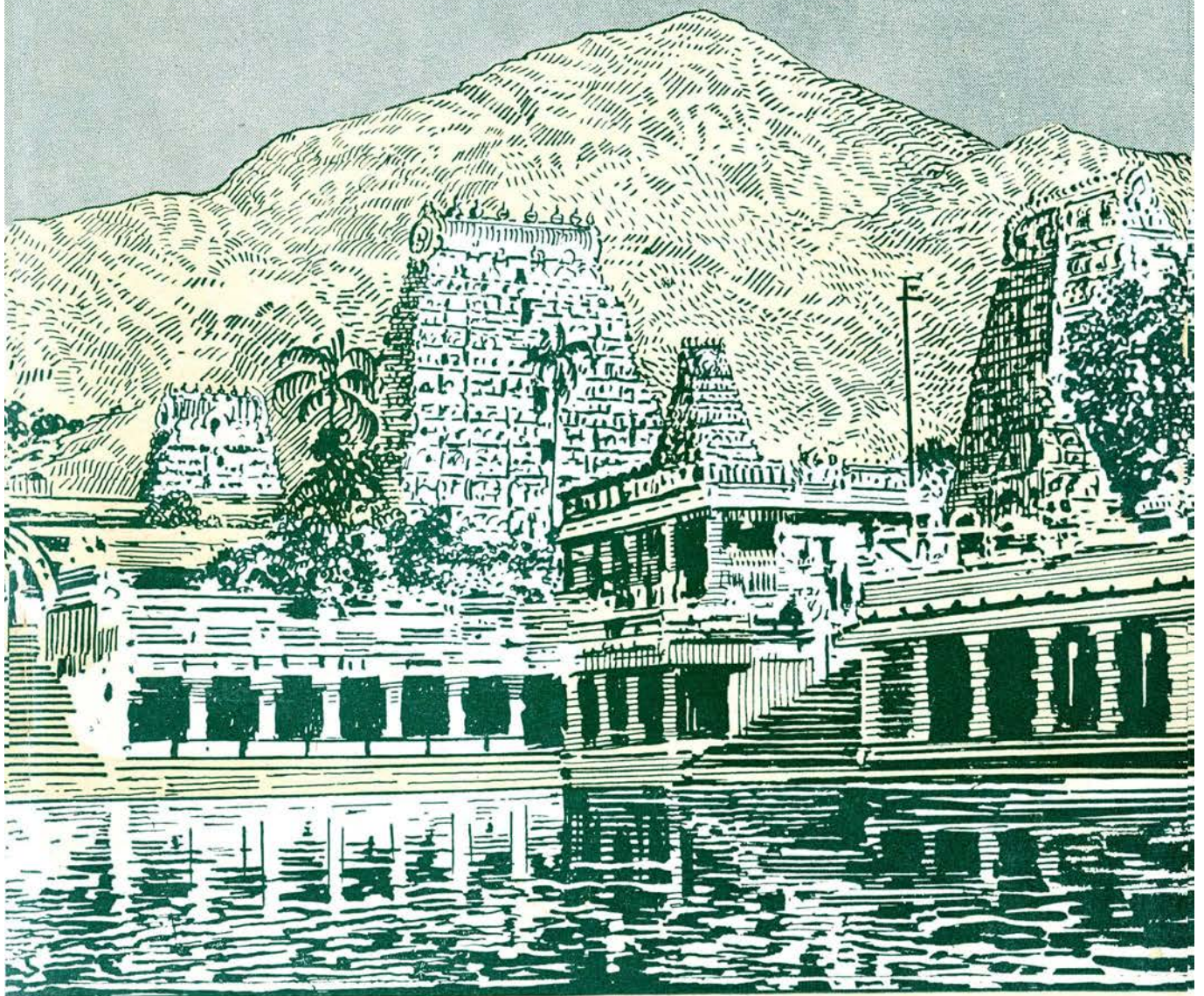


# The Mountain Path

EDITOR: ARTHUR OSBORNE



Vol. I

APRIL 1964

No. 2

**SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI**

"May Thou and I be  
one and inseperable like  
*Alagu* and *Sundara*, Oh  
Arunachala!"

—The Marital Garland of  
Letters, Verse 2.

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Editor :

Arthur Osborne,  
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✱

Managing Editor :

V. Ganesan,  
Sri Ramanasramam,  
Tiruvannamalai.

✱

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## THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

—The Marital Garland of Letters, Verse 1.

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## 'THE MOUNTAIN PATH'

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.

The editor is not responsible for statements and opinions contained in signed articles.

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3. To house books and periodicals on Eastern and Western Philosophy and depicting different cultural aspects of life in India and other countries.
4. To be a centre for the diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge.
5. To run a school where the students are taught Sanskrit, English, Tamil, Vedas and Upanishads and Mathematics etc. and given free boarding and lodging (VEDA PATASALA).
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T. N. VENKATARAMAN,  
President.



# The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

VOL. I

APRIL, 1964

No. 2

## WHERE CHARITY BEGINS

[EDITORIAL]

I said in my last editorial that the quest for Realization is the great enterprise, the true goal of life. Yet one often hears the objection: 'But isn't it more important to help others?' Although some who make this objection doubtless do so in good faith, it is at bottom a hypocritical attack on spirituality. It goes back to the 19th Century socialists who used to say: "First things first. Let us first remove the poverty of the people, then there will be time to consider their spiritual needs." Well, they succeeded in what they considered first. There is very little poverty left in North-Western Europe. And did they then turn to spiritual succour? Not at all. The anti-spiritual trend accelerated and became more unabashed. The workers who acquired leisure, security and a competence had less time, not more, to devote to their spiritual needs.

In fact it is not true that welfare facilitates religion or poverty impedes it or that material needs are the 'first things' to be attended to. Christ taught the exact opposite when the rich young man approached him and he told him to give his property away and become a mendicant. But then, of course, Christ and his followers would be put in gaol

in a Welfare State because begging is illegal. If poverty can be an impediment, so also can prosperity. Indeed, it might well be said that in a welfare state prosperity is the opiate of the people, lulling them into a false sense of security.

One sign of the animus behind the do-good objection is that it is only used against those who turn to a spiritual path. If a man declares that his absorbing interest in life is music or business or politics no such objection is made; only if it is religion that he turns to. And why should it be supposed that one who is striving to subjugate or destroy his ego is doing less to help others than one who allows it free play? Rather he is likely to do more. He may be more unobtrusive about it, simply helping those who come his way rather than engaging in organized charities, but there is likely to be less vanity and more genuine goodwill in what he does.

A touchstone that has been widely used in assessing moral behaviour is: 'What would happen if every one did that?' If every one lived as the Maharshi enjoined, in the world but not of it, fulfilling his professional and family obligations with detachment,

helping where he came upon the need for help, while striving on the path, the answer is that there would be no need for social service, since none would be exploited or impoverished for the benefit of others. There would be no destitute to help.

This touchstone also, however, has an anti-spiritual animus, being aimed in part against those who renounce the world to become monks or sadhus. It is in fact against those who renounce the world that the first objection mentioned, 'but wouldn't it be better to help others?' is primarily aimed, although by extension it has come to be applied unthinkingly to all who follow a spiritual path. In fact it crystalizes the Reformation revolt against traditional Christian monasticism. Indeed, even before the high tide of the Reformation, the anonymous 14th Century author of 'The Cloud of Unknowing' spoke regretfully of it in terms of Martha's complaint against Mary. "Just as Martha complained then about Mary her sister, so do active persons complain about contemplatives unto this very day." In terms of the Gospel story, this attitude of mind means that Martha chose the better way. Every one is entitled to his own opinion, but is one who rejects the decision of Christ in favour of his own opinion entitled to call himself a Christian?"<sup>1</sup>

'What would happen if every one did that?' The first and most obvious answer is that it is an unreal question, since every one will not do that: there are more Marthas than Marys in the world.

A deeper answer is that "man does not live by bread alone." Every one is a transmitting station of harmonious or destructive influences. The discordant, aggressive or corrupt tendencies in a man can be just as infectious as physical diseases, and that despite the fact that he may outwardly be doing social work. Conversely, the beneficent emanations of a spiritual person can have a harmonising effect on all around, even if they never speak with him, never meet him face to face, even though he may be a recluse with no apparent contact with the

world. If people can believe that a musician bestows something on the community, even though he does not supply food or clothing, it is but a step farther to understand that a spiritual man can too. Indeed, his benefaction is more powerful since, being independent of forms, it can penetrate the mind directly without the mediation of the senses. That is why the fellowship of saints has always been so sought after.

The influence may be almost too subtle to perceive, like a vague perfume of roses or it may be strong and tangible. "Great souls, wherever they are, create a spiritual zone around them: and anybody coming within that zone realizes something like an electric current passing into him. It is a very strange phenomenon, impossible to explain, unless one has experienced it oneself."<sup>2</sup>

In the subtler sense of giving spiritual aid this error of turning outwards to the welfare of others instead of attending first to one's own quest goes right back to the foundation of Mahayana Buddhism some two thousand years ago. I do not question the spiritual potency of the Mahayana. The test of a tree is its fruit, and the great Sages the Mahayana has produced are proof enough that the way they trod was valid. That is all we need to know about a path—that it can take us to the Goal. Nevertheless, their criticism of the Hinayana and their substitution of the Bodhisattva ideal for that of the Arahant, as it stands and as it is to be read to-day, is the point of view of ignorance.

Briefly, it is that the Arahant seeks only his private, individual Realization or Nirvana, whereas the Bodhisattva pledges himself to seek the Realization of all mankind, and even holds back voluntarily from the final step of entering Nirvana until his self-imposed task of helping others has been accomplished.

