the path of Liberation,” says the Visvasara Tantra.
SINCE Wordsworth complained: “The world is too much with us”, the pace of our getting and spending has grown so fast that we seem to have lost the dimension of depth. The poets love Nature and mythology and are at home in the past as the present, in the imaginary as the actual work.

The sacred trees described in Hebrew, Hindu and Norse mythology offer for our contemplation images of growth in time, organic unity in diversity and unselfish service. At the end of Chapter 22 in Book X of the Bhāgavata the Lord extolled these blessed beings:

“They live and grow for others’ good,
Fierce blows of sun and wind and rain
They take themselves and ward off from us.
Those that seek their shelter find
No harsh unkindness, no refusal.
With arms outstretched they welcome guests.
With leaf and flower and fruit and shade,
With root and bark and hard heart-wood,
With fragrant gums and tender shoots,
With many parts man’s many needs
It is their nature to fulfil.
Their birth and growth and death are all
A sacrifice unlimited.
From these friends let us learn to spend
Our life, our wealth, our thought and deed
In silent joy for others’ good.”

Thus towards the Jumna stream he walked
Through the thick avenue of trees laden with foliage, flower and fruit.

The 15th Chapter of the Gita describes a topsy-turvy tree, rooted in the heavens and growing downwards into time and space. This human tree lives its life both by ascent of sap and descent of spirit. Rooted in svadharma, in its own physical and social soil, it is exposed eternally to the sun of reality and the moon-mind reflecting its light.

To seek and find this inner self, the pearl of great price, we are told to imitate the diver who has no eyes for beauty of sky and landscape or the play of light and shade on the sea’s surface, but who, holding breath and speech, plunges straight down to the bottom. For a few pregnant moments he knows only one dimension, depth.

To discover one’s svadharma too, it is wise to plunge into one’s present duty, without too much looking before or after or afar. This obligation to accept and serve one’s surroundings, the charming sweetness of svadharma, is well illustrated by Booker T. Washington in his speech at the Atlanta Exposition:

“A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, ‘Water, water: we die of thirst!’ The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back: ‘Cast down your bucket where you are.’ A second time the signal, ‘Water, water; send us water!’ ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, ‘Cast down your bucket where you are.’ A third and fourth signal for water was answered, ‘Cast down your bucket where you are.’ The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River…”

I would say: “Cast down your bucket where you are!”

When God is recognized as immanent as well as transcendent, brightness of joy emerges from any task well done and from any happy human relationship. In verse 29 of Upadesa Sravanam Sri Bhagavan speaks of steadfast service as abiding in the state of bliss beyond bondage and release.

In the tenth sutra of Meikandar’s Sivinjuna Bodham (a Saiva Siddhanta classic), the tradition of steadfast service is summed up both
as the fruit of a good life and the seed of a better one. When His light shines on us, work ceases to be work. The right hand of the eternal goodness feels no strain and claims no credit. Appar, the supreme poet of *daavu bhaarva* (attitude of service) declares: “His duty is to support His slave. My duty is to serve and be content.” The sweetest singer among the 63 Saints, he found his joy in work and the feet of his Master in those he loved and served:

“As fire in fuel or butter in milk, the jewel of light stands hidden. Plant the rod of kinship and, with the rope of feeling, churn and churn away. And there He shines in front!”

The kinship is nothing tentative or temporary, nothing conditional on a *quid pro quo*. Complete surrender is imaged by the royal devotee, Kulasekhara, who says: “Though you seem to slay me? yet will I trust in you.” Suffering and sorrow are only passing shadows and cannot alter the loyal love of the King who sings:

“Even if you do not stop giving me pain, I will cling to Your Feet as the child clings to its mother though she may push it away in a fit of anger; as the chaste wife clings to her husband though he may misbehave; as the patient clings to the surgeon who cuts and cauterises his flesh; as a bird clings to the ship’s mast in mid-ocean; as wealth clings to one who spurns it but loves you!”

The unchanging certitude of loyalty is figured in the leaven which “a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,” the drop of curd in a pot full of milk. The slightest element, remaining itself and refusing to give up its virtue, converts the rest to the same quality. Where failure in human relations occurs, the explanation is to be sought in oneself. As St. Paul says: “All things work together for good to them that love God.”

The ideal of the steadfast servant, so dear and familiar to Tamil students, has been described again by Sri Muruganar, the greatest of contemporary Tamil poets, who recreates for us all the beauty of our older poetry. Obeying its living idiom and prosody, he brings out with clarity and emphasis the prayerful mood of a man of action turning to a higher power away from the threats and temptations offered by superficial, though apparently dynamic programmes.

Here is a rough rendering of his *Irai Pani Nitral* (Steadfastness in the Lord’s service):

Whichever way I went
I heard your praise, O Happy One,
And to your feet surrendered
My body, wealth and life.

I cried:
“Ocean of virtue, mountain-high,
Show me the way to happiness.”

Ramana just, majestic, said:
“Stand still. Stay where you are.”

Digging or soaring, Vishnu and Brahma
Could find you not at all.
And I trudging, trudging towards divers goals,
Was worn thin.

I cried:
“Tell me how to merge in the Feet
Beyond the knowledge of life.”

Said Ramana pure, secure:
“Be still, Rest as you are.”

Passing, passing through various births,
Driven on and on by the force of deeds,
I cried:
“Show me the way, my Friend, my Master,
Show me the way to reach you.”

Said Ramana, Lord of Wisdom and Welfare:
“Be not angry; be not glad,
Gather your mind to oneness,
And be guided by the Grace of the Lord.”

Like a picture sprawling on paper,
Rootless I ramified
And cried:
“Tell me how to cut the surface,”
Ramana, Master of Wisdom, said:
“Steady and bright,
Like the flame in a pitcher,
Burn in the grace of the Lord.
Be still. Fulfil His Will.”

I cried:
“Lord and Master, tell me how
To make good deeds prevail
Against deluding evil deeds.”

My Father dear, my Ramana said:
“Undeceiving, unshocking,
I cried:
"Mighty Master of Works, 
Creating, preserving, destroying, 
Tell me the means of salvation."
Ramana, wise and virtuous, said:
"Watching word and thought, 
Walk as you are guided 
By the Grace of the Lord who dwells 
In the lotus of your heart."
I cried:
"Tell me how to end 
The strong, inveterate deeds 
That torment and force me back 
Into the torrid current of births."
Said Ramana, best and brightest of teachers:
"Walking the straight path fixed of old. 
Join and be enjoined by 
The Grace of the Lord of joyous awareness."
I cried:
"O rain-cloud with compassion big!
Teach me truly the trick 
Of escaping alive from the flood of births."
Said Ramana, Lord of Wisdom and Welfare:
"Like not, loath not true nor false. 
Stand in the centre and be 
Impelled by the Grace of the Lord."
I cried:
"All forms I see are forms of You. 
Yet none of the Gods know you aright. 
Tell me firmly what to do?"
Said Ramana, Lord of Wisdom and Welfare:
"A way there is to escape 
The hungry current of births, 
To reach the shore and be safe. 
Join and be one with. 
The Grace of the Lord."
I cried:
"Best of Masters! You who shone 
In the kurunda tree's cool shade. 
To teach your devotee of Vaadavur, 
Full and clear, lay bare to me 
The secret of Self-knowledge!"
Said Ramana, my Father, my King:
"Be as you are your Self!"

We are indeed present in presence everywhere. The rest is bosh. — PAUL REPS.

The real is the void in which essentially there is not a thing; the seeming is the realm of forms in which there are myriads of appearances; the real comprising the seeming is the real shifting to the seeming; (straying from principle and turning to activity), the seeming comprising the real is the return of illusion to the real (rejecting the seeming and returning to the real), and inclusive integration is response from the invisible, free from existence and being neither pure nor impure and neither real nor seeming. This is that is called the immaterial and profound Great Tao of the non-grasping True Sect. — Ch'an and Zen Teaching, Second Series by MU TENG HUI YUAN (CHARLES LUK).
MEMORABLE DAYS WITH THE SAGE OF ARUNACHALA

THE highest ideal for man is to realise God, his real Self. Three prerequisites for fulfilling this sublime purpose of life are: a human body as it is only in such a state that we can work out our destiny and practise sadhana, the desire to be free and the help of a guru who has crossed the ocean of delusion. This objective unfolds itself commensurate with our spiritual effort and growth.

It was Grace and good fortune that brought me to the presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana in 1927. On entering the Ashram I saw the Maharshi seated on a couch with nothing more on than a loin-cloth and appearing to gaze at some distant void. He was surrounded by devotees sitting at his feet and the whole scene was reminiscent of sages of yore. I stood for a while in his presence. He looked at me casually and I made my namaskarams. He made kind enquiries where I came from and about my stay. Next morning I went to the Ashram and sat before the Maharshi in meditation. The mind was quiet and not wavering. Sri Maharshi remained sitting on the couch as usual apparently gazing at the Hill.

Next morning I again returned to the Ashram to sit at his feet as I found I could easily concentrate in his presence and have progressively longer spells of undisturbed meditation such as I have never been able to achieve before anywhere else. When I told the Maharshi about it and how enjoyable it was, he asked me whether I was sleeping at the time of meditation. On my replying in the negative he laughed and enquired about my method of meditating, which was to concentrate on a light in the heart and offer a flower to my Ishtam (chosen God) whenever the mind wavered as instructed by His Holiness Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, second president of Ramakrishna Math Mission. The Maharshi said it was all right for me and I could continue in this way.

The third day after a lengthy meditation in front of the Maharshi I told him about a picture of Jesus I had seen in a church, surrounded by all sorts of animals at peace with one another. He replied that this was due to the fact of animosity having been conquered by the sage. Even snakes would not harm anybody here in this Ashram and added that in the presence of sages evil nature would be conquered and friendliness prevail. That is how the rishis of old used to live in forests and caves unharmed by wild creatures.

A visitor asked the Maharshi in the evening if he saw any form of God in meditation. He replied smiling that the Self or Atman is our real nature and has no form. He quoted a verse of Sankaracharya: “You are not the body, you are not the mind, senses or buddhi. You are beyond all these.” You are the
Atman. When one becomes perfected in meditation having discarded all desires and merges in the Self the mind loses itself without any objectivity. The mind then is no mind. The mind losing itself in Atman is what is called samadhi. This is the real nature of man and sublime happiness.

The highest goal of man is to enquire Who am I? and realize the Self. If a human being does not try to realize this he lives in vain. This state in which he enjoys the highest peace and happiness is dearer than anything else in the world. It is in all beings in the innermost heart. Unless one realizes this state one will have to be born and die again and again. In this real state one goes beyond grief and sorrow. It makes a man immortal.

Young as I was I found it difficult to follow this teaching and asked for clarification when I returned to the Ashram next morning. This was the first time I addressed the Maharshi as Bhagavan. He replied that the path was indeed difficult, as difficult as walking on a razor's edge, but sincere effort is sure to bring result. "You (meaning me) could meditate for two or three hours not because of this life's practice but as a result of effort in past lives."

The fifth day of my visit I saw a young woman with a small baby seated at Bhagavan's feet sobbing bitterly. She had recently lost her husband and was grief-stricken. Bhagavan looked at her with compassion and told her: "Husband, wife and children are for the body. Go home and know who you are. Go home and do not weep." The words of a jnani have power to transform. 'Home' can also mean spiritual Home, the Source. His command "Go home and know who you are" might have taken effect in a heart one-pointed and purified by sorrow. In the case of another young woman, Echammal, heart-broken at the loss of her entire family, Bhagavan's very Silence was enough to effect the transformation and lift her grief (as recorded in Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge).

The remaining days went off as usual. Bhagavan's routine was to sit on the couch mostly in silence till noon and the same after food and a little rest. He used to look through the mail twice a day and go for a short walk on the Hill. He said on one occasion that since there was no mind at all there was also no concept of anything. All was one full expanse in peace and happiness. He quickly added that we cannot even say one expanse as there was no second. He was immersed in Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence — Consciousness — Bliss). Now his nature was that always.

When I was ready to leave I told Bhagavan so on the ninth day of my stay. Kneeling before him I wept profusely. He remarked: "You can stay on. Nobody asked you to go." However I took leave of him the next day and he told me to continue my meditation as usual and that everything will be all right in the course of time.

By Bhagavan's Grace not only was I drawn into the fold of a sage who had the highest realization but was helped in every way to experience periods of supreme peace and bliss. This indeed forms the sheet anchor of my life that was, that is and that will be. The silent ministration of Bhagavan will indeed remain an eternal spring of spiritual joy and peace.

It is but appropriate that I close this account with salutations to Bhagavan Ramana who keeps on inspiring ever increasing numbers of seekers as time goes on.