Now, in the first place, there is no such thing as individual Realization. Realization means realization that there is no individual: that is to say it is realization of the basic Buddhist doctrine of *anatta*, no-ego. Nirvana is the state which remains when the

<sup>1</sup> *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*, p. 33, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

<sup>2</sup> *Spiritual Discourses of Swami Vijnananda from Prabuddha Bharata*, Oct. 1963 issue.

individual ceases to exist. How then, can it be individual? To ask one who has awakened from the dream of individual being into the reality of Nirvana whether others also have attained Realization would be, as the Maharshi expressed it, as senseless as asking some one who wakes up from a dream whether the other people in his dream have also woken up.<sup>3</sup>

This, of course, is fully understood by the Mahayana teachers, but not by all their followers. One of their basic scriptures expressly affirms that there are no others to help, as a safeguard after speaking of the boundless compassion of the Buddha. "The famous Diamond Sutra makes it quite clear that the doctrine of compassion is only a facade for the ignorant, since in reality there are no others to whom to be compassionate. 'The Lord Buddha continued: Do not think, Subhuti, that the Tathagata would consider within himself: I will deliver human beings.' That would be a degrading thought. Why? Because really there are no sentient beings to be delivered by the Tathagata. Should there be any sentient being to be delivered by the Tathagata, it would mean that the Tathagata was cherishing within his mind arbitrary conceptions of phenomena such as one's own self, other selves, living beings and a universal self. Even when the Tathagata refers to himself, he is not holding within his mind any such arbitrary thought. Only terrestrial human beings think of selfhood as being a personal possession, Subhuti. Even the expression 'terrestrial beings' as used by the Tathagata does not mean that there are any such beings. It is only used as a figure of speech."<sup>4</sup>

As long as there is the concept of an 'I' there is a concept of others; as long as there are others to help there is an I to help them and therefore no Self-Realization. The two go together; they cannot be separated.

<sup>3</sup> *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 92-93, Rider's edition, p. 115, Sri Ramanaashram edition.

<sup>4</sup> *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*, p. 113-114, by Arthur Osborne, Rider, quoting *A Buddhist Bible*, p. 91-92, edited by Dwight Goddard, Harrap.

## OTHERS

What will they think of this?

What will they say to that?

So others arise.

When there are others there's I.

In truth there just IS.

Isness alone is;

No others, no I, only a dance, a rhythm,  
Only a being.

Of course, one has to play the game of 'I and others', to act as though they existed. It is as if (as can sometimes happen) one had a dream and took part in its events while at the same time being awake enough to know that it was a dream.

What, then, is this vow to help others before seeking one's own Realization? Nothing but a resolve to remain in a state of ignorance (*avidya*). And how will that help others? It means clinging to the ego one has sworn to dissolve, regarding it as supremely wise and beneficent! In the language of theism it is revealed as overweening arrogance, the decision to show God how to run His world or to run it for Him.

Whatever may have been the traditional Mahayana discipline (and a significant injunction by Milarepa, one of the great Mahayana saints, is quoted in a recent life of him: "One should not be over hasty in setting out to help others before one has realized the Truth; if one does it is a case of the blind leading the blind.")<sup>5</sup> this urge to help others by being a guru before one's time is one of the greatest pitfalls for the aspirant to-day. There may be some compassion in it, but there is likely to be far more vanity and egoism. Few things so flatter the ego as the dream of being a guru surrounded by the adulation of disciples. Few things so impede an aspirant as turning his energy outwards to guide others when it should still be turned inwards to his own purification. In spiritual things it is true, as the 19th Century economists falsely asserted about material things, that you help others most by helping yourself. The Maharshi never

<sup>5</sup> *The Life of Milarepa, Tibet's Great Yogi*, p. 157-8. By Lobzang Jivaka, John Murray.

indulged such people. He told them : "Help yourself first before you think of helping others."

In any case, there is no need of any vow of compassion. The nearer a man comes to the truth of the Universal Self, the more his phenomenal, individual self will take its true form and, without any vows, without arrogating to himself the control of his own destiny, he will find himself acting as it is his nature to act, doing what it is his true function to do. It may not be his function to be a guru at all : if it is it will come about naturally and healthily when the time is ripe, without his trying to force it.

A few examples will illustrate this. Buddha was the only son of his father and the heir apparent to his father's small kingdom. In what the unctuous do-gooders would call 'selfish' pre-occupation with his own spiritual welfare, he abandoned wife and child, father and throne, and set forth alone as a sadhu to seek Enlightenment. And how many millions have since drawn sustenance from his renunciation ! St. Francis of Assisi forsook the family business and alienated

his father in order to embrace 'the Lady Poverty'. And what spiritual wealth has flowed forth from his material destitution ! Sri Ramakrishna was consumed with ecstatic craving for the Grace of the Divine Mother. Nothing else concerned him, neither helping himself nor others. It seemed he would go mad with longing and despair. Then, when he did at last attain, such power flowed through him as to launch the spiritual regeneration of Hinduism and its attraction for Western seekers. Realisation descended unsought on Ramana Maharshi when he was a schoolboy of 16. He left home, seeking only solitude, and remained immersed in the Bliss of Being : yet disciples gathered round and he became the Jagat-Guru, the World-Guru, of his time through whom a new path adapted to the conditions of our age was made accessible to those who seek.

All of which goes to show that the Universal Harmony does not require any man's planning to give it shape ; or, in theistic language, that God can do His job without our advice.

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Many readers of '*The Mountain Path*', especially among those who were not fortunate enough to come to Bhagavan in his lifetime, are avid for reminiscences about him. All devotees or former visitors who have any such that have not yet been published are requested to send them to the Editor who will give them his earnest consideration. In doing so they will be performing a real service to many of Bhagavan's devotees and thereby indirectly to Bhagavan himself.

Persons who have received the blessings or guidance of Bhagavan in dream or vision whether before or after he shed the body, are also requested to write in their experiences.

---

## TRUE SILENCE

By NAGAMMA<sup>1</sup>

At three o'clock this afternoon I joined the company of devotees around Bhagavan. Reverting to what he had been saying earlier about Sri Sankara's 'Dakshinamurthi Ashtakam',<sup>2</sup> Bhagavan said: "Sankara took it into his head to praise Dakshinamurthi, but how can one praise *Mowna*?<sup>3</sup> So he described *srishti* (creation), *sthithi* (preservation) and *laya* (dissolution) and offered salutations to Dakshinamurthi, who is the embodiment of all three. In what other way could Silence be praised?"

Taking up the thread of the conversation, one devotee said: "Dandapani Swami told us that one Sivarathri<sup>4</sup> day, many years back, all the devotees gathered around Bhagavan and sat down, saying: 'To-day Bhagavan must explain to us the meaning of the Dakshinamurthi Ashtakam.' However, Bhagavan sat silent for a long while, smiling but not speaking. They then went away, feeling that Bhagavan, by his continued silence, had given them to understand that silence alone is the true meaning of the verses. Is that so?"

Bhagavan confirmed that it was so. I then added: "So that means that Bhagavan gave a silent commentary?" And Bhagavan confirmed this also.

Some one else said: "Then true Silence means abiding in the Self, doesn't it?"

Bhagavan: "Yes, of course. Without the Self how could it be Silence?"

Devotee: "That is just what I am asking. Would it be silence just to refrain from speaking without abiding in the Self?"

Bhagavan: "How could it be? Some people talk of keeping silence when all the while they keep on writing messages on bits of paper or on a slate. Isn't that activity of the mind just the same?"

Another devotee intervened: "Then is there no benefit at all from simply refraining from speech?"

Bhagavan: "A person may refrain from speech in order to avoid the obstructions of the outer world, but he should not suppose that that is an end in itself. True Silence is really endless speech. There is no such thing as attaining it, because it is always there. All you have to do is to remove the worldly concerns that cover it over; there is no question of attaining it."

In the meantime news came that some broadcasting society was thinking of recording Bhagavan's voice. Laughing, Bhagavan said: "Oho; Is that so? But my voice is Silence, isn't it? How can they record Silence? That which is Silence. Who could record it?"

The devotees sat quiet, exchanging glances, and the hall became absolutely silent.<sup>5</sup> Bhagavan, the embodiment of Dakshinamurthi, sat in the *mowna-mudra*, the posture of Silence, facing southwards.<sup>6</sup> That living image, his body, was radiant with the light of Atma. What a good day it was today!

<sup>1</sup> For a note on Nagamma and her letters see our issue of January 1964.

<sup>2</sup> Eight Verses to Dakshinamurthi. Dakshinamurthi is Siva incarnate as a youth teaching in silence. The Maharshi has been identified with Dakshinamurthi.

<sup>3</sup> Silence.

<sup>4</sup> The Night of Siva.

<sup>5</sup> Silence in the presence of Bhagavan had no feeling of constraint about it. It was a living, vibrant silence. It was in silence that the power of his Presence and the emanation of his Grace was most keenly felt. The same is to be felt now also. (Editor)

<sup>6</sup> One meaning of the name 'Dakshinamurthi' is 'The Southward-Facing'. The Guru is the spiritual north pole and therefore traditionally faces south.

## HOW I MET THE MAHARSHI

By LOUIS HARTZ

I met Arthur Osborne in an internment camp in Bangkok during the second world war. At first I had little contact with him because he was very reserved. After some time, however, I approached him. I had a craving to understand and asked him point blank what is Truth. What sticks in my memory is how, sitting beside his bed in the common dormitory, he said: "I will tell you one truth—Infinity minus X is a contradiction in terms because by the exclusion of X the first term ceases to be infinite. You grant that?" Yes, I granted that.

"Well, then," he said, "think of God as Infinity and yourself as X and try to work it out." When I asked for more explanation he just said: "Think this over and come tomorrow at this time and tell me what you make of it."

I returned to my place in the dormitory, which was only some eight or ten steps distant, and suddenly it flashed upon me that he was right, that you cannot take anything away from the Infinite, and that I was not apart from it, only I had not known.

The thought made me so happy that I could hardly wait to speak to him next day, but I did not like to disturb him earlier.

From that time onward he started to instruct me and after a few weeks he showed me a photograph of the Maharshi. There was an urgency in his voice as he spoke of him and he handled the photograph with reverence. I began to understand that there was only one 'I' and that it was in me and was everywhere.

The Maharshi grew so much in my heart that I felt him nearer to me than my parents or my wife. He lived more vividly in me than any person I had known. After some time we received permission to write a Red Cross letter to our families and I used mine to write to the Maharshi and ask him for guidance.

Then the war ended and I left camp. The desire to enjoy life sprang up in me again.

I was strongly drawn to the spiritual path but even more strongly for the time being to a worldly life. I wanted to make money, to have power and fine clothes, to be important. In camp I had eliminated day-dreaming as far as possible. When I went to bed at night I slept straight away. But now my nights were often filled with planning and scheming.