How gracious art Thou Lord Dakshinamurthy, To have blessed mankind by Thy ministration in human form, To Bhagavan who is but the form of Satyam, Sivam and Sundaram Do I offer my salutations again and again. Om Tai Sat.
SOME intellectuals tend to scoff at devotees and the path of devotion. It is partly due to the faults of many of us who call ourselves devotees or follow the path of devotion without understanding its full significance. Some of us content ourselves with a certain degree of emotional gratification. Some seek to have their lurking desires fulfilled through the agency of the High Power. That Power sustains them also, and responds to their prayers, for none is excluded from Its all-pervasive beneficence; it guides their onward evolution. However, the true spiritual seeker is one who, having realised the fleeting nature of the phenomenal world, one-pointedly seeks Truth alone or longs for the Lord of the universe—following the path of jignasa (enquiry) or bhakti (love of God), respectively. This short article humbly seeks to spotlight the nature of true bhakti as one of the major paths to spiritual fulfilment.

Himself a jnana avatara, who attained Realisation through a sudden experience of the true ‘I’, Bhagavan naturally, first and foremost, blazed the trail of Self-enquiry, ‘Who am I?’. Nevertheless, he was, indeed, a perfect bhakta, even as he was a perfect jnani. His Five Hymns to Arunachala—the ‘Father’ who drew him into Himself while he was a boy of sixteen—are a masterpiece of devotion.

According to him, self-surrender is the master-key of a devotee’s sadhana. If the devotee is sincere, He to whom he surrenders will never fail him. In that precious booklet Who Am I? he says, “The indefinable power of the Lord ordains, moves and controls every thing that happens... Knowing full well that the train carries all the weight, why indeed should we, the passengers travelling on it, carry the small individual articles of luggage on our laps to our great discomfort, instead of putting them aside and sitting at perfect ease?”

Among some of his other observations bearing on the subject are:

“Surrender yourself unreservedly and the Higher Power will reveal Itself.”

“True surrender is love of God for the sake of love and nothing else.”

“Bhakti is the mother of Jnana.”

“One-pointed thought of God is Bhakti; when it is in secret, it is Jnana.”

“Surrender yourself unreservedly and the Higher Power will reveal Itself.”

“One-pointed thought of God is Bhakti; one-pointed experience of Self is Jnana. There should be one alone, whether we call It God or Self.”

Once, when observing a few learned South Indian friends engaged in a hot argument amongst themselves in the Old Hall of the Ashram, to the effect that there was indeed no point in jnanis and bhaktas quarrelling between themselves, I a neophyte in the Ashram, interjected, “But jnanis and bhaktas never quarrel; it is pseudo-jnanis and pseudo-bhaktas who quarrel.” Bhagavan, who had been sitting quite indifferent on his couch, looking towards the window opening out to the sky, swiftly turned around toward us with a broad smile and approvingly remarked, “Yes, yes!”
Many other saints and mystics — Hindu, Muslim and Christian — have sworn by devotion and surrender to the Lord. Love of God permeated the lives of Chaitanya, Nanak, Mira, Rabiya, Namdev, Ramakrishna, and others.

The Bhakti Sutra of Narada, an ancient comprehensive thesis on Bhakti, throws a flood of light on different phases of a devotee’s approach to the Lord and stages of the evolution of his devotion.

The Bhagavata, a veritable scripture on Bhakti, resounds with singing the glory of the Lord and the glory of His devotees.

True devotion, however, means intense love of God; and self-surrender means self-giving, not self-grabbing, however subtle. “The essence of bhakti sadhana is the giving of self to the Supreme,” said Sri Krishna Prem, a devotee par excellence. Just as self-enquiry burns the ego, devotion or self-surrender melts the ego.

Let me conclude with the following soul-stirring words 1 of Swami Parmananda Puri, which bring into focus the right attitude befitting a devotee:

“He who has truly given his life, soul and body to the service of the Master must not think of his own will, but should sacrifice his own will at the command of the Master. This is called true self-sacrifice. Otherwise, as long as we can fulfil our own desires by serving the Master, we serve Him, but the moment it interferes with our satisfaction, we do not. This is not self-resignation. On the contrary, it is selfishness... .

“Ours is to give up all egotism and say ‘Naham! Naham! Tuhu! Tuhu!’ (Not I, not I! It is all Thou!)”

1 Selected from an article entitled “Self-Surrender,” published in Ananda Varta, Shree Shree Ma Amandanmayee Ashram, Varanasi.

Be in a domain where neither good nor evil exists; both of them belong to the world of created things; in the presence of Unity there is neither command nor prohibition.

All this talk and turmoil and noise and movement is outside of the veil; within the veil is silence and calm and rest.

Dost thou hear how there comes a voice from the brooks of running water? But when they reach the sea they are quiet, and the sea is neither augmented by their incoming nor diminished by their outgoing.

— Abu Yazid al-Bistani.
ISLAM AND ADVAITA

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

ISLAM expresses the point of view that God alone is to be worshipped and that the whole universe was evoked by Him out of nothingness and all men are as nothing before Him. Hinduism expresses the point of view that the universe with all its beings is a form assumed by Him, a manifestation of Him, without however, changing or detracting from His unmanifested Reality. To say that God created the universe out of nothing or that the universe is nothing but an illusion veiling the Reality of God comes to the same. The two points of view are therefore two aspects of the same truth, two ways of saying the same thing. Since a man has no reality other than that given by God, the essence of his being, the reality of him must be that reality other than which there is nothing, that is to say God. By realising the nothingness of his individuality, by what was called in Mediaeval Christianity 'self-naughting,' a man realises the universality of his Divine Essence. Therefore a man who has realized his true Self (which has nothing to do with psychology but goes beyond the mind to the very essence of Being and is without doubt the true meaning of the Delphic 'Know Thyself') has realized his essential Oneness with God ('I and my Father are One') beyond the accident of form.

Appreciating this, Hindus worship such a One as God. Adhering to the letter of the law, most Muslims condemn such worship as idolatry. Actually it is not; it is not worshipping other than God but, on the contrary, recognizing that the worshipped has destroyed the illusion of otherness from God which still veils the worshipper.

All this is understood by the Sufis— who are the spiritual elect of Islam and of whom are the great Islamic saints. They teach in secret what the Hindus teach openly. But the exoteric Muslims do not understand. For them there is an absolute gulf between the two viewpoints, and for them the Hindus are pantheists or idolators. The Sufi poet, Al Hallaj used to proclaim when in a state of ecstasy *An'al Haq 'I am the Truth.' 'The Truth' is a Divine Name and he was executed for blasphemy in accordance with Islamic law, although the Sufis understood and have continued to revere him. Another Sufi Abu Said, skirted the law, declaring negatively: 'There is nothing beneath this robe other than Allah.' A Sufi incantation used commonly to this day runs: 'I seek pardon of God for all (in me) that is not God.'

— From *The Incredible Sai Baba.*

Then you say
"I see a tree"
We name this say-act
a concept, concepts
and concepts about concepts
complicate see.
Not so good.
Who wants to complicate?
Me.

— PAUL REPS.
"To be, or not to be," mused Hamlet. He had the opportunity to choose or thought he had. But can we say, "To act, or not to act?" Is there a choice here? Unfortunately and most emphatically, no. We act all the time, whether we will or not, whether we are conscious of it or not, and worse luck, we are acted upon even more than we act.

There is another and a bigger problem: every action brings results. They are, most of them, neither expected by us, nor acceptable to us. Everywhere in this tragic world, says Bradley, man's thought, translated into action, is transformed into the opposite of itself. While independent action is so seldom possible, the results are almost always uncontrollable. The Bhagavad Gita says that all activity is surrounded by evil like fire by smoke, and more often than not unpleasant. Action makes a man, in a way, but it also unmake him in many other ways. Altogether it is not a desirable master, but, like the Old Man of the Sea, it has got on to our backs, and we find ourselves unable to shake it off.

One can understand the hippies striking out on their own from all that binds them to a way of life, experimenting with the degree of independence that it is possible to assert. Is it ever possible to extricate ourselves from the necessity to act? In this space age life moves on at breakneck speed. We are conscious that it is impossible to escape action. If and when the burden becomes unbearable, however, we do start thinking about the why and the wherefore, and eventually arrive at some kind of spiritual enquiry. We turn to the Vedanta and find the wonderful dictum: you are not the doer.

Fame, indeed, is the last infirmity of noble minds. Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi says: Even the man who looks upon the whole world as of no value, who holds in the palm of his hands, as it were, the essential truth of the Vedas, falls an easy prey to that notorious courtesan called fame, who, once she has enslaved him, never lets go, as a rule.

The answer seems to be essentially bound up with selfless service. It sounds contradictory to say but such action can free us from the bondage of action. The right action then would be to perform it as a sacrifice, and offer up the results as worship. What does one gain by such action? Jesus gives an astounding answer: one gains himself. The Self is the largest, or rather limitless, connotation of man's ego. When the ego dissolves into the Self (by dying to its egoism), it gets fulfilled. Nothing is lost but all is gained.

The disintegration of the ego is effected by, among other paths, service to God and man,
and this is the mystery of life: Work for others suppressing selfish desires, and you really evolve, and realise that you are an instrument, not the doer, in harmony with the Oneness of Being. Work for your own small identity and you grow smaller and more limited.

Again and again God manifests in this world of name and form, to lead us back to our primordial state, the Self. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," says Jesus. Even some of the great poet-seers have instinctively visualised this truth, though they could not work it out in terms of life and action.

Action is the law of life. From the newborn babe to the tottering old man one acts and is acted upon. The idle man sitting still is acting. He breathes and the physical functions of his body go on, while idle thoughts hum in his brain, chasing one another. The saint in *samadhi* is intensely active, in that he abides as the source of all action and spiritual energy radiates from his presence. There is a difference between these actions: the one is salvation, and the other is bondage. We learn lessons in the science of action; we learn that in order to win free from the bondage of action we have to transform action into selfless service without thought of reward and ultimately discard the sense of doership. It is said that the *sahasrāra* in most of us has only a few petals in the full bloom of light, the rest being curled up and dormant. The switches that operate their light lie hidden in the heart of service to others.

Right action is selfish, but selfish in the largest sense of the word, in the sense wherein Ashtavakra has proclaimed:

> "As I, by my light, reveal this body,  
> So do I reveal the whole Universe.  
> To me it belongs, or it is nought."

*Ashtavakra Gita*, Ch. II, Verse 2.

(Note: The dream either belongs to the dreamer or it is nought).

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True wisdom works for the welfare of all beings.

* * * * *

Meaningful words reveal nothing
Impart (the aim) before they are spoken.
If while grumbling you step forward
You betray your sad perplexity

An enlightened master always points directly at the mind to teach his disciples. Although his words are full of meaning, they seem unintelligible and non-revealing to them. Even before being spoken, these words already impart the aim of his teaching. If you come forward to interpret their literal meaning and neglect their purport, you will betray your delusion and will be unable to know it.

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*Ch'an and Zen Teaching*  
*by Mu Teng Hui Yuan (Charles Luk).*
Before G-d created the worlds
He serenaded them out
of Himself

— E. WEISEL.

G-d,
for Mercy's sake,
created the world
to reveal Mercy.
If there were no world
on whom would Mercy take pity?
So — to show His Mercy
He created the worlds
from Aziluth's peak
to this Earth's centre.

But as He wished to create
There was not a where?
All was infinitely He,
Be He Blessed!

The light He condensed
sideways
thus was space made
an empty void.

In space days and measures
came into being.
So the world was created.

This void was needed
for the world's sake,
so that it may be
put into place.

Don't strain to understand
the void!
It is a mystery — not to be realised
until the future
is the now.

Now
speaking of the void
we must say two things
— — opposite — —
is-ness and is-not-ness.

Void means absence of G-d
for world space's sake.
But in truth's deepest truth
G-d is still there.
Without His giving life
Nothing is is-ing.

Experience (of Reality) is said to be temporary or permanent. The first experience is temporary and by concentration it can become permanent. In the former the bondage is not completely destroyed; it remains subtle and reasserts itself in due course. But in the latter it is destroyed root and branch, never to appear again.

— Talks, p. 90.
There are various pathways leading to Self-Realisation and those who strive to realise Siva in their innermost heart extol the worship of the Guru as most efficacious for the attainment of this goal. We do not see though we have eyes to see; we do not hear though we have ears to hear. It is intuitive understanding which enables us to realise that the Guru, the teacher of the highest spiritual wisdom can be Siva himself.

The word Siva — *Aum Sivayanama* — is fraught with significance. The Guru is the Self in all hearts. The Guru awakens in the hearts of the true aspirants a hunger for spiritual illumination by dispelling their craving for life’s trifling pursuits. Selfless service is one of the paths leading to the knowledge of the Self. Selfless service is service to Siva — *Sivathondu* — performed in the spirit of universal love without thought of reward. It is an ancient message.

Sivathondu is the inspired ideal of service to Lord Siva. In the service of man, men learn to serve Siva, for He and they are inseparable. Service to Siva leads to the discipline of self-analysis and the purification of the mind whereby ignorance and egoism can be destroyed. A Sivathondu (one who does the service to Siva) sees the necessity for the conquest of the self by the Self to attain his primordial state. Realisation of Siva is *mukti* or liberation and selfless service follows in its wake spontaneously.