A few years later, when I was in Europe and due to return to Siam on business, I wrote to Osborne, who was living at Tiruvannamalai, to suggest that I should break my journey in India and stay there for a few days. He at once wrote back arranging to meet me and conduct me there and inviting me to stay at his house.

In Madras we hired a car and drove to Tiruvannamalai. It was an old car and I felt that I was being slowly roasted in the midday heat. When I let my eyes rest on the sun-baked scenery or the country folk sheltering under the wayside trees I saw only the face of the Maharshi looming up before me. Nothing else registered.

I was terribly scared that the Maharshi would look in my eyes and see into me. I cursed myself for a fool for coming to this desolate place, with its heat and discomfort. I don't know what prevented me turning back; perhaps I was afraid to show Osborne what a coward I was. The nearer we approached the Ashram the more I shrank from meeting the Maharshi.

It was nearly dusk when we arrived and he had already retired, but Osborne went in to see him and asked whether he would see me for a few moments. I entered the hall and saw an elderly man reclining on a couch, who gave the impression of great reserve and a certain shyness. It was not the severe Master or the Guru with the burning eyes that I had expected. Osborne explained who I was, and his replies were monosyllabic and sometimes in Tamil. With a slow movement of the head he turned to me and held my

eyes for a moment. His eyes were like empty, bottomless pools and at the same time they worked like magic mirrors, because suddenly I felt at peace as though I had come home after a long journey.

I can't recall where I slept that night, but I do remember that before going to bed I sat and talked with a number of people, Indians and foreigners, at Osborne's place. One of them was a diplomat from some European country, stationed in China. He talked about seeing spirits and even conversing with them, and it struck me as funny that any one should be interested in such things at a place like this.

Sitting in the hall next day I saw that the Maharshi's smile was tender and gracious. I not only lost my fears but felt at ease. I had no questions to ask. Before coming I had prepared a number of questions that had been worrying me to ask the Maharshi, but now I couldn't remember them. My doubts had simply evaporated. Questions seemed unimportant.

I felt that there was nothing strange about the Maharshi. He was just a man who was himself, whereas all of us were growing away from ourselves. He was natural; it was we who were not. We call him a saint or sage, but I felt that to be like him is the inheritance of everybody; only we throw it away.

There were a lot of people in the hall—Indians and foreigners, learned professors and simple country people. I reminded the Maharshi about the Red Cross letter I had sent him and he replied that he wanted me to come and I had come. There was something childlike about him: he was free and natural and could laugh with the spontaneity that only a child shows.

A discussion started in the hall and they appealed to the Maharshi to say who was right. Some one spoke about unity and I objected that the word implied two to be united and that a better word was Oneness; and the Maharshi confirmed this. He said that there is only One, and that One is indivisible. I felt that he meant that the divisions are all unreal, just as we say rain, ice,

water, coffee-water, washing water, but it is all water.

A group of devotees started singing and I asked the Maharshi what he felt about it. He laughed and replied that it pleased them to sing and made them feel peaceful.

Next morning again I sat in the hall. There was a yogi with matted hair. The diplomat was there, sitting in concentrated thought. I wondered whether I should imitate him, but I did not feel like meditating. Suddenly the Maharshi looked at me with great intensity. His eyes took possession of me. I don't know how long it lasted, but I felt at ease and happy.

Afterwards a disciple who had been with him for twenty years told me that this was the silent initiation. I felt that it probably was, but I wanted to make sure, so in the hall that afternoon I said: "Bhagavan, I want your initiation."

And he replied: "You have it already."<sup>1</sup>

Knowing myself and feeling anxious about what would happen when I felt his presence, I asked for some sort of reassurance from him, and he replied very firmly and decisively: "Even if you let go of Bhagavan, Bhagavan will never let go of you."

There was some whispering and exchange of glances when people heard that. The diplomat whispered to a Muslim professor who was sitting beside him and then the latter asked the Maharshi whether this guarantee applied only to me or to him also. The Maharshi did not look very pleased but replied briefly: "To all."

Nevertheless, I felt that there was something intensely personal in it, that it had been a confirmation of the initiation and a direct, personal guarantee of protection.

Certain it is that, whatever else may have happened, there has been no day since then when his face or his words have not influenced me.

<sup>1</sup> This is the only occasion on which I have ever known the Maharshi give an express verbal confirmation of having given initiation to any one. It will be noted that the request was phrased in such a way that the confirmation could be given without any statement implying duality. (Editor)

## WANDERER OF THE DEEP

By HARIDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Not on the surface shall the truth be found  
 Nor in the mind with transient knowledge crowned  
 But in the deepest depths where, more and more,  
 Thy Beauty stands revealed. Of time unbound  
 And of the sense of distance, I explore  
 Layer upon layer of mysteries that lie  
 Down at the deep heart's core,  
 A rose-red fountain which forever plays  
 Its jetting music under a still sky  
 Echoing into the dawn-light of our days.  
 Deeper and deeper do I seek and find  
 Such glories as would blind  
 The body's eyes. The lonely archetype  
 Of each creation, young and ever-fresh,  
 Warms the enchanted self into a ripe  
 Sensation as of autumn in the flesh  
 Mellowing in lambent air  
 High-hung above the zone of spirit-mind :  
 A loneliness, a naked space, a wide  
 Expectancy of Naught on every side  
 Brimful of unborn multitudes which seem  
 Wrought in the process of the Master's dream,  
 A floating breath of fragrance, sovereign lapse  
 Into remembering forgetfulness  
 Grown inarticulate. Faint mountain-caps  
 Engirt with distant snows austere rise  
 To meet the cool high-wandering state of eyes  
 Tingling out of the solitary stress  
 Of the creative sleep.  
 I move between two moments, winged and strong,  
 And as a silence between song and song,  
 A wandering spirit wedded to the deep!

## SELF-ENQUIRY: SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

By D. E. HARDING

Our self-knowledge is our beauty: in self-ignorance we are ugly.—PLOTINUS.

You know the value of everything—except yourself!—RUMI.

All Christian religion wholly consists in this, to learn to know ourselves, whence we come and what we are.—BOEHME.

Who is it that repeats the Buddha's name? We should try to find out where this 'Who' comes from and what it looks like.—HSU YUN.

Forgetfulness of the Self is the source of all misery.—RAMANA MAHARSHI.

How is it that we need all this prodding, all these warnings and earnest invitations and promises of immense rewards, to persuade us to take a close look at ourselves? Why don't all intelligent and serious people make it their chief business in life to find out what they really are?

Surely, if such comparatively trivial questions as whether one is good-looking or not, popular or not, a 'success' or not, excite the keenest interest in us, the rather more important questions whether one is mortal or immortal, a body or spirit, created or Creator, should be that much more fascinating. Or so one would have supposed. To exist at all, somehow to have arrived on the scene—what astounding luck!—an intelligent something-or-other, and yet to remain uninterested in the nature of that something-or-other! It's incredible. Letting slip such an opportunity, foregoing (whether out of fear, laziness, or just negligence) the supreme privilege of discovering oneself, is more than unenterprising: it's a kind of madness, and none the less pitiful for being almost universal.

Thoughtful people, when challenged on this subject, are apt to excuse themselves by raising a number of objections to this inward search: they aren't at all sure it's a good thing. Of course (all agree) we need a working knowledge of our nature in order to make the best of ourselves and get on with others, but the probing can thrust too deep and go on too long. 'Know thyself' is all right up to a point, but shouldn't be-

come an obsession, an end in itself, and certainly not our life's work: such introspection (they say) is likely to do more harm than good. And so: it's a selfish diversion of our energies from the service of others to preoccupation with ourselves; or it's a morbid introversion resulting in self-consciousness (in the bad sense) if not actually in mental illness; or it's time-consuming and unpractical, unfitting us for our jobs and even for family life; or it's depressing and dull, a dreadful bore, a dead end terminating in a mental blank; or it kills spontaneity and all natural, gay, out-going enjoyment; or it's a wonderful excuse for idleness and sponging; or it's coldly indifferent to art and to nature, to the beauty and wonder of the universe and the rich variety of the human scene, or it's a stupefying drug which reduces words to gibberish, stops thought, numbs the mind itself, exchanging our most highly-evolved human function for the nonhuman or subhuman Inane. More briefly, it's suspected that habitual looking within becomes selfish, unhealthy, futile, unnatural, idle, world-despising, retrogressive. In short, an Escape. And the alternative? Apparently, it's that we should plunge right into the thick of things and find out what we are by living as fully as possible, becoming thoroughly involved in the turbulent and dangerous life-stream instead of sitting down quietly and letting it flow by.

Of course these doubts and criticisms aren't the whole story: underlying them

lurk deeper fears and less conscious obstacles. All the same, there's something in them: they deserve to be taken seriously, and that is the purpose of this article. Its aim is to show that, in fact, the seeming weaknesses of this prolonged looking at oneself are its strength, and so far from being a retreat from Reality it renounces that retreat. It's turning round and facing the central Fact at last instead of running in all directions away from it. Indeed it's the true Panacea, and ultimately the only way to full life, happiness, sanity, and even the effective service of others. Not that these statements are to be accepted on trust. The didactic tone of this article is merely for the sake of brevity: the fruits of true discovery are for tasting and not for dogmatising about. In this field, nothing's valid that we haven't tried out for ourselves.

First, then, take the accusation of selfishness. The typical Christian view is that we're not here to discover ourselves but to forget ourselves, concentrating on others and exchanging our natural self-centredness for the other-centredness of loving service.

But how can we really do very much good to others till we know ourselves profoundly? How much of our so-called help is in fact working off our guilt-feelings on the world, trying to resolve our conscious conflicts regardless of the real need; and how often our short-term help ends in long-term hindrance. It's notorious that material and even psychological aid, in solving one problem, is apt to create two more. Only the highest spiritual aid, given by one who really knows himself, and others through himself, can be guaranteed altogether beneficent and free from those unfortunate side-effects which go on and on so incalculably; and then the gift is probably a secret one, unexpressed and inexpressible. The truth is that helping oneself (which means finding oneself) is helping others, though the influence may be altogether subterranean. It goes without saying that we must be as kind as we can, but until we see clearly Who is being kind we're working in the dark, with the hit-or-miss consequences that might be expected.

One of the troubles with this would-be forgetfulness of self in the service of others is that it's practically impossible: deliberate virtue rarely forgets to pat itself on the back a little. Goodness aimed at directly cannot avoid self-congratulation, and then its odour becomes unpleasant. But if, on the other hand, it's a mere by-product, arising naturally out of true knowledge of oneself, then it's quite indifferent to itself and any incidental merit or demerit, and so continues to smell sweet. Unfortunately, wrong effort to become a saint, or even a Sage, is a self-defeating (or rather, Self-defeating) enterprise ending in its opposite—an inflated ego. Whenever it's not a question of *discovering* the present facts but of somehow altering them, of achieving something in the future, then the ego is at work. The ego can't be defeated on its own ground. The only way to get rid of it is to turn from the time-ridden, ever-changing outer scene where it thrives to the changeless Centre where it can never penetrate: in other words, the ego vanishes when one is oneself quite simply. Not only does the inward search promise to restrain or reduce our egotism: in the end, it's the only way of abolishing it. Truly speaking, there's nothing whatever to *do*—except clearly to realise that wonderful fact. All that's necessary is to examine the spot one occupies; here, always, lies Perfection. Here, the egoless, universal Self shines with utmost brilliance, alone. Only disinterested Self-enquiry succeeds, and then quite incidentally, in rectifying our attitude to others, because it alone unites us to them, demonstrating that in truth there *are* no others.

To call this enquiry selfish is to confuse the self or ego with our true Self. The genuine, liberating Self-enquiry is concerned with our essence, not our accidents or peculiarities. Unlike the ordinary man, the one who's engaged in this enquiry isn't at all interested in what marks him off from other men (his personal characteristics, history, destiny, merits, faults) but only in what he shares with all. Therefore his researches can never be for himself as an individual human: they're a universal enterprise on

behalf of all creatures. No-one and nothing's left out. This way works, but the merely human way of laboriously overcoming self-centredness, by trying to centre oneself on other people (feeling for them, seeing things from their viewpoint, etc.) doesn't work in the end. The total and permanent cure is to find one's true Centre within, to become altogether present and Self-contained.

Can such an enquiry be morbid, nevertheless? What is mental illness, in the last resort, but alienation from others and therefore from oneself? It's the shame and misery of the part trying to be a whole (which it can never be) instead of the Whole (which it always is). We are all insane, more or less, till we find by Self-enquiry our absolute identity with everyone else.

Self-enquiry is also suspected of being, if not actually unhealthy, at least unpractical. Some colour is given to this objection by the fact (painfully evident to anyone who gets mixed up with religious movements) that 'spiritual' people are quite often cranks, misfits, or inclined to be neurotic. Actually, this isn't surprising. Contented (not to say self-satisfied) people, fairly 'normal' and well adjusted and good at being human, aren't driven to finding out what else they may be. It's those who *need* to find out Who they are, the fortunately desperate ones, who are at all likely to take up the enterprise of Self-discovery. A sound instinct tells them where their Cure lies, though few find it.

So it is that the worldling may appear (and often actually be) a far better man than the spiritually inclined. Looking within doesn't transform the personality overnight. All the same, it's a sign of success in this supreme enterprise that it altogether 'normalises' a man, fitting him at last for life and correcting awkwardnesses and weaknesses and uglinesses. Now he's truly adjusted: he knows how to live, prosper and be happy. Paradoxically, it's by discovering that he isn't a man at all that he becomes a wholly satisfactory man. Naturally so: once he sees Who he really is, his needs, and his demands on others, rapidly dwindle; his ability to concentrate on any

chosen task is remarkable; his detachment provides the cool objectivity necessary for practical wisdom: for the first time he sees people as they are; he takes in everything and is not himself taken in. At the start, Self-enquiry may not be the best recipe for making friends and influencing people, but in the end it's the only way to be at home in the world. Nothing else is quite *practical*. Sages are immensely effectual men, not a lot of dreamy incompetents.

Ah (say those who don't know), but their life is so dull, so monotonous. How is it possible, attending for months and years on end to what is admittedly featureless, without any content whatever, mere Clarity, to avoid a terrible boredom? Discovering our North Pole may be fine, but do we then have to live there in the icy darkness where nothing ever happens?

Now the extraordinary truth is that, contrary to all expectation, this seemingly bleak and dreary Centre of our being is in fact endlessly satisfying, sheer joy, absolutely fascinating: there's not a dull moment here. It's our periphery, the world where things happen, which bores and depresses. Why should the colourless, shapeless, unchanging, empty, nameless Source prove (in actual practice not theory) so astonishingly interesting, while all its products, in spite of their inexhaustible richness, prove a great weariness in the end? Well, this curious fact just has to be accepted — thankfully. It can hardly be a matter of serious complaint that everything lets us down till we find out Who's being let down. If we would only allow them, all things push us Self-wards.

They do so naturally. In fact, the whole business of Self-discovery (though so rarely concluded) is our normal function, our natural development, failing which we remain stunted, if not perverse or freakish. Again, this is a surprising discovery. One would have imagined that any protracted inward gaze would have made a man rather less human, probably giving him a withdrawn look, an odd, self-occupied, and maybe forbidding manner. Actually, the reverse is true: only the Self-seeing man has the grace and charm of one who is perfectly free. To

find the Source is to tap it. Take the case of the man who is morbidly self-conscious: there are two things he can do about it, the one a mere amelioration (if that) the other a true cure. The false cure for his shyness is to lose himself by moving out towards the world; the true cure is to find himself by moving in, till one day his self-consciousness becomes Self-consciousness, and therefore perfectly at ease everywhere. Nobody can, by any technique of self-forgetting, regain the naturalness, the simple spontaneity of the small child or the animal; but, by the opposite process of Self-recollection he can gain something like that blessed state, though at a much higher level. Then he will know, as if by superior instinct, what to do and how to do it; and, rather more often, what not to do. Short of this goal, we are all more or less awkward and artificial, more or less bogus.

Is this an easy way out—out of the hell of responsibility and involvement and constant danger into a safe and unstrutuous heaven? To look at the enquirer you might think so, but you couldn't be more mistaken. In a sense, admittedly, it's the easiest thing in the world to see what nobody else can see, namely what it's like to be oneself, what it's like *here*: the Light is blazingly obvious, the Clarity transparently clear and unmis-takable. But in another sense, alas, it's the most difficult thing in the world to see this Spot from this Spot: this mysterious Place one occupies, where one supposed there was some solid thing, a body or a brain, and where in fact is only the Seer Himself, is too wide open to inspection, too plain to catch our attention. All our arrows of attention point outwards; and they might be made of steel, so hard it is to bend them round to point in to the Centre, and still harder to prevent them springing back again immediately. Of all ambitions this is the most far-reaching, and no other adventure is anything like so daring or so difficult. This task, though clear and simple and natural, is also the one that requires more courage and persistence than most men have any idea of. The Sage has taken on an immense job: alongside him, Napoleon is a weakling. And this work, which makes all other work seem

like irresponsible pottering, is his perfect realisation that there's nothing whatever to do!

Is the result worth the trouble? Is there nothing of value out there, nothing worthy of our attention and love? Turning our backs on a universe so magnificent and so teeming, and on all the treasures of art and of thought, and above all on our fellow beings, is surely a huge loss. The Sage — so it's reported — isn't interested in these matters: the world consists of things he doesn't wish to know: for him, knowledge of particular things is only ignorance. Is his achievement, after all, so difficult and so rare only because it's fundamentally wrong to despise the world?

Once more, the boot's on the other foot. Oddly enough, it's the man who attends only to the outer scene, ignoring what lies at its Centre, who's more or less blind to that scene. For the world is a curious phenomenon that, like a faint star, can be clearly observed only when it isn't directly looked at. It's an object that will not fully reveal itself till we look in the opposite direction, catching sight of it in the mirror of the Self. Like the Gorgons, it won't bear straight inspection. This isn't a dogma, but a startling practical fact. For example, though the world is sometimes beautiful when directly viewed as quite real and self-supporting, it's always beautiful when indirectly viewed as a product or accident of the Self. When you see Who's here you see what's there, as a sort of bonus. And this bonus is a delightful surprise: the universe is altogether transformed. Colours almost sing, so brilliant and glowing they are; shapes and planes and textures arrange themselves into charming compositions; nothing's repulsive or despicable or out of place. Every random patterning of objects — treetops and cloud-banks, leaves and stones on the ground, human figures and cars and shop windows, stains and tattered posters on old walls, litter of all kinds — each is seen to be inevitable and perfect in its own unique way. And this is the very opposite of human imagination: it's divine realism, the clearing of that imaginative, wordy smoke-screen which

increasingly hides the world from us as we grow older and more knowing.

Indeed the path of Self-enquiry is no escape route: it's the shortest way in, our highroad to the keenest enjoyment of the world. Yet, seemingly, it's incompatible with any other serious creative endeavour, whether artistic or intellectual or practical. If so, this is surely a considerable drawback.

It's true that Self-enquiry will never succeed till we put our whole heart into it, and consequently the dedicated artist or philosopher or scientist is an unpromising subject. Actually this is not, however, because he's too devoted to his calling, but because he's not yet devoted enough, not yet absolutely serious about it: he needs to deepen and widen his field till it includes both himself and the whole world. For the only consistent genius, the only complete Artist Philosopher-Scientist, is the Sage, who is fully conscious of being the Painter of the entire World-picture, the Thinker of all thought, the Universe-inventor, Knowledge itself. This doesn't mean, of course, that he has all the details at his fingertips, but he does see what they all amount to in their innermost essence and outermost sum, namely his true Self. And whenever a question of detail does arise, his response is the correct one. His mindlessness is the indispensable basis of a smoothly functioning mind: his Self-information includes all the other information he needs. In short, he's sage, which means wise: not clever and learned and with a head full of ideas, but altogether simple and — literally — clear-headed.

Even in ordinary life we find hints of this vital connection between Self-awareness and creativity. Don't our very best moments always include a heightened consciousness of ourselves, so that we aren't really 'lost' in admiration or creative fervour or love, but newly found? At its finest, doesn't the opaque object over there point unmistakably back to the transparent Subject here? It may even happen that the transparency comes first: we attend, our idiotic inner chatter dies down, we consciously become nothing but an alert, expectant void—and presently the required tune or picture, the key notion, the true answer, arrives ready-

made in that void, from that void. With luck (or grace) and some practice, we may occasionally and imperfectly enjoy this insight into the process of Creation itself. It is the life of the fully Self-aware.