Mr. Rangachari, a Telugu Pandit in Voorhese College at Vellore, asked about *nishkama karma*. There was no reply. After a time went up the hill and a few followed him including the pandit. There was a thorny stick lying on the way which Sri Bhagavan picked up; he sat down and began leisurely to work at it. The thorns were cut off, the knots were made smooth, the whole stick was polished with a rough leaf. The whole operation took several hours. Everybody was wondering at the fine appearance of the stick made of a spiky material. A shepherd boy put in his appearance on the way as the group moved off. He had lost his stick and was at a loss. Sri Bhagavan immediately gave the new one in his hand to the boy and passed on.

The pandit said that this was the matter-of-fact answer to his question.

A few days before the passing away of Arthur Osborne Sri T. P. R. had called on him along with Sri Ganesan. Osborne was listening with great interest to Sri T. P. R.'s recollections of earlier days with Sri Bhagavan and exclaimed that not a bit of such recollections should be lost. He felt that they should be on record and made available to devotees so that they can relive the atmosphere of Sri Bhagavan’s presence, which is an inspiration and a blessing by itself. This instalment gives an account of the first bhiksha to Sri Bhagavan in the year 1896, soon after his arrival at Tiruvannamalai.

Grandfather sowed — grandson reaped

It was on an auspicious day in the early thirties that a visitor and devotee had arranged for a bhiksha (food offering) to Sri Bhagavan and all those present at the Ashram. We were talking about it as it was always welcome news to us and mentioned it as usual to Sri Bhagavan. In a reminiscent mood he referred in this connection to his arrival at Arunachala for the first time and observed that after leaving Madurai for good it was only on two occasions that he had food in private houses. One of them was the home of Muthukrishna Bhagavathar of Tirukkoilur which was on the route to Tiruvannamalai. Turning to me he observed: “The other was your grandfather’s, the only home I entered in Tiruvannamalai to have a meal there.” I was delighted to hear of the good fortune my grandfather had in serving Sri Bhagavan in this way. I asked Sri Bhagavan how this came about and he graciously described the event vividly recapturing the occasion. I wrote it down verbatim in homely Tamil and showed it to Sri Bhagavan for perusal, adding that this was also the reason or occasion for finding my way to his feet.

The following is a literal translation of Sri Bhagavan’s narrative (in Tamil):

"After I came to this town, it was in your house only that I had bhiksha, eating on a leaf plate. Your grandfather, a great devotee of Siva, was there. He was tall and of a stout frame, adorned impressively with a garland of Rudrakshas and other beads. Every day he used unfailingly to visit the temple of Arunachaleswara and return only after having darshan. I used to remain somewhere near the temple of Subrahmanya and every day he would sit before me for a while without saying anything, then rise and go away. I was a young boy and was not speaking and he an aged person was saying nothing too though he used to watch me all along. He was well known in the town and people of consequence used to be his guests. Do you know what happened? One day some official had arrived at his house. Arrangements were made for a feast. That day also as usual, after going into the temple and having darshan, he
came to me and sat down. To him who used to remain silent always, before me, the thought had come to somehow take me that day to his house and give bhiksha. As soon as he rose to return home he said to me, “Hum, hum, get up, get up; we will go home, have bhiksha and come back.” What to do? I was not used to speaking. Was that not so? So I made negative signs shaking my head and hands signifying that it was not necessary. He did not listen or heed me. He had determined to take me that day and offer bhiksha. What to do? He was strong and stalwart — I was small and slight in comparison. He continued, “Hum, hum, get up, get up. Youth that you are, leave yoga and tapas for a while… We shall go home and after having bhiksha return…” So saying he took my arm, linked it into his, and made me get up and follow. So accompanying him I was led to his house which was close by to the temple car. It was a very spacious house with verandahs on both sides. In between there was a big open courtyard with an edifice to Goddess Thulasi in the centre. On the northern verandah he made me take the first place, spread a leaf larger than all the rest, and himself served me plentifully. It was only after I finished eating, that he ate and got up. This was the only day I entered into a house here. In Tirukkoilur it was Muthukrishna Bhagavathar’s house. No other. In those days I never had a bath even. The body would be smelling. No one would come close to me. In spite of all that, your grandfather used to come unfailingly and sit with me. In this town, so many people would come, see me and go. But he alone realised, that though a young boy what was in this was a Fullness.”

When questioned by some visitor, Sri Bhagavan explained what attitude of mind could make social or political activity a valid sadhana, but he discouraged his devotees from taking up such activity. It was enough that they should perform their own functions in life with purity and disinterestedness, doing what was right because it was right. Even though the present state of the world seems inharmonious, it is part of a vaster harmony; and by developing Self-knowledge one can both know this harmony and exert a far greater harmonious influence than by attempts to change the course of events.

By doing what is right simply because it is right, without self-interest, one is benefitting others even apart from the visible results achieved and in a more potent although more subtle manner than results can indicate. One is also benefitting oneself in a very direct way. In fact disinterested activity (nishkama karma) may be said to be the true bank account, which will shape one’s future destiny.

— Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge, p. 154-155.
SADHANA IS SERVICE; IS SERVICE SADHANA?

By JOHANNUS J. DE REEDE

The caption of these paragraphs implies that the two — service and sadhana — can be treated as two distinct processes. But in this article the emphasis will be on pointing out the interrelation of the two processes which are unitive.

Of all creatures man alone is capable intellectually of investigating the origin of his own individuality or of finding out who he is in reality. In the process of digging down to the roots of his being, what is likely not to survive is the digger or investigator himself as a separate entity.

Service has two aspects: social service to ‘others’ as others, which is laudable on a relative plane; but the acceptance of that plurality and self-satisfaction from such acts of service carries the danger of strengthening the ego.

Service to God in serving others, or selfless service without any thought of reward has a purifying effect and may lead ultimately to Liberation. In this way serving ‘others’ would mean serving oneself.

A wise Christian apocryphal saying has it that the subtlest of sins is ‘to want to do more for others than for oneself.’ The ‘sin’ here would apply to not seeing the oneness of oneself with ‘others’, hence the ‘more’.

The chassidim in their theology of service in the words of Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer Baalshem Tov express it in this way: “To help another is not a task but the self-evident reality on which chassidim is based. To help is not a virtue but a pulse of its existence.”

“He who thus lives with others in his own action realises the truth that all souls are one...”

It follows that true service which is sadhana is service to oneself in others. In Sri Arunachala Pancharatna (Five Stanzas to Sri Arunachala) Sri Ramana Maharshi says: “Feeling God’s immanence everywhere, one considers oneself not as the agent, but as a tool to serve God in the shape of one’s surroundings.” If we help and transform ourselves the whole world will be transformed. Such help from within is the best help one can render. All sages including Sri Ramana Maharshi have confirmed this. Selfless service or nishkama karma will be included in all four marga — Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana — in some form or other. They are not exclusive of one another. Service in this spirit is sadhana. Sadhana is service to oneself in the effort to realise the Oneness of Being. Such realisation helps the whole universe. Service which enhances the ego is a disservice to the performer. Service which questions the ego is Mahâ-Yoga.

The only enquiry leading to Self-realisation is seeking the Source of the “I” with internal mind and without uttering the word “I”. Meditation on “I am not this; I am That” may be an aid to the enquiry but it cannot be the enquiry.

— The Collected Works, p. 80.
CHAPTER IV
GOWRI COMES TO ARUNACHALA
FROM KANCHEEPURAM

Brahma continued:—

At this Vijaya bowed down devotedly to
Ambika and praised Siva fervently in
order to bring peace of mind to her.
She said: "Oh Devi! You will not be
abandoned by Siva at any time. For you're
his very life and the Supreme Sakti. It's only
when you desire to spread out your
maya (power of illusion) that the Lord though
always one with you appears to be separate.
You have come here at the command of
Sambhu to worship Him and you cannot
transgress it. You may perform regular
penance (tapas) in this temple erected by
Siva without any rituals (karmas). Moreover
as you're yourself the world, the protection of
the world is in your power. You will again
join Siva and uphold dharma. That being so,
Parvati, how can you feel any pain of separa-
tion? Devotee of dharma, may your religious
observances become famous in the world and
become spiritual instruction to your devotees."

On hearing her speak thus, Gowri began to
practise austerities on the bank of the Kampu.
She put aside her various ornaments and
instead wore the beads of rudraksha. She
threw away her fine clothes and wore for
garment the barks of trees, her entire body
smeared with holy ashes. She lived on ears
of corn picked by herself and always repeated
the name of Siva. Thrice a day (morning,
noon and evening) she bathed in the Kampu,
lovingly shaped its sand into a linga and
worshipped it full of devotion with leaves
as traditionally prescribed.

The Devi observed the dharma of alleviat-
ing the misery of all creatures and loving
kindness to animals. In summer she
surrounded herself with fires, lay on bare
ground in the rainy season and stood in ice-
cold water in the cold season. She respect-
fully welcomed the holy sages (maharshis)
who came to see her. The sages were filled
with wonder at her austerities.

On one occasion when she had collected
and cleaned the flowers from the forest repeat-
ing mantras and begun to worship a linga
made of sand on the bank of the Kampu in
the agamic way, Siva wishing to test her
devotion made the waters of the Kampu rise
and overflow her banks. Seeing a huge flood
approaching, her companions warned the Devi who opened her eyes and saw the river in flood. Distressed at this obstacle to her worship she at once embraced the linga lest it should crumble away and said to them “What to do? Worship in progress cannot be stopped come what may. Only those who have acquired merit can bring to completion their good actions in this world and the dharma which is capable of fulfilling the desires of the heart. This Siva Linga is made of sand. It will dissolve in this flood. If a linga is destroyed a true devotee should also perish with it. This flood has risen up through the maya of Siva to test the sincerity of my devotion. I will continue without the least fear. ‘Friends! Go away quickly!’” Saying this Ambika did not abandon the linga which she was embracing though she was fast being surrounded by water. She devoutly adored the great linga clasped to her heart, and with open eyes meditated on Sadasiva with one-pointed devotion.

Then a divine voice from the sky spoke: “Girl! This great flood has subsided. You can now leave the linga, noble of beings! This linga worshipped by you will achieve everlasting fame as the one worshipped by the gods and capable of granting boons. May your penance be successful! May the human beings who see and worship this linga erected for the maintenance of dharma attain the goal of their lives! I myself shine on this earth in the form of the effulgent Arunachala for the liberation (of mortals). The name means that the accumulated sins of the worlds will radically vanish only at the sight of it. Rishis, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Yogis, etc., come here and fervently worship it forsaking the peak of Kailasa and Mount Meru.

“Formerly there arose a fight between Brahma and Vishnu who had both sprung from me and I manifested myself before them in the form of an effulgence in order to remove their delusion. When Brahma as a swan and Vishnu as a boar could not find my beginning or end they adored me devoutly. Whereupon I was pleased and appeared before them, who were capable of protecting the three worlds, to grant the boons desired by them. Again at their request, I the effulgent one, became the immovable linga famous as Arunachala. You may go there and learn from the sage Gautama about devotion to me and the glory of Arunachala and do more penance. I shall reveal to you my effulgent form there in order that all sins (of the world) may be destroyed and all the worlds proper.” On hearing these words which came from Siva in his formless state the Devi said “So be it”
and made ready to start at once for Aruna­chala. Turning to the rishis who desired to follow her, she said “Devás! Rishis resolute in religious observances! Stay where you are. Perform your austerities on the bank of the sacred Kampa. This linga of sand which removes all sins and brings in all kinds of prosperity bears the marks of my embrace. Worship it. Let my devotees know that I shall be known as Kāmakshi as I fulfil all their desires and bless them. Let them also worship me and obtain the boons they desire.”

“I am entirely under the control of Sambhu, the lord of the devas. I shall therefore go to Arunachala and carry out His command. After I have done hard penance there and obtained the grace of Sambhu you may come and see me.”

Then she came to Arunachala. Having arrived there she worshipped daily with great fervour the effulgent Lord of Arunadri (the Hill of Arunachala) together with her companions to the sound of divine dundhubis (a kind of drum), and with flower garlands accompanied by the dancing of apsaras. As a result of worshipping the motionless linga in this manner she became very emaciated. The goddess saw siddhas, yogis, rishis and devas there. The devas said: “Atri, Bhrigu, Bharadwaja, Kasyapa, Angirasa, Kutsa, Gautama and other siddhas, vidhayadharas and devas do long penance here for the fulfilment of their wishes. The Ganga and the other holy waters worship this Linga-Hill on all sides. This is the noble and divine linga known as Arunadri.” On hearing this, Gowri again and again paid homage (to it).

All the maharshis begged her to be their guest but she said that she must see Gautama according to Siva’s command. So they directed her to his ashram.

But Gautama, considered the foremost among sages, had gone out into the forest in the morning to procure flowers and other articles of worship. When leaving, the sage instructed his disciples to attend and properly look after the guests who might come to the ashram, in his absence. Devi went to his hermitage where she was received by his disciples with great respect and hospitality. They asked her humbly to wait a little for the sage, and sat around her. Her presence transformed the hermitage into a beautiful place gloriously ornamented and surrounded with wish-fulfilling tree (kolpaka trees).

The prince of sages (Gautama) returning from the forest with sacred grass, sacrificial fuel etc., in his hands saw from a distance his ashram resplendent with many pavilions and wondered greatly. He then understood by his yogic powers that this was due to the arrival of Gowri. He hastened with great eagerness to see the Mother of the Universe. On the way he also learnt from his disciples who came to meet him about the arrival of Gowri. The Maharshi was elated at the news and saw in it the fruition of his austerities which brought about such a most auspicious event by Siva’s grace!

(to be continued)
CHAPTER IX

EXPOSITION OF THE SELF

1. When this assemblage of body, senses, etc., acts of its own accord there arises an idea ‘I am this’. This is the jīva (ego) stained by the dirt of ignorance.

2. When the conviction that everything is the space-like (all pervasive) Consciousness becomes firm the jīva comes to an end like a lamp without oil.

3. Like a misguided Brahmin, who abandons his own nobility, and adopts the life of a Sudra, the Lord assumes the role of the jīva.

4. Just as a child sees an apparition (created by its own fancy), so also the stupid jīva creates, on account of delusion, this unreal body and sees it (as separate from him).

5. A child superimposes a (real) elephant on a clay elephant and plays with it; even so, an ignorant man superimposes the body, etc., on the Self and carries on his activities.

6. The picture of a snake does not cause fear of a snake when it is realised to be only a picture. Similarly when the jīva-snake is clearly understood there is neither misery nor the cause of misery.

7. The snake superimposed on a garland merges in it; so also the sense of separateness rising from the Self merges in the Self.

8. Although bracelets, etc., appear to be many, as gold they are one. Similarly although the adjucnts are many, the Self is really one.

9. Like the organs of the body and modifications of clay (vessels of clay) non-duality appears as duality (multiplicity) in the form of the moving and unmoving objects.

10. Just as a single face is reflected as many in a crystal, in water, or in ghee or in a mirror; so also the (one) Self is reflected in the (many) intellects (or minds).

11. Just as the sky is (appears to be) stained by dust, smoke and clouds, so also the pure Self in contact with the qualities of Maya (prakriti) is (appears to be) soiled by them.

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1 Continued from our last issue.
12. Just as metal in contact with fire acquires the quality of fire (namely heat), so also the senses, etc., in contact with the Self acquire the quality of the Self.

13. Just as the invisible Rahu becomes visible when it is seized by the moon (i.e., comes in contact with the moon), even so the Self is known by experiencing objects of perception.

14. When water and fire come together they acquire the qualities of each other. Even so when the Self and the inert body come together the Self looks like the non-Self and the non-Self looks like the Self.

15. Just as fire thrown into a large sheet of water loses its quality, so also Consciousness in contact with the unreal and the inert seems to lose its real nature and becomes inert.

16. The Self is realised in the body only with effort, like sugar from the sugarcane, oil from sesame seeds, fire from wood, butter from a cow and iron from stones (ore).

17. Like the sky seen in an unbroken crystal, the Supreme Lord of the nature of consciousness is seen (exists) in all objects.

18. Just as a big lamp kept inside a vessel made of precious stones illumines by its light both outside and inside, so also the one Self illumines (everything).

19. Just as the sun's reflection in a mirror illumines (other things) so also the reflection of the Self in pure intellects illumines (other things).

20. That in which this wonderful universe appears like a snake in a rope is the eternal luminous Self.

21. The Self is without beginning or end. It is immutable Existence and Consciousness. It manifests space, it is the source of the jiva and higher than the highest.

22. The Self is pure Consciousness, eternal, omnipresent, immutable and self-effulgent like the light of the sun.

23. The omnipresent Self, the substratum of all, is non-different from the effulgent Consciousness like heat from fire. It can only be experienced (not known).

24. Pure Consciousness without intellect, the Supreme Self, the illuminator of all, the indivisible, pervading (everything) within and without, is the firm support (of all).

25. The Self is absolute consciousness. It is pure awareness, undecaying, free from all ideas of acceptance or rejection and not limited by space, time or genus.

26. Just as the air in the universe pervades everything, so also the Self, the Lord, abides bodiless (in everything).

27. The Consciousness which exists in the expanse of earth, in the ornaments, in the sky and in the sun exists also inside the worms lying in their shells under the earth.

28. There is neither bondage nor liberation, neither duality nor non-duality. There is only Brahman always shining as Consciousness.

29. Awareness is Brahman; the world is Brahman; the various elements are Brahman; I am Brahman; my enemy is Brahman; my friends and relatives are Brahman.

30. The idea of a consciousness and an object of consciousness is bondage; freedom from it is liberation. Consciousness, the object of consciousness and everything else is the Self; this is the gist of all systems of philosophy.

31. There is only consciousness here; this universe is nothing but consciousness; you are consciousness; I am consciousness; the worlds are consciousness — that is the conclusion.

32. That which exists and that which shines (is known to exist) are all the Self; anything else which seems to shine does not (really) exist. Consciousness alone shines by itself. Ideas of knower and known are idle postulates.

(to be continued)
Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the drum as well as the drum-beat.
Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the brave warrior who does not run away from the battlefield as well as the warrior who is aware of the tactics of the enemy.
Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the messenger as well as the servitor.
Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the swordsman as well as the one who bears a quiver.
Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the possessor of sharp arrows as well as the wielder of several weapons.
Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the possessor of excellent weapons as well as the possessor of an excellent bow.
Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the traveller on narrow pathways as well as the one who travels on good roads.
Prostrations to Thee that livest in the water of the rivulet as well as the water of the cataract.
Prostrations to Thee that livest in the water of the muddy pond as well as the water of the lake.
Prostrations to Thee that livest in the water of the river as well as the water of the pool.
Prostrations to Thee that livest in the water of the well as well as in the water of the pit.
Prostrations to Thee who art the rain as well as the drought.
Prostrations to Thee that art in the clouds as well as the lightning.
Prostrations to Thee that art in the white autumn cloud as well as the hot sun.

Prostrations to Thee that art in the wind which brings rain as well as hailstorms.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the household articles as well as the guardian of the house.

SECTION VIII

Prostrations to Thee that art accompanied by Uma and art the remover of sorrows.

Prostrations to Thee that art in the red rays of the rising sun as well as the reddish rays of the risen sun.

Prostrations to Thee that conferrest joy on all beings and art also the protector of the virtuous.

Prostrations to Thee that art stern towards Thine enemies and also the terrible one.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the slayer of enemies near and far.

Prostrations to Thee that art the slayer as well as the destroyer.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the trees crowned with green leaves.

Prostrations to Thee that art the Pranava (OM).

Prostrations to Thee that art the source of worldly pleasures as well as the bliss of Liberation.

Prostrations to Thee that bestowest the joys of this world as well as the bliss of Liberation.

Prostrations to Thee that art auspicious of form and art also most auspicious.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the holy waters as well as the gods installed on the banks of rivers.

Prostrations to Thee that hast crossed the sea of samsara as well as one who has not.

Prostrations to Thee that art the japa (repetition of mantras) etc., which destroys sins as well as the spiritual knowledge which liberates one from samsara.

Prostrations to Thee that promptest individuals to do worldly acts which keep them in samsara and to enjoy the fruit of those acts.

Prostrations to Thee that live in the midst of the tender grass on the banks of the rivers as well as the foam in the water of the rivers.

Prostrations to Thee that live in the sandy embankments of rivers as well as their flowing water.

(to be continued)

1 Featured in the last instalment were Sections V and VI of SRI RUDRAM and not merely Section V as was indicated by mistake. Section VI commences from “Prostrations to one who is the elder and…” (p. 47 of Jan. 71 issue).

It is not only as a technique of meditation that Sri Bhagavan prescribed Self-enquiry but as a technique of living also. Asked whether it should be used always or in just fixed hours of meditation, he replied, “Always.” This throws light up on his refusal to sanction renunciation of worldly life, for the very circumstances which had been obstacles to saddhana were thus converted into instruments of saddhana. . .

—ARTHUR OSBORNE

in Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge, p. 153.

As indicated by the title, it was not the intention of the author to give a systematic account of Buddhist teachings, but rather to follow in the tracks which this great spiritual movement has left in the course of its history and in the impact with other religious traditions that preceded it (like Shintoism Japan, to which some very interesting chapters have been dedicated). Frithjof Schuon, who is the author of many books on religious thought and the inner unity of religious experience and mystic symbology, discusses the main features of Buddhist tradition; however, not from the point of view of an abstract dogma, but as a living unfoldment of that eternal Dharma, which has been proclaimed by the Enlightened Ones of all ages in many different forms, according to the necessity of the times and the spiritual level of its people. Due to this he avoids the one-sided attitude of putting one school of Buddhism against the other, in the attempt to find out which of them represents 'true Buddhism.' To him the unfoldment of Buddhism through the centuries is neither to be judged as a process of deterioration from an original state of perfection and purity, nor as 'progress' from a primitive state of mind to the heights of transcendental knowledge, but as a natural growth and gradual transformation of the all-containing spiritual seed which the Buddha planted into the hearts of men. To ask which school of Buddhism most faithfully reflects the original teachings of the Buddha is "as if one were to ask which of the branches of a tree best conforms to the root." "The deployment of a more or less subtle aspect of the Dharma is never an 'evolution' in the progressivist sense of the word; inspiration is not an invention any more than a metaphorical perspective is a rationalistic system" (p. 76). Evolution, rightly understood, is the transformation of the invisibly existent into the visibly formed. It is the transition from the potentiality of an abstract law (dharma) to the actuality of life in time and space. Applied to the Bodhisattva Ideal Schuon expresses a similar thought: "Buddhism unfolds itself in a sense between the empirical notions of suffering and cessation of suffering; the notion of Compassion springs from this very fact.... This is where the Bodhisattva enters the scene: he incarnates the element compassion — the ontological link between Pain and Felicity — just as the Buddha incarnates Felicity and just as ordinary beings incarnate suffering; he must be present in the cosmos as long as there is birth and death, this presence of his being expressed by the statement that the Bodhisattva wishes to deliver all beings." (p. 132).

The author rightly warns the reader of the purely intellectual conception of Buddhism, which tries to explain everything in terms of a pseudo-scientific modern psychology and reduces all moral and spiritual values to drives and forces emanating from the 'Unconscious', thus depriving the individual of his moral responsibility and depreciating at the same time the very intellect whose conclusions form the basis of his judgement. "This so-called 'psychology of spirituality' or this psychoanalysis of the sacred is the breach through which the mortal poison of modern relativism infiltrates into the still living oriental tradition!" (p. 71). It is this tradition which gives meaning and importance to Zen, whose anti-dogmatic and anti-conceptual attitude is based on the direct experience and practice of Buddhist meditation, rooted in the profound faith in the ever-present reality of Buddhahood, an attitude which has nothing in common with Western agnosticism or the anti-intellectual tendencies of our time. "It is one thing to take up a stand beyond the scope of the thinking faculty and another to remain far short of that faculty's highest possibilities, even while imagining one has transcended things of which one has not comprehended the first word. He who truly rises above verbal formulations will ever be ready to respect those which have given direction to his thinking in the first place" (p. 70). These words should be taken to heart by all those who try to reduce Zen to a mere play with paradoxes and who think that thereby they are exempted from the demands of reason and clear thought, before they
have learned to use them. The same can be said with regard to the subtleties of Zen art which are miles apart from the ineptitudes of contemporary ‘abstract’ or ‘non-objective’ productions of the majority of modern artists who have no spiritual values to convey. “With this can be compared the confusion persistently fostered by European psycho­logists as between drawings by insane patients and Tantric Buddhist mandalas” (p. 71). In spite of all outer appearances and similarities all these productions of a bewildered modern mind lack that ‘myste­rious dimension’ of the Mahayana, known as the ‘Vajra Vichar’ or Vajrayana, for whose comprehension “one has to start out from the Idea of the ‘metaphysical transparency of the world.’ According to which Reality is ‘an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and its circumference nowhere” (p. 26).

This book is not only a valuable contribution to our understanding of Buddhist tradition, but a challenge to the spiritual values of our own time. The author was lucky to have found in Marco Pallis a competent translator whose knowledge of the subject is as profound as his own inner conviction of its value, as testified by his own works.