The result of observing only the universe is that one ends as a kind of one-man Resistance Movement in it. Anxiety mounts to cosmic proportions. Only observing the Observer of the universe will finally put a stop to a man's worrying and fussing and scheming. When his interest is diverted inwards he naturally relaxes his hold — his stranglehold — on the outer world. Having withdrawn his capital and paid it into his own Central Bank (where it immediately appreciates to infinity) he has nothing to lose out there and no reason for interfering. He knows how to let things be, and work out in their own time. He's in no hurry. Knowing the Self, he can hardly fail to trust its products: whatever occurs is agreeable to him, because even if it weren't it could never touch his real Being. In Christian terms, he has no will but God's; what he wants is what happens, and what happens is what he wants. Paradoxically, his obedience to the nature of things is his rule over them: his weakness is all-powerful. And the secret of his power is that he isn't concerned with events at all. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Seek ye first these things, and even they shall be taken away.

This perfect obedience isn't just lining oneself up with God's will, or imitating it, or even becoming part of it: it's that very will itself in full operation. If we wish to find out exactly what it's like to make the world, we have only to desire nothing and pay attention. But total acceptance is very hard. It's precisely the opposite of the lazy indifference that merely lets things slide. It springs from inner strength, not weakness, and is the result of concentration, not slackness. Why is the world so troublesome, so frightful? Is it like that by nature, or because we make it seem so by our negligence? Is it perhaps so terrible a place because we take the easy way of fighting it instead of the difficult way of fitting in with it? We have to find out for ourselves the

truth of the Sage's demonstration that even in the smallest things the way of non-interference, of giving up all self-will, of 'disappearing', is astonishingly practical, the wisdom that works. Not only in the long run, but from moment to moment, *consciously* getting out of the Light, giving place to whatever things present themselves in it, instantly puts them right. We do too much and therefore remain ineffectual; we talk far too much and therefore say nothing; we think far, far too much and therefore prevent the facts from speaking for themselves — so say those who know the power of Emptiness. It's for us to make our own tests, not — repeat *not* — by the direct method of trying to be inactive and quiet and mindless (it just won't work) but by the indirect method of seeing Who was trying to be like that. No man becomes Godlike except by seeing he isn't a man anyway.

His experience of deification has no content whatever, no details: it's not merely indescribable, but non-mental or non-psychological, and in the truest sense non-human. Thinking or talking about it destroys it at once, by complicating what is Simplicity and Obviousness itself. It's rather like tasting sugar or seeing green: the more you reflect on it the further you get from the actuality. But there the resemblance ends. Seeing green is an ineffable experience because it's a prehuman or infra-human one; seeing the Seer of green is an ineffable experience because it's a posthuman or superhuman one. The Sage's rejection of the concept-ridden, word-clouded mind is poles apart from the sensualist's or the beatnik's:

Self-enquiry isn't retrogression, but the next evolutionary step beyond man, or rather the whole path from him to the Goal. And though the Goal is beyond thought, pure limpidity, void even of voidness, it's also nothing but the Honest Truth at last. For only the Self can be *known*: everything else is partly guesswork, partly false. Only Self-awareness is wide-awake and fully observant: all other awareness is mind-wandering. Total alertness is the Self.

And so, every fault we could find with Self-enquiry has turned out to be only a merit, disguised by its very perfection. Certainly there are kinds of introspection which are harmful, but they're concerned with the ego or empirical self and the very opposite of the true enquiry, which is pre-eminently healthy and sane, creative, natural, life-enhancing, intensely practical, and altruistic. Though obviously we're not all ready for it yet, and some of us have left it terribly late, it's what we're here for. To neglect it is in every sense a shame.

It would still be shameful neglect, unworthy of our energy and intelligence, even if Self-enquiry promised no pay-off at all. And in any case its benefits are purely coincidental; the only way to have them is to care nothing for them, but only for the unvarnished Truth about ourselves, no matter how unedifying it might prove. *If all we want is to see Who we are, nothing can stop our doing so this very instant.* But if our plan is to use that vision to buy happiness or Liberation or any other goods, we might as well abandon the very idea of Self-enquiry. Our Light is for lighting up itself alone.

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## SAMADHI

By N. R. KRISHNAMURTI

The enquiry 'Who am I?' plunges the mind into the Self. This is not the nescience of sleep. One can abide as the Self in Nirvikalpa Samadhi without the body-world dream or in Sahaja Samadhi with this dream simultaneously witnessed. If the Lord

Ramana-Dakshinamurti chose to declare the Supreme State by silence only, it is not for us to attempt a definition in words. It is the part of Wisdom to remain still, as our Lord Sri Ramana ordained.

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## SHIRK AND TAWHID

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

It says in the Quran that the one unforgivable sin is *shirk*. This means literally 'association'; it implies the association of any other with Allah in one's worship: and one who thus associates is termed a *mushrik*. Literally interpreted, a Christian is considered a *mushrik* because he associates Christ and Christ's mother with God in his worship. For most Christians, of course, the Trinity is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and in any case one who understands the doctrine of three Persons in One God is not a *mushrik*. The term might, however, fit educationally backward Catholics who pray to saints and the Virgin as well as to God.

Understood more profoundly, *shirk* is not necessarily the worship of any other god or person but of whatever one is devoted to—wealth or pleasure, political or financial power, social prestige, popularity or any other such intangible idol. Even love between man and woman can be *shirk* if the horizontal pull is strong enough to impede the vertical. The condemnation of *shirk* is equivalent to the Judaic statement that the Lord is a jealous God and to Christ's saying that one cannot worship God and Mammon; but it is a point of doctrine which is more central to Islam than to the other two Semitic religions.

The Sufi goes still deeper. For him the 'other' that is associated with Allah is the ego, which is the basis of all sin. "A person grows up in a state of spiritual ignorance, turned towards the transient and incomplete satisfactions of this life and away from the radiance of Divine Bliss. Since this means turning away from God, Christianity calls it sin. 'Sin is nought else, but that the creature turneth away from the unchangeable God and betaketh itself to the changeable; that is to say, that it turneth away from the Perfect to 'that which is in part' and im-

perfect, and most often to itself.'"<sup>1</sup> In this fullest and deepest meaning, so long as there is ego there is *shirk*, and therefore 'forgiveness, in its fullest meaning of Realization is not possible. The *shahada*, that there is no god but God, has not been fully realized.

Hinduism teaches that a necessary precondition for Realization is *vairagya*, which means non-attachment, equal-mindedness. Father Lazarus, in his article on 'The Spirituality of the Greek Orthodox Church'<sup>2</sup> speaks of the similar insistence by this Church on *apatheia*, which, he explains, is far from meaning 'apathy'. Islam approaches the same point from the opposite end, saying that there cannot be Realization so long as there is *shirk*. One says that there must be non-attachment, the other that there must not be attachment. Because attachment to anything, and primarily to oneself, means giving it a share in the devotion that is due to God alone. Indeed, to combine the terminology of two traditions, one can say that *vairagya* means no *shirk*; *shirk* means no *vairagya*.

As Sufis sometimes express it, the great sin and obstacle to *fana* or Realization is 'otherness', the belief in a separate individual being apart from the One. And this is *shirk*. I remember attending a Sufi session at which a chant or incantation was used that would run in translation: "I ask pardon of God for what (in me) is not God; and all things say 'God'." The first half is a rejection of 'otherness' as sin and error; the second half an epiphany, representing the entire universe as a hymn of praise to God.

*Tawhid* is Oneness. It is understood by the exoteric Muslim as the Oneness of God, a doctrine more rigorously insisted on in

<sup>1</sup> *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*, p. 119, quoting from the *Theologia Germanica*. By Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mountain Path*, Jan. 1964.

Islam than in any other religion, except perhaps Judaeism. But for the Sufi *tawhid* is the state of Oneness, or more correctly 'no-other-ness' that remains when the *shirk* of ego ends; and that is Advaita or Identity.

I say 'no-other-ness' rather than Oneness. It is not really correct to say 'I am He' in the sense of  $A=B$ , since that supposes a duality to be dissolved. The right formula is: 'There is no I; He alone is.' Nor is this mere verbal hair-splitting; it has grave practical implications, for the incantation 'I am He', used alike in Sufism

and Hinduism, carries within it the danger of secretly, even unwittingly, implying 'the ego is God', which is the uttermost error and supreme blasphemy. Therefore a Sufi will not say 'I am Allah', but he may say: 'I am not other-than-Allah', for otherness is the *shirk* of ego which he has sacrificed; and when all otherness disappears what remains is *tawhid*.

For the Muslim the *shahada*, 'there is no god but God' is the great weapon: the first part of it rejects *shirk*, the second part affirms *tawhid*.

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## AHAD

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Before the beginning He was,  
Beyond the ending He is,  
Hidden in the heart of man,  
Flared forth in a myriad stars and a bird's song.

Unchanged and unbegun,  
Unfellowed, He, the One,  
The All He is, the Alone,  
Otherness but a dream gone on too long.

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## A RAGING FIRE

By "SEIN"

It is against the spirit of our age to flee *samsara* for solitude. Some even ridicule those who do.

Yet *samsara* is a raging fire and those who fall into it are destroyed. There is no merit in their destruction. It is not a sacrifice but the result of ignorance.

Some can remain near the fire without getting scorched, can even use it, but how few!

Whether we flee from it or not, the fact remains that it is a fire. How few can avoid its flames, how few can be like King Janaka!

To escape from it is absolutely necessary, yet in the present age Bhagavan has assured us that the escape may be an inward one. One way or the other, whether by inner aloofness or by solitude, escape we must!