**LAMA ANANGARAJA GOVINDA.**


Reincarnation is the main theme of this altogether engrossing book and is defined as “the unfolding of the human spirit through recurring lives on earth.” The book reinforces belief in Reincarnation by a long-ranging sweep of history to show that the creed has “a magnificent intellectual ancestry.” Spencer’s remarkable forte is his lucidity of presentation. Here one finds no adumbrates or embellishments of style, but the single objective of quoting chapter and verse from the works of some of the greatest minds through history to prove that Reincarnation has been accepted by them as the relative plane when the seen is regarded as a ‘manifestation of the Self, being Eternal and Changeless, only manifests its value, as testified by his own works.


Gems from the Tantras (second series) are from well chosen terse tantric texts with lucid commentaries. Particularly illuminating are the comments on the Mantra. They bring it to life and open new horizons for the devout-practitioner: ‘By identification, by love one must become one with the mantra.’ M. P. Pandit stresses the importance of being properly initiated by a Guru with authority to initiate, who must belong to a line of Gurus who must have made out a massive case in support of the creed. The book, as the title proclaims, is a sequel to an earlier publication on the same subject. The present work contains, besides its main theme, a miscellany on some “mysteries” of the universe. But every time the mystery is elucidated by a correct approach to arrive at the revealing truth behind it.

**G. R. KAPADIA.**

The most illuminating chapter in Spencer’s book is the one entitled : *AUM TAT SAT — TAT TVAM ASI.* It is related in the chapter how God is said to have dispelled the difficulty of Moses about the accep­tion of his teachings by the people at large.

God’s reply was to tell the people that I AM had sent Moses to them. That would scatter all doubts.

Christ is quoted too : “We live and move and have our being in God.”

A citation from Hormuzd Yashat says : “God says : ‘My first name is I AM.’”

Ramana Maharshi repeatedly points out that all doubts about rebirth are dissipated by inquiring into the nature of birth and death, which are but two points in the body consciousness of the Self. The Self, being Eternal and Changeless, only manifests itself in various forms in this body consciousness.

An important chapter is on “The Doctrine of Rebirth in Zoroastrianism” by Daftar Khurshed S. Dabu. This noted scholar quotes profusely from Zoroastrian religious texts which express belief in Reincarnation. Learning and inspiration combine to make out a massive case in support of the creed.

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Reincarnation, of course, is one of the main planks of Indian religious thought. But Spencer draws from prophets, poets and philosophers alike to drive home the universality of the tenet. Pyth­agoras and Plato, some of the greatest German thinkers, including Goethe and Max Muller, and poets like Wordsworth and Tennyson have alluded to Reincarnation as the inescapable concomitant of human evolution.

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separate entity independent of the Self, the universe is just as unreal as the relative plane.


The Isa Upanishad being one of the older texts is notable for its faithfulness to the Ideal of the Vedic Seers. Unlike the later Upanishads that came to be written in epochs further removed from the Vedic age, the Isa Upanishad preserves a harmony between earth and heaven, life and spirit. It does not reject life as false but seeks to show how to live it in the right and intended way and make of it a manifestation of God. Prof. Desai takes up this Upanishad for study and exposition because of its living appeal to him by its comprehensive approach to the problem of man, Nature and God.

He gives the Vedic background of the thought that finds expression in this Upanishad, and draws attention to the different interpretations put on certain key terms by different commentators. He differs from the meanings given by Acharya Shankara in many significant places (e.g., Verses, 1, 2, 12 etc). A good deal of research and scholarship has evidently been gone into this work and whether one accepts his findings everywhere or not, the effort deserves to be dispassionately studied.

For instance, in the well-known Verse No. 8, \textit{sa paryagat} which reads (in English) "It is He that has gone abroad — That which is bright, bodiless, without scar of imperfection, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil. The Seer, the Thinker, the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent has gone abroad — That which is bright, bodiless, scathless and becomes a seer, a subduer of senses, a man of comprehensive outlook and a self-reliant person thus fulfils his objectives for an eternal period." (p. 64), and commenting upon it elsewhere, observes: "It presents a picture of an ideal — a synthesis of material and spiritual qualities. It presents a harmonious personality. Such a person is seen in the form of a wise seer (Kavih), controller of mind and subduer of senses (Mani), of a universal outlook (Paribhu) and self-reliance (Swayambhu). Know it that in him the soul force is awakened and he is on a high stage of fulfilment of the divine life."

Similarly his reading of \textit{asambhuti} in the context of the \textit{Kebra Parasha} of the Gita to mean the elemental sheath or the gross body is open to question.

All the same the work is an earnest study of the Isa, bold and independent.

PATHWAY TO GOD IN KANNADA LITERATURE: By R. D. Ranade. Published in collaboration with the Karnatak University, Dharwar, by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chaupatty, Bombay-7. Pp. 342.

"I was practising meditation some time for about eight years from 1901 to 1909, but not with much effect. When I fell rather seriously ill in 1909, my mind turned towards God. The 'seed' of the spiritual life was already sown in the year 1901 indeed. When I became reckless and desperate about my life, and said it does not matter if I die, I devoted my whole attention to God. So, after four months of very strenuous practice, a sort of an experience came upon me. There was a priest named Dambhat, who used to ring the bell in the temple of Siva near the house in Poona where I was staying then. Those bells began to ring in my ears also. I did not know whether it was a bell in the temple or in the heart that sounded. I never knew till then anything of this kind of experience at all. I never knew it from anybody. So I was really perturbed; I did not know what to do and whom to ask. Then all of a sudden it happened that a friend of mine, the late Sri S. V. Mhaskar, sent me a copy of the \textit{Volume II of Sankara Granthavali}, Mysore Edition, with my breath, merges at the holy feet of Lord Vishnu." This is the solution which I found in the above verse contained in the \textit{Yogaratvalli} of Sankaracharya. That came to me as a sort of encouragement."

So records Dr. Ranade, the philosopher-mystic, in his account of one of his journeyings on the different Pathways to God. He accepts nothing unless it evokes a response in his being and he does not rest satisfied until he is able to integrate his experience in one whole of Godward movement. After sounding the depths of mysticism in the Marathi literature, after examining with becoming humility the path trodden by the pilgrims of Light in the Hindi, he devoted the last years of his life to an intimate communion with the Saiva and the Vaishnava saints and mystics of the Karnataka country. The book
under review represents the fruit of this research as far as it is possible to translate mystical experience in terms of the intellect.
The author ranges wide through the recorded utterances of the various ministers of God, the exponents of philosophy, the innumerable devotees of the Lord, compares their findings and exhortations with similar outpourings in the other parts of India and in the West and underlines the oneness of the Spirit and the commonality of the approach. He discusses the subject under convenient heads. What is most pleasing about the whole treatment in his choice of typical poems and phrases of these mystics of Karnataka and his reasoned exposition of their underlying thought. Especially striking is his unravelling of the tantric symbology implied in many of these enigmatic verses.
Indeed spiritual experience refuses to be fragmented and analysed by the critical and systematising apparatus of the logical intellect but a literature that purports to record that experience can be evaluated and drawn upon by those interested. And Dr. Ranade's is one way and a conscientious way.


This anthology, prepared at the instance of the National Commission of Ceylon for UNESCO, to introduce Sinhalese literature to the West, consists of readable English renderings of representative selections from prose and verse (12th Century A.D.—18th). Though some of the poetical selections like the Sandesha (Message) poems in the manner of Kalidasa's Meghaduta, are secular in manner cf Kalidasa's Meghaduta, the emphasis is on practice, not theoretical knowledge, often expressed in an epigrammatic form. This work of 1,330 couplets (133 chapters of 10 verses each) is divided into three parts: on Virtue, on Wealth, on Love. Each couplet contains one idea and stands by itself, a pearl of beautiful thought and elegant expression. The general strain is that of a perfect moral man in a perfect society. Between man and his fellow beings the relation advocated is one of mutual understanding and love. The poet who is said to have lived in Mylapore before the present Christian era was evidently well-informed in the traditions and customs of the land and is the author of the dharma prashna. The emphasis is on practice, not theoretical knowledge, e.g.,

To live in tune with the world, who fail,
Though learnt, their learning is of no avail
and on Justice:
Justice is both good and true
If each section gets its due.

Menander (Milinda) and a Buddhist monk Nagasena. The passages relate to the question of Personality and to the character of Nirvana. Replying to the query as to how Nirvana is to be recognised, the learned one speaks: "Great king, it is to be recognised by its freedom from distress and danger, by its fearlessness, by its security, by its peace, by its beauty, by its sense of well-being, by its wholesomeness, by its purity and its lightness." (P. 358).
Translation is always a tricky matter. If it is too literal, it runs the risk of getting lifeless and pedantic. If it is free and literary, the sense may stray. A balance is needed.

The author’s fresh renderings are no improvement on the original as in the case of Pope’s translation.

M. P. Pandit.


This is an interesting book, and well written. It is a philosophy of the individual, and a philosophy of the true education of the individual. The main point of the book is the distinction between “self-realisation” and “self-actualisation.” Zen emphasises “self-realisation,” existentialism emphasises “self-actualisation.” The author says that “self-realisation is related to self-knowledge and understanding; self-actualisation is related to knowledge for control.” And the author’s reflections on “Leisure” and “Work” as parallel concepts to “self-realisation” and “self-actualisation” are significant, and are of practical value. “If the value of leisure is lost, the value of existence becomes questionable.” “What good is it to gain the whole world if we lose the sense of Being.” “There is an effortless order in the world, and the purpose of leisure is in letting this order be.”


The translator and compiler has given us extracts of letters representing the essence of the Shaikh’s teaching to his disciples. They embrace the paths of jnana and bhakti. Such teachings are not easily accessible as they are usually given by the Shaikh individually and mostly orally in response to the disciple’s direct need hence their direct appeal to the heart of a seeker. Such teaching may or may not be written down. We owe a debt of gratitude to the translator for having brought these letters to light in the English language.

Here are a few quotations:

“Do not say ‘I’ before having been extinguished (in God). You will have no life before having undergone death.” “Everything in the cosmos is to be found in the soul; equally everything in the soul is in the cosmos.” “The Infinite is not infinite unless it is at the same time unmanifested and manifested.” “If you wish your path to be shortened in order to attain realisation swiftly... learn outer knowledge as is indispensable... but do not linger on it... a deepening of inner knowledge is what you need.”

Prof. N. A. Nikam.


This is an exposition of the teaching of the Gita with the stamp of sound scholarship. Gita the immortal guide throws a flood of light on the most fundamental spiritual questions: the nature of life and death, the duty of man, mind control, God-realisation, divine manifestation, the triple gunas, the relative merits of renunciation and work, methods of meditation and methods of sadhana. Making no elaborate comments on his own but stating his conclusions briefly backed by appropriate passages from the Upanishads, Shankara, Emerson, Shakespeare, Carlyle etc. and even modern scientific theory, the author has succeeded in giving a faithful summary of the Gita.

SHOWER OF DELIGHT (Price Rs. 3); JOY — SAT CHIT ANAND (Rs. 2); SAMADHI (Rs. 3): By K. K. Pradhan. Pub.: Mrs. Leela Pradhan, 147, Rajaram Bhuvan, Shivali Park, Mahim, Bombay-16.

The first volume is a collection of yogic thoughts in a spiritual voyage. They hold one’s interest and many of them are a view in retrospect of the panoramic past, helpful in giving new meanings to established values.

The second volume explains mainly the principle of Ananda or Bliss of the Spirit and endeavours to convince that life’s effort is to bathe in the eternal fount of Joy within even when we pursue the joy without. “Is it not therefore quite natural to hold that everything we do in our life, however trivial it may be, is an effort towards catching that one great ‘Divine Joy’?” (p. 60).

The third volume explains various kinds of Samadhi and what they lead to finally, Sahaja Samadhi. The author says: “As the word Sahaja indicates this samadhi stage must be ultimately as natural to a human being as his mundane life.”

Ramamani.


This thin book runs to just 52 pages including the Preface by the author and the Introductory Foreword by Prof. S. S. Raghavachar. It gives the
substance of three special lectures delivered by Prof. N. A. Nikam to a select audience in the campus of Mysore University.

The first lecture, entitled 'Philosophy as Question and Answer,' begins by distinguishing between mere ignorance, learned ignorance and ignorance that is aware of itself. In the Chandogya Upanishad it is said that Indra and Viroshana went to Prajapati seeking instruction about the Self. One can become aware of one's ignorance only when one has a dim consciousness of what lies beyond. To know the nature of this mystery the man begins to inquire, which may be called a sort of dialogue within oneself or Vedantic dialectic. To illustrate the dialectic, the author brings out the further questions implied in the question with which the Mundaka Upanishad starts: "By knowing what does all this become known?" This initial question which seems to relate to some object outside of us ultimately turns out to be a question relating to the nature of the questioner himself. All inquiry is thus self-inquiry and realisation is only self-realisation.

The second lecture brings out the implications of the identity between satya and dharma which is stated in a famous passage of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (I. iv. 14). Satya or Truth is said to prevail. It does so by the power it derives from its identity with dharma. Dharma is not only power but also the power which keeps power under check. Dharma therefore makes for law and order. When one becomes conscious that this law comes from within then one automatically acquires moral consciousness and does what is right spontaneously. The imperative therefore is: "So be aware that the universal law acts through you." 'Truth is Justice' ultimately and that 'Truth is the Good' and 'The Good is the Truth.'