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## TIBETAN BUDDHISM

By HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

We are very grateful to His Holiness for finding time to write this article for '*The Mountain Path*' amidst his manifold other pre-occupations. Many readers will be interested to see in it a categorical statement from the highest authority that there still are valid initiatic paths in Tibetan Buddhism and qualified gurus among the refugee Lamas able to impart guidance on them. (Editor)

According to Tibetan Buddhism, the Lord Gautama Buddha was one of the thousand Buddhas of this fortunate aeon or *kālpā*. For the realization of perfect Buddhahood he introduced two types of method, one gradual and the other sudden. These differences of method were required to suit the mental aptitudes of different followers; but no matter in how many ways he taught, the purpose was always the same: to enable people to attain the Buddha-state. Similarly there are countless streams and rivers flowing in every direction, but they all flow ultimately into the same ocean. There are valid reasons why Lord Buddha taught various ways of attaining the same goal. He was teaching with full knowledge of the past and future and knew that some had attained such a high state in their previous life that in this life they needed only to call upon the Name of Buddha to attain Buddhahood. He varied his teaching also to suit different people's attitude of mind and to open the minds of those who attached too much importance to ethical codes and doctrinal theory. In some cases also he taught the existence of individuality or form for the benefit of those who shrank back from recognizing the truth of Egoless Being.

In an article of this length it is not possible to go into detail about absolute and relative truth; however the basis, the path and the result have to be considered. The basis from which to start is a clear understanding of both relative and absolute truth. The path demands the acquisition of understanding and the accumulation of merit. When understanding and merit or moral worth have been brought to a sufficiently high level the Result is achieved. This is the spiritual and bodily form of a Buddha. The mind, which is the basic material for the attainment of Buddhahood, is as pure as gold. The mind

of a Buddha is basically the same as that of any other human being, the only difference being that the mind of a Buddha is purified while that of an ordinary human being is coated with the dirt of sin. It is like two pieces of gold, one polished and shining, the other discoloured and dirty: in fact both alike are gold.

The common starting-point both in Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism is a feeling of repentance causing and caused by an aversion to wordly matters (*samsara*), just as we feel aversion to a nest of poisonous snakes or avoid stepping into a fire, or as a person sick from over-eating feels disgust for food. Starting from this aversion, one must observe all the moral laws and proceed with the constant feeling that Buddhahood is not being sought for one's own good but for that of others. Then one must meditate on the Egoless Existence of mind and body and follow the steps of Preparation, Application, Seeing, Practice and finally Fulfilment.

Though one may speak of 'Tibetan Buddhism', it is in fact no other than what Lord Gautama Buddha taught. The translations of his teachings from Sanskrit into Tibetan are most carefully perused and verified before being accepted as authentic and practised. The utmost care is devoted to checking every detail to verify whether such translations of teachings noted and handed down by great Indian pandits really are genuine, whether they have been practised by great Indian Sages with good results, and whether they have been generally accepted by learned Indian and Tibetan sages and saints as being beyond doubt Lord Buddha's true teaching and have been handed down to us without any breach of continuity from the time of Lord Buddha himself. Only after

this thorough checking and verification and the removal of all doubt is any teaching accepted and practised.

The way of practising these teachings is also very important. For those who seek to follow them in these later ages, after the death of Lord Buddha, it is essential to find a Lama or Guru capable of taking the place of Lord Buddha and imparting his teaching. The teaching should then be studied and practised in due order under the guidance of one's Lama or Guru. To those who ask whether valid paths are still open under the guidance of Lamas who have escaped from the Chinese it can be answered that there are such paths and there are Lamas capable of imparting guidance on them.

There are many varied paths, both of the Tantra and Sutra type. According to the Sutra school, human minds can be grouped into three different classes: those qualified to attain a state of paradise or beatitude, those qualified to attain Nirvana, and those qualified to attain Buddhahood. These must be studied in due sequence. An ordinary man in his natural state is generally below all three, his thoughts and actions being on too low a level to attain even the state of beatitude or paradise, that is to say to take rebirth in the realms of gods, demi-gods or men. Especially difficult is it to obtain rebirth in the world of men, and particularly in the form of a man endowed with the eighteen necessary mental and physical qualifications for spiritual progress. Rebirth in this human state is most rare, the very material for such an achievement being rare, as also the examples of it. One who has the great good fortune to be reborn as a human being with the eighteen necessary physical and mental qualifications for progress is most precious, powerful and beneficent. Such a person can attain once more the state of beatitude or even advance to Nirvana or Buddhahood. In order to do so, however, he must use his life to good purpose and not waste his precious endowments.

The teaching is most precious and one should put it into practice immediately and not postpone it to a later date, for everything in this world is transitory and nothing lasts. Every living being dies. None has ever

escaped death or ever will. In the whole universe there is nowhere one can go to escape from death. Nor can one measure out one's span of life. Rich or poor, mighty or weak, wise or foolish, when the time comes there is no way of escape. Neither medicines nor any other inventions will be able to save one at that time. And no man can say when death will come or what will be the cause of it. One may be healthy in the morning and that same evening be laid upon a sick-bed; or one may go to bed feeling quite well and never rise in the morning. Death may call you while you are eating, walking, talking or doing anything at all or even while taking a medicine to cure yourself of sickness. Aged parents may bury their children; in fact such cases are to be seen everywhere and every day. No matter how wealthy you may be or how devoted to your parents, children or relatives, when the time of death comes nothing will help and nothing will go with you except your good and evil deeds. Religion is the only thing that can help at the time of death. Remembering this, one should follow religious teaching and practise it, looking upon every form of worldly enjoyment as a delusion.

When a man dies in his sins without having started to practise his religion it is not just like a flame being put out. It is worse than that, because he will not be able to escape rebirth; and it will not be a favourable rebirth. Man can be reborn either in a state of beatitude or in one of the three undesirable states to which a life of sin leads. These are: hell, the state known in Tibetan as 'Preta' and the animal state. In hell one suffers unquenchable fire and bitter cold, in Preta unappeasable hunger and thirst, and in the animal state from being treated as an animal. The only escape from these undesirable states is by seeking salvation through the Tri-Ratnas — Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. These are a sure refuge because they are above all these sufferings, their means of salvation is perfect and they are indiscriminately compassionate towards all alike. In order to attain salvation and avoid being reborn in any of the three evil states one has to shrink from such a birth and to have absolute faith in the Tri-Ratnas

as the sure means of salvation. This faith, however, should be based on reason and understanding ; it is not blind faith that Lord Buddha asks for. With the help of enlightened faith, as Lord Buddha taught, one can resist evil and do good.

Something must be said here about actions, their causes and their fruit. There are four points to notice.

In the first place good actions performed for good motives will bear good fruit. Of that there is no doubt, just as one is sure to reap oranges when one sows an orange seed and to reap thorns when one plants thorns.

Secondly, whether one's actions are good or evil the fruit that results from them will be far in excess of them. If one sows a single small orange-seed or the seed of any other fruit tree it will grow into a tree bearing not merely one fruit but many.

Thirdly, we cannot reap what we have not sown, whether good or evil. For instance if a person undergoes a severe wound or illness but does not die of it, that means that he has not committed any action which should result in death from a wound or illness at that time.

The fourth point is, that one cannot escape from reaping the fruit of one's actions, whether good or ill. In illustration of this there is a story that in the time of Lord Buddha a king by the name of Phakyipo murdered 70,000 persons. Seeing this, Lord Buddha foresaw that he would be burnt to death in this lifetime as part of the fruit of his great crime. When the king heard this he set out to sea in a ship to escape the possibility of being burnt to death. However, the sun's rays, focused through a gem worn by one of his queens kindled a spark in his garments and this burst into flame and burnt him to death. The various kinds of death, good and evil, are grouped under the ten virtuous acts and the ten evil acts ; and each of these twenty can be subdivided into various categories.

Those who simply do good and resist evil are still counted among the lower ranks, since the most they can attain is to avoid the three states of suffering and be born in

one of the three states of happiness. But these three states are themselves not free from suffering, and beside they carry with them the danger of being reborn in one of the three evil states. One who wishes to go beyond this and escape from the cycle of rebirth altogether must have firm faith in the Tri-Ratnas and practise the three dogmas. Only those who follow this path are counted among the higher ranks.

Having thus attained a high rank, one must conceive compassion for the suffering of all living beings, even though one has oneself escaped these sufferings and won free from the cycle of rebirth. Even here, however, one has still only the feeling of compassion for the sufferings of others and not yet the power to give them salvation. This is achieved only when one has attained the state of Buddhahood. Therefore, with the purpose of attaining Buddhahood for the salvation of every being, one must have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and conceive the feeling of perfect spiritual Enlightenment, absolutely and relatively. One must then practise and live as a true and perfectly enlightened person. This is the path for those of the highest rank.

The above is a general summary of the practice of Buddhism.

There is another path, the shortest but very dangerous, quite different from those mentioned above. This is Tantrism. It enables one to attain Buddhahood in a very short period, even in this lifetime. On this path there are only two steps, but only persons of the highest aptitude and understanding can take them. For him who can learn, understand and practise them perfectly Buddhahood is attainable in this very lifetime.

To sum up :

Lord Buddha cannot wash away your sins for you.

Lord Buddha cannot separate you from your sins.

Lord Buddha cannot exchange his place with yours.

But Lord Buddha has shown us the true path to salvation.

## SONG OF MEDITATION

By HAKUIN

Hakuin, 1685-1768, was the most influential Rinzai Zen Master of recent times. His 'Song of Meditation' or *Zazen Wasan* is chanted before formal lectures in Zen monasteries. This translation of it was specifically made for *The Mountain Path* by the American poet Gary Snyder.

Living beings—Buddhas from the first.  
Without beings, no Buddhas.  
Not knowing how near, men seek it far off.

—like living in water  
and crying of thirst  
—like a rich man's child  
lost in a poor town.

The karma of travelling the six realms  
Is the dark road of your own ignorance.  
Always walking the dark road  
When will you leave samsara ?

This samadhi of the Mahayana  
Is great beyond praise.  
The paramitas of morality and charity,  
Nembutsu, repentance, and asceticism,  
All sorts of good practice  
Are contained within it.

A man who gains the merit of but one meditation  
Destroys the gathered errors of a lifetime.  
When the evil realms are homeless  
The pure land can't be far.  
How grateful is the man  
Whose ear once hears the Law.

Praise and adoration  
Gain great good fortune  
But one who turns towards this  
Proves his true self directly :  
True self is no-self  
—this is not idle talk—  
Cause and effect are one ;  
—this opens the gate—  
No twos or threes, the road is straight.

Form of the formless is the form.  
 To go or come—no different place ;  
 Thought of the thoughtless is the thought,  
 Song and dance the Dharma's voice.  
 Samadhi is an open sky,  
 Four Wisdoms moon is bright and clear—  
 What can there be left to seek  
 For total stillness has appeared :  
 This very place is the Lotus Land :  
 This very body  
 Buddha.

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## TO SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI\*

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

A face that's still, like silent cloudless blue,  
 And eyes that even as stars drip holiness  
 Won from a source beyond our ken—a new  
 Messenger Thou, in this age, of a grace

Men ache for and, withal, are terrified  
 When it shines near—wan puppets of fool senses,  
 That would disown the soul's faith—even deride  
 The Peace they crave yet fear—for Life's false dances

And siren rhythms beguile the multitude !  
 And there they woo Time's whirls and wheels—for what ?  
 At best a reeling moment—an interlude  
 Of half-lit laughter dogged by tears—of Fate !

O Son of Dawn ! who only knowest the Sun,  
 And through His eye of Light see'st all that lies  
 Revealed—a flawless plenitude which none  
 But Son's own children ever might surmise !

For only the chosen few so far have won  
 The Truth that shines beyond world's wounds and cries ;  
 Who see Thee throned in high dominion  
 Of Self's invulnerable Verities.

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\* From the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, Sri Ramanasramam, 1946.

## NON-VOLITIONAL LIVING

By WEI WU WEI

Some of our readers are interested to know who Wei Wu Wei is. All we are authorised to say is that he is widely known in spiritual circles as the author of the three books: '*Fingers Pointing Towards the Moon*', '*Why Lazarus Laughed*' and '*Ask the Awakened*',<sup>1</sup> the last of which is reviewed in our issue of January 1964, to which readers are referred.

We are taught that "Enlightenment" is the true nature of all sentient beings, and most of those who read these words are hoping by some means to arrive at an Awakening to that state, some by understanding and practice, others by understanding only. In either case understanding is an essential factor, and no essential element of that should be overlooked or misunderstood. These few lines are to suggest that one such is in fact both misunderstood and overlooked. That to which I refer may be described as "non-volitional living", which is the way of living of those who live in Enlightenment.

First let us ask what is meant by "volition". I recollect Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi as having said that volition and an ego are one and the same manifestation. More analytically considered, perhaps we may say that volition is the functional aspect of an I-concept, an "ego" appearing to function in phenomenal life, the "ego" being the supposed entity and its functioning being cognised as volition. That being so, it is evident that this apparent functioning can play no part in the enlightened state. It is evident also that as long as we continue to live volitionally we are unlikely to awaken to that state ourselves. Moreover it is volitional living alone that produces, indeed constitutes, what is called 'karma'.

Instead of repeating here what has already been suggested on this subject elsewhere, I propose to offer some brief citations from masters who spoke to us from the state of whole (undivided) mind, which is that of what is called "Enlightenment".

First one may remember that non-volitional living is *implicit* in the teaching of the

Lao-tze book, contemporary with the teaching of the Buddha but spatially separated from it by thousands of miles. It is explicit in the teaching of the most profound of Chinese philosophers, Chuang-tze, whose many references to the matter may be summed-up in the devastating statement that "he who is not absolutely oblivious of his own existence can never be a ruler of men", for to be oblivious of one's own existence is to be cut off from the source of Volition.

Coming down to the third century of our era we find the great Tao-sheng (c. 360-434), founder of Ch'an Buddhism in China some three generations before the assumed dates of Bodhidharma, in a discussion of his teachings by Hui-yuan (334-416), founder of the Pure Land Sect, stating a doctrine succinctly described by Prof. Fung Yu-lan as follows:

"Here we find a combination of Taoist and Buddhist ideas. What we call retribution results from the activities of the mind. Our aim, therefore, should be to respond to external situations *without interposing the mind*, since such a course permits physical activity, yet involves no mental activation. This is the way to transcend the cycle of transmigration, so that our acts no longer entail any retribution."

'Retribution', of course, is what we know as 'karma'.

This is *spontaneous response without volitional activity*.

Let me now quote a little-known statement of the famous and fully-enlightened sage Huang-po of the T'ang dynasty, died 850, who taught at the height of the great period of Ch'an Buddhism. His advice was:

<sup>1</sup> All three published by Messrs. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

"Simply void your entire mind: this is to have unpolluted wisdom (pure non-objective inseeing or prajna). Daily go out, stay at home, sit or sleep, but in every word you say be not attached to the things of purposeful activity. Then, whatever you say or wherever you look, all will be unpolluted (undefiled by objects and karma-free)." (from the 'Sayings of Ancient Worthies').

That is *spontaneous non-volitional living*

Is someone asking how this to be done? I wonder if such a question is in order. We may ask the Awakened. But if their answer implies aim, intention or practice, then some ingenuous translator has made himself responsible for that part of the answer, for would not that be looking for the moon in a puddle? The doing of it is non-doing, and volition cannot be abjured by an act of volition, or a thief caught by telling him to catch himself. Moreover it is not *an act* of non-doing either: it is neither doing nor non-doing, but the utter absence of both.

Let me recall Sri Bhagavan's statements on the subject, statements as categorical as any he ever made, his earliest statement made in writing to his mother, and one of his later statements made not very long before he died. It may be objected that he was specifically referring to the reputed incompatibility between free-will and determination, but that context is as good an example as any other, and where is there to be found an entity to have will, free or fettered, and what could a phenomenon do if it were not determined? I will not quote them here, for anyone who does not remember them can readily find them, but by dealing with the question as he indicated and solving the specific problem he was referring to — a

pseudo-problem, as all problems are — we will automatically solve the general problem which is the subject of this Note.

It is for those better qualified to comment on Bhagavan's teaching; so let me finish these suggestions by returning to the above quotation of a drill-sergeant commanding some voluntary action, but, Chinese characters being for the most part devoid of syntax and parts of speech, the statement may equally be rendered "The voiding of your entire mind is to have pure inseeing, then your every action will be free of purposeful activity." He quite certainly did not mean to imply that a purposeful act of voiding your mind would produce a state devoid of purposeful activity.

Somebody made a memorable remark when he stated that we only have one freedom, which is to affirm or deny our own existence just as Bhagavan used to say that our only freedom is to identify ourselves or not with the body whose destiny is already shaped by karma. But that is not even a freedom: at most it is a recognition, and the affirmation and denial are identical. Such a recognition is devoid of volitional interference, and it is the voiding of the mind.

In all forms of Buddhism, and indeed perhaps also in Vedanta, we are constantly urged to abjure all such activities as 'attachment', 'discrimination', 'clinging', *vikalpa*, *samskara*, and others. This, surely, is swallowing a bowlful of rice grain by grain for *all are just manifestations of volition*, that is living volitionally, and such diffusion is unending. The heads of a Hydra grow again; is it not simpler to seek the heart of the Hydra herself?

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*You are the pure immutable Essence, formless and deathless. How then can you say that you know this or do not know that about the Atma?*

— AVADHUTA GITA, 1, 24.

*You should always be engaged in worshipping Him. How can an alien thought then find a place in your mind?*

— BHAKTA MIRA.

## THE INFINITE WAY ON LIFE

By JOEL S. GOLDSMITH

Joel Goldsmith of Honolulu, Hawaii, is widely known as one of the leading masters of spiritual healing in the world to-day. His book *'The Art of Healing'*<sup>1</sup> is a beautiful exposition of this art as a canalization of Divine Power, with the healer eliminating his own personality. Apart from this, he has a wide influence in many countries, through his books and his personal influence and as the leader of the 'Infinite Way' groups. As this article, written specially for *'The Mountain Path'* will show, the way he advocates is fundamentally the same as that of the Maharshi, since it consists in seeking Reality in oneself, not in any books or scriptures or other places or things.

It is very noticeable that far too many students do not know what makes The Infinite Way, or why there is an Infinite Way message. Because they do not catch this major point, they struggle for years—not knowing where they are going or why. That which started me on the spiritual path and which ultimately led to The Infinite Way, was the realization that there is no God in the human world or in any religious teaching as such. There is no God answering the prayers of people. For this reason and for this reason only, there can be a world filled with all the things you can think of which constitute horrible world conditions. None of this would be if there were a God in the world. In the presence of Light there is no darkness. You cannot have the Presence of the Christ and have a sin or a death or a lack or man's inhumanity to man.

Eventually it was revealed to me that you cannot reach God through the mind, and that is why prayers as such are worthless except as one's blind faith might make of them a little power—just as it is possible to give a little sugar pill and stop pain. In this realization you must remember that this makes any religion, or any religious teaching in and of itself nothing more nor less than a philosophy. The only thing that can make a religion a Religion is something that brings the actual Presence and Power of God into concrete manifestation, and it is for this reason that we say The Infinite Way is not so much a teaching as an EXPERIENCE.

These are spiritual principles, but they do not constitute The Infinite Way. They are but stepping-stones or bridges over which you walk. You have not reached the goal of The Infinite Way until you have the actual realized Presence of God or Activity of the Christ. It is for this reason that we cannot have outlined or formalized prayers. They are of no value—except to quieten you. Your prayer is not going to help anyone until you reach that place of stillness where you receive a response from within. Therefore, the teaching of The Infinite Way is as valueless as any other teaching if it does not result in the actual Experience of the Presence of God—the FEEL of the Presence of God within you. You can study the Bible and quote it and 'fall right into the ditch', if it does not elevate you in consciousness to where the actual meeting with God takes place.

No human being knows how to heal. No human being has the power to heal. No human being either knows or receives the 'things of God'. Therefore, there can be no healing or real spiritual teaching until you are spiritually endowed—until the Presence announces Itself. Then you can sit back as a beholder and watch your life change. And, as you watch your life change you can say: "I did not do that". When you reach this place, you are then functioning in The Infinite Way. Now The Infinite Way becomes an 'alive Religion', whereas before it was just a preparation.

People keep asking, "Why was this innocent child murdered or why was my dog

<sup>1</sup> Published by Allen and Unwin.

run over when they did nothing wrong?" The world does not know the answer, but as students you should know that there is no God in the human world. Anything of that nature can and will happen — until the child or the dog or the business or the profession or anything else is brought into the presence of one who is spiritually endowed. Then you can trust your child or your dog or your business or your profession — because now the Grace of God is benefiting them. It is the Spirit of God Itself. Until this is understood, The Infinite Way can mean nothing to you except as another teaching or as something nice to read or listen to — and that is not its intent. The intent of its message is this: That every student shall reach that place in consciousness where "the Spirit of God is upon them" and they can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me", or "Whereas I was blind, now I see". Then you can sit back and say, "I can fulfill all obligations" — not as if you were doing it but as if you were being guided, strengthened and wisdomed from within — which you would be.