The third lecture is entitled "Being and Delight of Being." As both reason and experience are employed in the Vedanta, it is essentially a dialectic. It is a movement of thought which comprehends the opposites and passes beyond them. The author illustrates the nature of this transcendence by showing how 'Delight of Being' is transformed into 'Delight of Being.' He takes the passage in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (I. iv. 1-3) which says that the universe was always the Self, which was never other than the Atman. Being is awareness and awareness is being. There is no Sat which is not Chit and no Sat-Chit which is not Ananda.

The same process of analysis enables him to distinguish between ignorance and ignorance, seeing and seeing, question and question and, finally, between Vedanta and Vedanta. Readers arrive at the deeper meaning implicit in these distinctions. Thus the ignorance that is aware of itself is not the same as the ignorance which thinks that it knows and therefore does not feel called upon to inquire; the questions that provoke further questions are not the same as the questions that can be straightway answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no.' The Vedanta that is Philosophia perennis is not the same as the Vedanta which is reckoned as one of the systems of thought.

One rises from a study of this small book with a deeper insight into the profundities of thought enshrined in the Upanishads.

We heartily recommend the close and careful study of this book to all students of the Upanishads.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER.

Sri Bhagavan was intensely active — he himself has said so, though none who experienced his Grace needed any confirmation — and yet so concealed was his activity that casual visitors and those who failed to perceive believed that he gave no upadesa (instruction) at all or that he was indifferent to the needs of seekers.

The extreme importance of this question lies in the fact that (except in the rarest of cases, such as that of Sri Bhagavan Himself) Realisation is possible only through the Grace of a Guru. Sri Bhagavan was as definite about this as other Masters. Therefore it was not enough for the sadhaka (aspirant) to know that his teaching was sublime and his presence inspiring.

— ARTHUR OSBORNE

in Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge, p. 139.
SRI RAMANA JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS

AT THE ASHRAM

The ninety-first Jayanthi (birthday) of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on Monday, Jan. 11, in the usual grand manner. Very early in the morning a group of devotees sang some well-known Tamil songs on Sri Bhagavan. Veda Parayanam commenced at eight followed by special puja. The Ramana Linga was beautifully decorated. A special feature this time was that the spacious new Auditorium was used for the first time for a Jayanthi celebration. Festoons and coloured flags outside it enhanced the festive mood. The day marked the conclusion of Laksharpbana (special puja in which the Sahasranama or thousand names are repeated one hundred times) which had started a few days earlier. Nagas waram (pipe) players were in attendance providing good South Indian music. After Arati (waving of lights at the end of the puja) devotees and visitors were treated to lunch, and there were also the usual feeding of the poor. In the afternoon members of Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan’s party rendered devotional songs. The celebrations came to a close with the screening of the film on Sri Bhagavan in the Ramana Auditorium.

At RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The Kendra celebrated the Jayanthi on Jan. 3. After Vedic recitation and music, Sri La Sri Panirimalai Swamigal spoke on the meaning of Namasivaya Mantra and blessed the efforts of the Kendra handing over a cheque for Rs. 1,000/- towards the Building Fund. This was a gift from the Delhi Ladies Tiruppugazh Sat Sang.

At CALCUTTA

Jayanthi was celebrated under the auspices of the Bharati Tamil Sangam, Calcutta on Sunday the 24th. Recital of Sri Rudram and Aksharamanamala and a talk by Sri S. M. Bannerjee on ‘Sivam — Arunachala Sivam and Arunachala Ramana’ were part of the programme. Sri S. C. Mazumdar read out portions of Swami Sivananda’s writings on Sri Bhagavan and described his visits to the Ashram and darshan of Sri Bhagavan. All devotees joined in the bhajan conducted by Sri K. Venkatachalam and party.

At MADRAS


At SAMBRE, BELGAUM

At a well-attended function at the residence of Sri P. R. Suryanandam, a message from the Ashram was read out and there was a rendering of devotional songs specially composed for the occasion by Sri Ramathan and Sri C. N. Sastri.
At MADURAI

It was a three-day function at 'Sri Ramana Mandiram' commencing from the 9th. Sri Lakshmi-ratan, I.A.S., inaugurating the celebrations observed that we should honour sages in a real sense by following their teachings in daily life. Special puja was done on Jayanthi day in the morning followed by Sri Sang and recitation of Aksharanamalai etc. in the afternoon. Sri C. Balasubramanian, District Judge, Ramnad, spoke on the significance of Self-Enquiry and Sri Sankara Rajulu on the Appalam Song of Sri Bhagavan.

At KOLHAPUR

Silent prayer, musical recitation of the fifteenth chapter of the Gita, group singing of devotional songs and speeches by Prof. Chandrasekhar Joshi, Prof. G. V. Kulkarni, Pandit Kuperkar Sastri and Mrs. Y. Kulkarni formed the programme.

At PALGHAT

The 'Vijnana Ramaneeyaa Ashram' celebrated the Jayanthi for two days. On the morning of the 11th, puja to Sri Bhagavan was performed and the same evening a devotees' group, 'Ramana Bhakta Sangham' was formed and a discourse conducted on the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan. After japa of Arunachala Siva on the morning of the 12th, there was chanting of Aksharanamalai and Upadesa Saram of Sri Bhagavan.

At IMPHAL

A representative gathering consisting of administrators, teachers, businessmen and others assembled at the house of Dr. Laiven Singh for the celebration. Chanting of the Vedas, the Gita, Sri Ramana Dhyanaam and the Hymns to Arunachala was followed by spiritual discussion and bhajans.

At NEUILLY-SUR-SEINE (FRANCE)

A group of Sri Bhagavan's devotees celebrated his Jayanthi on Jan. 11 at 'Vedanta Vihar' with great simplicity. Verses on celebration of Sri Bhagavan's birthday were translated from the Collected Works (p. 103) with a short commentary. Fifty colour slides were displayed on a screen, from those taken by Miss Guerineau and her party when they were on a visit to Tiruvannamalai, with a running commentary. Shown among others were the pradakshina (circumambulation) around Sri Arunachala. Silent meditation followed in fitting homage.

RAMANA JAYANTHI At BOMBAY

The 91st Birthday of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated in Bombay in all solemnity. Photo: Shri N. D. Sahukar welcomes the guests and devotees. Shri U. N. Dhebar, seated in the middle, presided over the function. Shri Swami Agamananda of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram also graced the occasion.
1971

ASHRAM BULLETIN

RELEASE OF POSTAGE STAMP:
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

The Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department have been pleased to issue a special Postage Stamp with the facsimile of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi along with First Day Covers and a Brochure in commemoration of Sri Ramana Maharshi's life and teachings.

These will be formally released on April 14, 1971, synchronising with the 21st Anniversary year of Sri Bhagavan's Brahma Nirvana1 (English calendar date) at a suitable function to be held at Sri Ramanasramam on that day.

The Stamps and the First Day Covers will be of the denomination of 20 paise, available through the Post Masters at the Philatelic Bureaus at the following G.P.Os.:

- Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Bombay, Calcutta, Cuttack, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kurnool, Lucknow, Madras, Nagpur, Patna, Shillong, Simla, Srinagar, Trivandrum, New Delhi, and Officers Command - Central Base P.O., C/o 56 A.P.O. and CBPO, C/o 99 A.P.O.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
President, Board of Trustees.

Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.
April 1, 1971.

SPECIAL REPAIRS TO SRI BHAGAVAN'S OLD HALL

The Old Hall in which Sri Bhagavan stayed continuously for over twenty-three years in the oldest building in the Ashram. It had been badly in need of repairs for quite some time. The work was taken up by Sri K. Padmanabhan, Ashram Engineer, in the second week of January and completed in the record time of a fortnight at a cost of nearly three thousand rupees. Extensive repairs have been effected by way of relaying the tiles, anti-termite treatment to the wall-joints, repair of cracks, repainting the woodwork and the walls and

1 The ceremonial Brahma Nirvana will be celebrated as usual at Sri Ramanasramam according to the Tamil calendar on April 23, 1971.
SRI BASHEER BABA’S VISIT

H. H. Sri Basheer Baba Maharaj has established an Ashram at Sri Ram Sai Nagar in Andhra Pradesh, and furthering its improvements and construction of temples, he visited Sri Ramanasramam on March 19, to invoke the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi for the successful fruition of his efforts. He personally invited the President of the Ashram, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, and all the devotees to visit ‘Sri Ram Sadi Mandir’ and attend the celebrations. He was taken round the Ashram by the Ashram President and other old devotees, visiting Sri Bhagavan’s Shrine of Grace, the Mother’s Shrine the Ramana Auditorium and the Old Meditation Hall. Prasad from the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan was given to Sri Baba before he left the Ashram. In the company of Sri Baba the devotees of the Ashram felt an elation pervaded with devotion and love!

Sarah Farrand, a sincere devotee of Sri Bhagavan (see Ashram Bulletin of July 1965, p. 205), has visited the Ashram several times and stayed, sometimes, in months. Now she intends to complement her sadhana with selfless service to mankind. Here are her impressions of a return to Sri Ramanasramam for another 3 weeks stay after an absence of several years:

“One hardly knows where to begin to describe the joys of a return to Sri Ramanasramam, but certainly the prelude comes shortly after the bus leaves Madras city and begins to pass through the scenery typical of this region. The vast plains are dotted with palm trees, puddy of a dazzlingly translucent green and lakes filled by the winter rain. In parts huge boulders appear in mounds which you feel must have been arranged by some giant hand and always, near or far, are the pointed hills of Dravidia, those hills which E. M. Forster described as the oldest hills on earth and which bring Arunachala to mind long before that familiar and dearly loved shape comes into view on the horizon some ten miles from Tiruvannamalai. It holds the attention like a magnet: Arunachala, whose mystery we may never fathom but whose power we know has drawn us here as surely as it drew Bhagavan at the end of the last century.

The town has increased in size during the five years since we were last here, inevitably participating in the development which is evident wherever you go in India nowadays and its tentacles have crept much closer to the ashram itself. However, you only have to walk a little way along the Chengam Road to find yourself — with perhaps a few villagers in bullock carts, on bicycles and on foot — far from the noise and activity of town life, the only buildings being deserted temples and the scenery just as described above, with the addition of the towering form of Arunachala always at your side and which signifies Oneness of being.

Oh Arunachala, Thou dost root out the ego of those who dwell on their identity with Thee, Oh Arunachala!

The ashram too has increased in size with the erection of a splendid new building to house Bhagavan’s Samadhi and could no longer, by any stretch of the imagination, be described as the jungle hermitage which Paul Brunton found in the 1930’s. Nevertheless it still casts its magic spell over the unwary devotee. There is much to fill the time, mind and heart, such as meditation in the Old Hall early in the morning, listening to the Veda-parayana before the Samadhi, a walk up the Hill to Skandanramam, eating in the original dining hall seated cross-legged on the floor just as everyone did in

PILGRIMS

Sri Umesh Dutt visited the Ashram after a lapse of six years with his brother-in-law from Bangalore, and stayed for ten days which were felt memorable by him. He says: "I felt like recharging a run-down sattana-battery. I really missed some of the old faces that have now been absorbed in Arunachala in eternal peace. Mr. Osborne’s passing away has left a void. How can there be anything lacking, when Sri Bhagavan is!"

Sarah Farrand, a sincere devotee of Sri Bhagavan (see Ashram Bulletin of July 1965, p. 205), has visited the Ashram several times and stayed, sometimes, in months. Now she intends to complement her sadhana with selfless service to mankind. Here are her impressions of a return to Sri Ramanasramam for another 3 weeks stay after an absence of several years:

“One hardly knows where to begin to describe the joys of a return to Sri Ramanasramam, but certainly the prelude comes shortly after the bus leaves Madras city and begins to pass through the scenery typical of this region. The vast plains are dotted with palm trees, puddy of a dazzlingly translucent green and lakes filled by the winter rain. In parts huge boulders appear in mounds which you feel must have been arranged by some giant hand and always, near or far, are the pointed hills of Dravidia, those hills which E. M. Forster described as the oldest hills on earth and which bring Arunachala to mind long before that familiar and dearly loved shape comes into view on the horizon some ten miles from Tiruvannamalai. It holds the attention like a magnet: Arunachala, whose mystery we may never fathom but whose power we know has drawn us here as surely as it drew Bhagavan at the end of the last century.

The town has increased in size during the five years since we were last here, inevitably participating in the development which is evident wherever you go in India nowadays and its tentacles have crept much closer to the ashram itself. However, you only have to walk a little way along the Chengam Road to find yourself — with perhaps a few villagers in bullock carts, on bicycles and on foot — far from the noise and activity of town life, the only buildings being deserted temples and the scenery just as described above, with the addition of the towering form of Arunachala always at your side and which signifies Oneness of being.

Oh Arunachala, Thou dost root out the ego of those who dwell on their identity with Thee, Oh Arunachala!

The ashram too has increased in size with the erection of a splendid new building to house Bhagavan’s Samadhi and could no longer, by any stretch of the imagination, be described as the jungle hermitage which Paul Brunton found in the 1930’s. Nevertheless it still casts its magic spell over the unwary devotee. There is much to fill the time, mind and heart, such as meditation in the Old Hall early in the morning, listening to the Veda-parayana before the Samadhi, a walk up the Hill to Skandasramam, eating in the original dining hall seated cross-legged on the floor just as everyone did in
Bhagavan’s time, or simply wandering about the grounds. Along with all of this goes the pleasure of seeing old familiar faces and many new ones. Nowadays there are more western visitors than ever before, some having come from places as far distant as Alaska and New Zealand, and it is both fascinating and heart-stirring to talk with them and share one’s feeling of joy and privilege at being fortunate enough to spend a few weeks or months in the ashram where one who had realized in his own being the highest spiritual truth lived and taught for more than half a century.

Certain places have an extraordinary, unearthly enchantment, power and significance. Arunachala-Ramanasramam is one such place and this is one of the reasons why we shall come back again and again.”

After a brief visit of three or four weeks during the summer of 1969, Philip Pegler, a youthful English devotee, came once again to Arunachala for an extended stay of several months. Endearing himself to one and all by his calm, yet bright and engaging manner, he leaves us with a few impressions of his second visit:

“It was eight months ago in July 1970 on the first morning of my second trip to Arunachala, the blessed abode of Sri Ramana, when I decided to visit Skandashram to enjoy once again the special sanctity and peace there. I had offered thanks to Sri Bhagavan for allowing me to return to Tiruvanamalai and was walking back down the path to the Ashram at the bottom of the Hill in a joyful mood. Suddenly a sharp stone underfoot made me wince. Immediately a powerful thought flashed through the mind.

‘Sometimes it is necessary to suffer pain in order to rise about it.’

The next moment, before I knew what was happening, I had stumbled off the path, several feet to my left — straight into a thorn bush. I rose to my feet, surprised and shaken, blood streaming from hand, arm and leg, which now resembled a pin-cushion.

The significance of the fall on Arunachala, right at the beginning of my stay, was not lost on me. All devotees gradually come to realize as sadhana proceeds, that the Hill is by no means inert — it is as Bhagavan always stressed a living force, the embodiment of Shiva Himself. We also come to accept pain and conflict as a necessary part of spiritual practice. To bring Peace to the mind is a lifelong task, requiring steadfast patience — but the only reason for living is just to realize this Peace of Being, which is our true nature.

Gradually, however, by the Master’s Grace, love and devotion grow. And you look back at the end of your long stay to find you are indeed a changed person. A real understanding of what vichara is has slowly dawned on the mind and you have begun to work with this powerful tool. Self-Enquiry, you now appreciate, is no mere mantra or mental formula, but an attitude of the entire mind — a device to turn it round to pure awareness. And when real Peace wells up in the heart the path becomes clearer.

To my great regret the time has come to return to England for a while, but I fancy the West may now be seen through different eyes. Bhagavan is always with us and when He protects us what disharmony can hurt us?

I long to come back to Sri Ramanasramam soon. Like many others I count this as my spiritual home and the happiness I have found here will, I pray, never be lost again.”

Sri Subimal Dutt, Central Vigilance Commissioner, New Delhi, visited the Ashram on Feb. 7. He said: “I consider myself fortunate in having been able to visit this holy place. This is the fulfilment of a long-cherished desire. Sri K. Navaratnam and Srimathi Ratna Navaretan of Jaffna (Ceylon) devotees of long standing, spent more than a week here in February. They write:

“Salutations to Sri Bhagavan! My wife and I have spent ten delightful days at this sacred spot, deeply absorbed in the living presence of Sri Bhagavan. We have been regular visitors for over forty years and have taken an abiding interest in the development of the Ashram. It is our firm belief that it is Bhagavan Himself who is directing every minute detail here and we are happy to pay our humble tribute to the excellent management of the Ashram. It serves a dire need at this time, when one witnesses seeming chaos all around. May it serve all mankind under Bhagavan’s benign guidance, is our fervent prayer.”

Sri P. Somasundaram, Director of Khadi and Village Industries Department, Madras, visited the Ashram and as usual was engaged in spiritual sadhana. He wants to convey the following:
"Whenever I felt mentally fatigued I used to come to Sri Bhagavan and sit in the meditation hall. I had the strange experience of all my problems vanishing in His presence and my mind getting recharged with great energy to tackle the ever-increasing complexities of life. No wonder it has become a place of pilgrimage to me! With the addition of the new majestic building around Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi, the Ashram presents a look of completeness. With His Grace and under the able guidance of its President, Sri Venkataraman, the Ashram is bound to grow further radiating its spiritual light all over the world. Salutations to Sri Bhagavan!"

Mr. Frederick Stafford & Mrs. Hazel Stafford of Paris, introduced to our readers in the April 1970 issue, spent two weeks here in March. Mr. Stafford says:

"Once again my wife and I have found here in Sri Ramanasramam that perfect peace and stillness which we have been seeking. As always our stay has been made most comfortable and agreeable by the devotion and care of the Ashram staff. All our physical wants were most excellently looked after by our kind hosts, and with rested bodies and spirits, we were able to feel Sri Bhagavan's benevolent Presence which is ever abiding here. His Grace and loving Guidance continue to aid and encourage the seeker. Our deepest thanks to the President and management for offering us this unforgettable opportunity to draw again upon this source of joy and peace."

Mrs. Ruth Hartman of West Germany and Mrs. Barbara Birch of Scotland (once our journal's agent in Canada) spent a few weeks at the Ashram towards the end of last year.

Mr. James Parker-Washington of U.S.A., a Life Subscriber to our journal and a Life Member of the Ashram and who has always taken part in all our projects though staying in the States, has arrived in the Ashram to his great joy for a lengthy stay. We are indeed pleased to welcome him!
Miss Kasturi Bhat (Vellore) 
B. R. Nanjundiah and family (Bangalore) 
K. C. Sastri and family (Madras) 
Chaturmal Jethmal and family (Coimbatore) 
H. R. Chadha (Calcutta) 
U. V. Aswani and P. N. Panjwant (Bangalore) 
Ramana Mudaliar and family (Madras) 
Miss Lily Malapur and cousins (Madras) 
Dr. Kameswari Sharma (Madras) 
Major General P. V. Ramaniah (Simla) 
A. K. Iyer (New Delhi) 
Umesh Dutt (Jullundur City) 
Brahmacharini Sarada of Chinmaya Mission 
(Delhi) 
R. V. Setlur (Bombay) 
Dr. D. D. Palande and family (Kumbakonam) 
J. S. Kapoor (Allahabad) 
B. R. Somasekhar and family (Bangalore) 
H. L. Contractor (Bombay) 
Dr. Shah (Hubli) 
V. Dwarkanath Reddy (Chittoor) 
Mr. & Mrs. N. N. Akhradhry (Calcutta) 
Mission of Man by Aaron Hillel Hatz : Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016. ($5-00) 
Bhagavam by Jules De Gandt ; tr. by Gerald M. Spring : Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016. ($8-75) 
A Buddhist Bible by Dwight Goddard : Beacon Press, Boston, U.S.A. ($3-95) 
An Anthology of Sinhalese Literature, edited by Christopher Reynolds : George Allen & Unwin, Ruskin House, Museum St., London. (Price in U.K. £4-50) 
The Mountain Path Library 
New Additions 
Mission of Man by Aaron Hillel Hatz : Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016. ($5-00) 
Bhagavam by Jules De Gandt ; tr. by Gerald M. Spring : Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016. ($8-75) 
A Buddhist Bible by Dwight Goddard : Beacon Press, Boston, U.S.A. ($3-95) 
An Anthology of Sinhalese Literature, edited by Christopher Reynolds : George Allen & Unwin, Ruskin House, Museum St., London. (Price in U.K. £4-50) 
The Call of the Vedas by Prof. A. C. Bose. (Rs. 4/- each) 
Minstrels of God by K. K. Pradan : Mrs. Leela K. Pradhan, 147 Rajaram Bhavan, Shivaji Park, Bombay-16. (Rs. 3/-, Rs. 3/-, Rs. 2/-) 
Buddhist Ethics by H. SadhakHNitha. (Rs. 3/- each) 
SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

A statement showing the Income and Expenditure of Sri Ramanasramam for the year 1969, certified by Sri J. Srinivasan, F.C.S., Chartered Accountant of Bangalore, is published below for the information of the devotees and well-wishers of the Ashram. The statement was approved on 15-12-1970 by the Board of Trustees appointed by the Government of Tamil Nadu and was recorded by the Government in their G.O. (RT) No. 472 dated 12th March, 1971.

Sri Ramanasramam,
22nd March, 1971.

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended December 31, 1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
<th>P.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
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<td>535</td>
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<td>Electrical Installation at 10%</td>
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<td>Cycles at 10%</td>
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<td>Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year</td>
<td>202</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>59,920</td>
<td>43,863</td>
<td>18</td>
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Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended December 31, 1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
<th>P.</th>
<th>Income</th>
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<td>1968</td>
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<td>3,856</td>
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<td>Receipts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>43,863</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examined and found correct.
(Sd.) I. Srinivasan,
Chartered Accountant.
Sri D. S. Sastri, an eminent retired bank manager, had his first darshan of Sri Bhagavan in May 1941. He happened at that time to be in Madras on his way from Cochin to Ahmedabad on transfer in a troubled frame of mind over having to go so far. Earlier in life he had domestic worries and visited temples in South India without finding any solace. Now it occurred to him to visit Sri Ramanasramam and his wife readily agreeing, they both came here.

On perceiving Sri Bhagavan for the first time they were overwhelmed by his majestic presence and aura of Grace and so they stayed on longer than originally planned. Towards the end of their stay they felt that Sri Bhagavan was their real Guru and that it was no longer necessary for them to visit temples or holy men. Here at last they have found what they have been seeking. This was a sure sign of Grace though it may not have been obvious to them at that time.

Their next visit was delayed by nearly two years owing to the great distance away from the Ashram. Sri Sastri, however, wrote about Sri Bhagavan to his younger sister, Nagamma, (for an account of whom see July 1965 issue, p. 207) who responded immediately and came to Sri Ramanasramam to join the family of devotees. She kept in touch with her brother and was to a certain extent responsible for drawing the couple to the Ashram and strengthening their faith which ripened into ardent devotion.

Fortunately in 1943 Sri Sastri got a transfer from Ahmedabad to Madras. From then onwards he and his wife became regular visitors to the Ashram participating in its activities. Mrs. Sastri passed away in 1966 absorbed in Sri Bhagavan. After Sri

The reminiscences of direct disciples of Sri Bhagavan are of particularly absorbing interest to all devotees. Sri Sastri’s reminiscences will appear in the next issue of The Mountain Path. We hope to have a series of such reminiscences. Up till now they appeared sporadically. Devotees are requested to contribute.—Editor.
Bhagavan's Mahasamadhi, Sri Sastri has been coming to the Ashram regularly taking an abiding interest in it as before.

Earnest seekers coming to the Ashram used to enjoy special attention from Sri Bhagavan in the beginning stages as if to uphold and steady their spiritual first steps with motherly solicitude, Sri Bhagavan being both Father and Mother and the very Self of devotees. Later they were left to themselves again as if to steady their steps without visible support or may be so as not to give scope to the ego to exult in such attention. Some felt crest-fallen over it till their understanding matured.

Sri Sastri and his wife also went through the stage of feeling 'left to themselves' after having frequently visited the Ashram.

So, one afternoon while Sri Bhagavan was returning from the Gosala (cowshed) they prostrated before Him and sought His guidance to attain peace of mind and a path to Moksha (Liberation), Sri Bhagavan smiled and, as was usual with Him, said: "We shall see." That evening while they were sitting before Him in the Hall, He made the following remark: "People come here seeking direction to attain peace of mind and Liberation. If people in Madras or Bangalore were to enquire the way to Tiruvannamalai, it could be shown to them. But if having come to Tiruvannamalai they still ask the way to it, what can one do for such people?"

This amounted to saying that they were neck-deep in water (Grace) and still asking for water! On another occasion Sri Bhagavan gave the assurance: "Grace is always there. You are never out of its operation." Sri Sastri and his wife understood fully and this marked the ripening of their unwavering lifelong devotion.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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

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

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

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

Date: 26-3-1971.
AN ANSWER TO
'THE-NIGGER-IN-THE-WOODPILE'?

Surely the immediate answer is very simple? 'We—us', like 'I—me', are concepts, and concepts cannot conceive their own conceptual absence. Should not that be the answer, for in all contexts they assume their conceptual presence?

But that fundamental inability is also an accurate definition of 'bondage', and 'knowing' being 'being', as Sri Bhagavan stated, knowing it is 'liberation' from ignorance (not knowing it). 'Glimpsing' however is not knowing, and does not suffice.

There is neither 'bondage' nor 'liberation' otherwise than as psychoses, and apperceiving that there is no 'we—us' nor 'I—me' frees those concepts from their relative shackles, by bringing them to the surface of consciousness wherein they evaporate. But as long as the psychoses are active they reassert their power.

While unresolved, do not these pronouns vitiate nearly everything said, done or written, and in technical publications such as *The Mountain Path* and *The Middle Way* are they not as regrettable as they may be inevitable? In the psychosis of 'bondage' the concept of 'we—us' may be regarded as a haemorrhage which renders the psychosis incurable until the suppuration is staunched at its source. . . .

The fact seems to remain, however, that, taken literally, the use of these terms must necessarily render whatever is being said not merely ridious but also a confirmation of the psychosis of 'bondage' either in writer-speaker, in reader-hearer, or in both.

May I suggest that it is unlikely that any phenomenal 'person' has ever been able to suffer the atrocities cited in the reply, without suffering — unless under drugs or hypnosis — whereas ('I—I'), by whatever name I may be known as a phenomenon extended conceptually in space-time, am inevitably impervious to any sensorial experience ever.

Is not this a pertinent example of the classical misunderstanding between the two approaches, sometimes called 'positive' as opposed to 'negative', whereby the former retains relative phenomenality as its basis, which the latter negates in order thereby to apperceive directly what all phenomenality noumenally is? For such "There is no 'we' but I ('I—I')".

If we apperceived that conceptual opposites are relative and therefore illusory, would there be very much left about which to argue?

NOTE: Living relatively, 'we' must speak relatively? A somewhat facile reaction? If 'we' go on speaking relatively 'we' will go on living relatively and 'we' will go on dying relatively, time out of mind, for, relatively, there will always be 'we—us'. As long as we use them, and whenever we use them, 'we' are living relatively and are psychologically 'bound' as 'us'.

*Wei Wei*

True, concepts cannot conceive their own conceptual absence, but this does not supply an immediate simple answer. Apperceiving that there is no 'we—us' nor 'I—me' is still in the realm of intellectual knowing however subtle. In a mind empty even of apperceiving that something is not, when our own intellect comes to rest, concepts evaporate in non-identification with the body or ego and the ever-present self shines as It is. 'It is Divine Light which enlightens you' says Meister Eckhart and it

1 See issue of April 1970.
cannot be reached with our own intelligence which only puts us in the way of spiritual striving up to the point when effort becomes effortless and the Self takes over. Even knowing that there is no thought is still a thought which must evaporate. The same applies to negating relative phenomenality.

Relatively living we not only 'must speak relatively' but wage war on our relative we's and egos. The enquiry and all sadhana starts only from the relative plane. It is up to 'we-us' relatively speaking to strive to transcend all relativity with the help of Divine Grace which is vouchsafed only 'to him who has striven hard and one-pointedly' says Ramana Maharshi. Our hunger in a dream will be satisfied only by dream-food. On waking we know that both were unreal.

It is said that there are as many paths as there are seekers who are compared to wet wood in various stages of drying and very very rarely to dynamite exploding at the touch of a lighted match. 'Among thousands of men one perchance strives for perfection; even among those who strive and are perfect, only one perchance knows Me in truth.' (Bh. Gita Discourse 7).

Apperceiving or even hearing the truth may result in knowing-Being in the rarest of cases when through prolonged steady effort the mind had become still enough. 'Even if we find one who had at once achieved the mouna or Supreme State . . . you may take it that the necessary effort has already been finished in a previous life' says Ramana Maharshi, as recorded in Day by Day with Sri Bhagavan, p. 113.

What it amounts to is that you presume the effortless transcendental state almost without effort by negating relative phenomenality whereas jnanis like Bhagavan, the Buddha, Hui Neng and others teach that such a state is achieved only through the greatest, steady, one-pointed effort. If it applies to achieving effortlessness in limited object why should it not apply to realising Infinity. Has anyone ever climbed Everest without practice or a guide? And this is more than Everest. Jnanis identified with 'we-us' in Oneeness of Being speak as you do from the highest plane but also recognize the relative reality of the embodied state and show the various paths how to transcend it.

As to suffering, pain is only in the mind so when thoughts can be stilled even briefly when for instance a tooth is being extracted without drugs the pain is not felt. Modern science resorts nowadays in operations and childbirth to a process of breathing which restrains the mind so that pain is not felt. Apperceiving that conceptual opposites are relative and therefore illusory does not leave anything to argue about except the necessity to follow it up with sadhana, till through Divine Grace, it becomes living Truth.

Glimpsing is surely not enough, though, as you say, it may be a glimpse of ultimate realisation, or what I would call genuine apperceiving. Even if drowned in waves of thought the mind in question is always still because such as it is whole.

A Glimpse of ultimate Reality is Knowing-Being for the brief Eternity that it lasts. Man is wonder-struck to realise his inherent most natural state, only he did not know that he knew. All else falls away like chaff in the wind before its dead Certainty. What is not enough is that it does not last if waves of thought rise up again. And here it is where genuine Masters show the method how to still the mind. The process of realisation starts on the whole with such sporadic Glimpses till it steadies itself through sadhana. 'Earnest effort never fails' says Bhagavan.

From the Absolute point of view the mind is always still even, when, as you say it is drowned in waves of thought. 'Even when the thieves of the five senses break in upon me aren't Thou still in my heart?' says Ramana Maharshi, who also enjoins steady, continuous practice to disrealise unreality so that the illusory tyranny of thought and senses ceases. It is real enough while the illusion lasts.

Sri Bhagavan in all-encompassing Oneeness of Being writes in the Muritali Garland of Letters for the sake of seekers:

Unless Thou extend Thy hand of Grace in mercy and embrace me, I am lost, Oh, Arunachala! (51)

When will waves of thought cease to rise? When shall I reach Thee, subtler than the subtle ether, Oh, Arunachala? (57)

Thou hast administered the medicine of confusion to me, so must I be confounded. Shun Thou as Grace, the cure of all confusion, Oh, Arunachala! (76)
towards sadhana of a sincere seeker. I enjoyed it very much. . . . Due to age-old samskaras (predispositions) intellectual wisdom alone does not suffice to reveal the primordial ever-free state. A man continues to feel fettered so long as the mind is not stilled.

The intellectuals may mistake intellectual knowing for realisation but a true seeker will humbly follow the path indicated by the genuine Master who has himself traversed it and is a sure guide. The Ever-Free say that the path is arduous, and prolonged steady effort is necessary to get rid of the cobwebs of delusion, though this cannot be achieved without Grace. An ancient Jain saint says: "From the Absolute point of view the Self is neither bound nor liberated but due to age-old vasanas men are deluded and undergo the cycle of birth and death and all it entails. When a rope is mistaken for a snake the fear is real enough. The illusion can be discarded only with the Grace and help of the Ever-Free who show us the method how to loosen the cobwebs of illusion so that ever-present Grace becomes effective."

AMARENDRA VJAIJI,
Pindawara (Rajasthan).

Bhagavan also says that the nature of the mind is to wander and its weakness is due to the dissipation through thoughts due to vasanas. When one can make the mind stick to one thought the energy is conserved and distractions lessen. By long practice which is not easy, the mind is controlled and made steady. In the end the one thought also evaporates.

EDITOR.

IV

Kindly accept this humble tribute from one who is both a reader as well as a seeker: The last one-and-a-half lines of your answer (in the April 1970 issue) viz., "To discover for themselves as living Truth that they never were" is the quintessence of all Vedas and Upanishads. . . .

R. R. PALIY,
Mannargudi.

THE SAD-GURU

Allow me to congratulate you on your Editorial entitled "Sad-Guru is One" in the January issue of The Mountain Path. It recalled to my mind the very words that I had the privilege of hearing from Bhagavan Himself in 1945.

It happened like this. I came to Bhagavan five or six years earlier in a state of deep grief caused by a personal bereavement. My mind being then stuffed with various tales of ' occult' phenomena, I submitted to Bhagavan several questions on a sheet of paper regarding life after death and possibilities of contacting the dead. Bhagavan read it through but did not give any reply. When I was about to leave the Ashram a few days later I repeated those questions again without receiving a reply. Bhagavan just smiled. Within a year or so, I happened to come across a saint, nearer my home, who, I was convinced by a dream, was sent to me by Bhagavan. I put endless questions to this saint till eventually my intellectual doubts were set at rest.

On my second visit to the Ashram in 1945 I told Bhagavan that by His Grace my doubts were cleared. Bhagavan was indifferent. But when I remarked that one more doubt remained He turned to me and asked "What is it?" I said I felt that I was no longer without my Sad-Guru, for whom I had been praying, but wondered who was my Sad-Guru; Bhagavan himself, who had given me the blessing, or the saint who thus appeared on the scene and removed my intellectual cobwebs. Bhagavan focussed his eyes on me and said: "The Sad-Guru is One." The impression this pronouncement made on my mind in a flash though hazy, was on the same lines as so lucidly expounded in your said enlightening editorial bearing those very words as its title.

PROF. MADAN MOHAN VARMA,
Jaipur.

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ON HEARING SOUNDS

I am writing this with reference to your reply to Dr. T. P. Gupta, p. 74 in the Jan. 71 issue . . . After mentioning that the substratum of all sounds is om, you say that such sounds are usually due to high blood-pressure. This statement is likely to discourage many people who take such experiences of sounds as indications of their progress in sadhana. In fact Nada-yogis systematically practise concentration on such sounds. Chirping sounds of birds, ringing of bells, sounds of flute, conch etc. are heard during the practice. Hamsa Upanishad describes 10 types of sounds beginning with the sound of a cricket, presumably the whistling, hissing sound referred to by Dr. Gupta. I have been getting this 'cricket' sound during meditation. I enjoy it and it helps me in mediation. I had myself examined and the doctor found my blood-pressure quite normal. It would be worthwhile ascertaining from Dr. Gupta whether he associates the noises in his
ears with blood-pressure and if not, suggest to him to concentrate on the sound and enquire who is hearing them.

K. K. NAMBIAR, Madras.

Sounds are obviously on two planes. They can be very annoying when due to hyperaemia. In medical books dealing with special pathology and diagnostics these sounds are mentioned among other symptoms of hyperaemia. If Dr. Gupta had found them enjoyable he would not try to get rid of them.

In my reply to Sri Sivapragasam I said: "When hearing the humming sound ask yourself who hears or try to hear in it AUM . . ." which is exactly what you are suggesting in the last sentence of your letter. It applies also to Dr. Gupta who gets The Mountain Path. If my remark was not to the point, don't you think he would have written to say so? Bhagavan asks us also to try to reach the source of sound.

Sadhana of concentrating on sound is well known. The Brahma Group in North India practise it and so do some Muslims fuqara.1 'The expressive Power of the creative Consciousness is She whose form is sound' says the scripture (Lalitasahasranama) as quoted by M. P. Pandit in the second series of Gems from the Tantras.

Even without concentrating on sound AUM may manifest as Shabda Brahman vibrating-humming throughout the universe, its sub-stratum and source. But then it is realised as coming from the heart-centre if a place could be named. The sound comes from within say some who had practised such sadhana. Do we hear with our ears? Bethoven was stone-deaf when he composed the Sonata Pathetique and other masterpieces! And when we plug our ears there is the sound of sea-waves.

Mr. Kerby's short article entitled The Illusion of matter is scintillating. He cleverly illustrates the outer space with matter as mere waves or vibrations arising in space. I wish to add that these are only the external counterparts of our inner Self and mind, the latter being only in the form of waves or vibrations in the Self, is not a real separate entity and so does not exist apart from the Self. This may be compared to waves in the sea. The word "wave" is a mere verbal expression. The Consciousness in action (waves) is 'mind' and Consciousness in potency in Pure Consciousness, our real and natural State. This is Siva on which is superimposed the 'mind' the vibratory dynamic force or Shakti. Thus Siva and Shakti are one and the same.

DR. G. SUBRAMANIAM, Madurai.

The expression 'pure channel' does not necessarily detract from the ultimate meaning of Guru — Self — God being One. The Guru is both the all-pervading Self in the heart of all beings and in his human form also a pure channel or as Thayumanavar calls him a decoy to entice us if need be or lead us back to the inner Guru in the heart as a living Reality which is Himself.

Since science has reduced all matters to energy taking various forms, it also points intellectually to Oneness of Being by inference. Einstein, the greatest known scientist, has humbly come to the conclusion that science with all its stupendous discoveries does not touch even the fringe of the Mystery of Being.

As to Kerby's 'The Illusion of Matter' your comparison to waves in the sea is very apt. They cannot be separated.

EDITORS.

1 fuqara (plural of faqir).