The principles of The Infinite Way, as they have been given to me, will definitely change your consciousness to the place where the spiritual endowment can take place. Let me explain: The moment you learn that God or Spirit is the only power and the only law, and you accept this even intellectually, you can at least meet a claim of bad weather by saying: "If God is the only law, weather cannot be law". Or, if you are faced with the threat of an atomic bomb you can say: "If it is true that Spirit is the only power, then I do not have to worry about bombs." Or, in the case of a disease on the way, such as a flu epidemic: "What is that to me, since the Spirit of God is the only power." Actually you may turn around and get the flu because intellectual acceptance is not the protection. However, if you persist in working with the principle of 'one power', eventually it will leave the mind and go down into the heart. And when this takes place, then you can say, "Now I see."

There is not a person on the face of the earth who does not have a problem of sup-

ply. Even the multimillionaire has a problem of supply; if it is only concern as to how to meet his income tax. But when you adopt into your consciousness: "Man does not live by bread alone"; or "Supply is not something material because supply is of God, and therefore supply is spiritual" — the fear or hatred or love of money evaporates. Eventually, then, you do perceive that this is a spiritual universe. When you stop the attempt to GET material supply, it comes to you just by knowing that God is its Source and God is Spirit.

As you take one principle after another and lose your fear or hate or love of the outer, and can settle in meditation, you will find it much easier to say: "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth" and find yourself in a deep pool of contentment. When you are in this 'deep pool of contentment' — quiet — peace — the Spirit moves and imparts Itself to you. It may be in words, or in a deep breath, or in FEELING — but when It does, God is on the scene.

This is the function of The Infinite Way, to bring you to the place where you live by God—by the Presence of God—not by statements of Truth. The one demonstration you can make in The Infinite Way is the demonstration of the Presence of God —that moment when you FEEL that "God is on the field". Then you are living by Grace. Then you will realize: "Thy Grace is my sufficiency in all things." Not that quotation, but the actual realized Grace or Presence is my sufficiency, and there is sufficient Grace present to meet the needs of THIS MOMENT. Everyone wants God 'ten years from now', but, just as nature provides enough air in your lungs for this second, so God is sufficient Grace for THIS SECOND. And, as God's Grace never stops, you always have enough Grace for this moment. There is no 'future heaven'; there is no 'heavenly heaven'; THIS MOMENT is the only heaven there is. The only heaven there is living in this moment, because only in this moment do you have sufficient Grace to provide you with the spiritual Bread, Meat, Wine, Water — even Resurrection. There is enough Grace present in this moment to resurrect your

body, your marriage, your fortune, your business — whatever the world says you have lost. And as you live in **THIS MOMENT**, that Grace becomes a continuing experience — bringing about the fulfilment.

Never ask this question: "Why am I in this trouble, or why did this happen to an innocent child?" You know the answer. There was no God in that picture or it would not have happened. Paul described it: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit", or from the Master: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." This is the man of earth. But the 'man who has his being in Christ' toils not, neither does he spin — yet none are arrayed as beautifully in all the world's goods.

If you witness Infinite Way students going on year in and year out and not receiving fruitage or Grace, you can know that they are just 'reading with the mind' and remaining there. That is not reaching God. We are to live with a passage of Truth until it becomes 'our own', and here is an example: "Thy Grace is my sufficiency and there is a sufficiency of Thy Grace to meet this need." You could then put away all of the books — until you could **DEMONSTRATE** that principle. Through the books we present Truth and, if you could take one statement of Truth and demonstrate it, then the books would have fulfilled their purpose.

I started this article by a reminder that there is no God in the human scene, that there is no way to reach God with the mind, and that harmony begins to come into your experience **ONLY** as you attain the actual realized Presence of God or Spirit of God. In many of the metaphysical approaches you hear it said that 'evil is not power' or 'there is no evil' or 'error is not real' or 'evil is not of God'. But in The Infinite Way you must get out of that habit, because it is a habit which leaves you in the very error which you have been denying. There is error — there is evil — and that is why there is the search for God. Had there been no evils in the days of the Master, there would have been no Master on earth because there would

have been no need of one.<sup>1</sup> In fact every religion had as its origin the fact that there were so many evils on earth that people thought a new religion was needed. The true statement should be: "Temporal power is not power in the Presence of the Christ or Spirit," which means that evil or error of any nature is not power in the realized Presence of God.

Let me prove this to you. Whenever you have been ill in your metaphysical life, the illness continued until you called your practitioner.<sup>2</sup> The illness then either slowly or rapidly disappeared, indicating that there must have been Something in the life of the practitioner which acted upon the evil — the ill. When sin or disease or death came anywhere near the Master, it was dissolved. But, if he was not around, the error kept on just the same. Yes, there will be evil — but not in the realized Presence of God, the **ONENESS** with God. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

You can sum up the evils of this world in the words 'temporal power', which would mean power of germs, power of dictators, power of armies, power of bombs. All that can be summed up as temporal power — and then you can realize that temporal power is not power when it is brought into contact with the Spirit of God. Then you will know that, whatever temporal power is tempting you, you must bring the actual Presence of God into the situation — whether you are so close to It that blinking your eyes does it, or whether you are so far away that you have to sit for days and nights until the Spirit breaks through. But if you are expecting any help until this happens, you are going to be sadly mistaken. Nothing happens to the errors that come into your experience until you have attained the realization of the Presence of God — then temporal power is dissolved as darkness is dissolved in the presence of light.

<sup>1</sup> This is in accordance with the promise of Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Whenever righteousness is obscured and evil prevails, I manifest myself." ch. iv, v. 7. (Editor).

<sup>2</sup> The author is referring here to a spiritual healing practitioner of the 'Infinite Way' group. (Editor).

This should give you such an understanding of the nature of the message of The Infinite Way that you will not trust or rely on any of its statements. Instead, you will know that they are to remind you to GO WITHIN and bring forth the Presence. You must actually experience God — then that Invisible goes before you to make the crooked places straight.

The statement I made above on Grace, "There is sufficient Grace present to meet the needs of THIS MOMENT," brings up another subject. Let me illustrate: The question is asked, "What is Truth?" I will tell you that no one in the history of the world has ever known what Truth is because Truth is infinite. Never has there been a religion or a teaching that was Truth. But, like the Omnipresence of sufficient Grace to meet the need of the moment, as you turn within in your meditation — sufficient Truth reveals Itself for the immediate now. The infinite nature of Truth means we can turn within and draw forth all the Truth we need for any moment. Do not label any teaching 'The Truth'. Truth has been revealing Itself through me all these years, yet it would be a horrible thing to say, "The Infinite Way is the Truth". Truth must continue revealing Itself one hundred years from now, or a million.

When you are dealing with your daily experience, you are opening yourself to an inflow of Truth, but be careful not to depend on yesterday's manna. Go within for the inspiration of the moment — for this moment's manna — if not the Spirit of God does not work. A statement of Truth is not God. A statement of Truth is the reminder that sends you back inside for further impartations.

If you will live constantly and consciously aware that there is a sufficiency of Grace for THIS MOMENT, or if you will live consciously aware that "I have hidden manna" — and then go within for the flow — you will be living by Grace. But you must constantly know that you have this hidden manna — this 'Meat the world knows not of'. Do not depend on the statement — go WITHIN. Even if nothing comes, the contact has been made.

Be sure you never forget that the function of this message is to reveal to you that you do have an Inner Grace — a hidden manna — a 'Meat the world knows not of'. Go within for the flow; then go about your business and, whatever your need is, the solution will appear in its own way. This has really carried me from the beginning of my work. Once touched by the Spirit, I knew there was Something within me that did the work. Everything necessary to my experience always appeared, even in time to correct my mistakes. You cannot avoid making a mistake but, even if you do, this Inner Manna corrects it.

It is really very sad if an Infinite Way student does not catch this point, that there is an Inner Grace — a 'Meat the world knows not of' — a hidden manna. Knowing this, you can always go within, wait for the assurance and then go about your business, KNOWING that Something is "going before you to make the crooked places straight". It is sad if students do not catch this. Nobody in the world has ever been born without this hidden manna — NOBODY — because God incorporated Himself IN man AS man. Therefore, the only function of religion should be to acquaint you with that fact and to help you to raise up or release that Spirit. When this happens religion has accomplished its purpose. Then of course "Go and sin no more". After that there MUST be spiritual integrity or you have cut yourself off and human selfhood is the barrier.

Can you not see the sin of believing that anyone of us is different from another — except in the degree of realization? There should be spiritual leaders, because in their presence temporal power does not operate. They can help in the overcoming of discords but only to a certain point, because "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you". However, no matter how advanced we become, there are times when problems can become so hypnotic that we ourselves may not be able to bring release and so we turn to each other for temporary help — for a lift. The Master was not ashamed to say, "Stay awake and pray with me", so there should be no hesitancy in turning to each other for help.

I have no hesitancy whatsoever to do this when I need it — and I receive the help.

Religion is nothing to become sanctimonious about. Religion has to be recognition of an indwelling Presence, and then the ability to LET IT LOOSE. There is nothing more sacred in the entire world than the individual. That means every individual, for it is every individual's function to attain his individuality and not keep it in a herd or a mass.

In The Infinite Way our dependency is on a hidden manna, a 'Meat the world knows not of', a Presence you cannot define. You do not have a blind faith — you go within and bring it forth as Spirit. Then your religious life has been accomplished. Then forever after, you can say: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But because of the mesmerism of the world, you must go within twenty to thirty times a day. In other words you must get back inside where you acknowledge, "I have a hidden manna" — and then LET IT OUT.

It will not be long until someone says to you, "What is it you have?" or "Can you help me?" No, it will not be long. Then you must remember to give milk to the babes. Do not give deep metaphysics at first. Give it gently — gently. And do not believe that you can lead anyone to this point in a year. Only a few are ready, because of previous incarnations, to catch this in a year or less. I can be very patient because I know that human wisdom cannot be replaced by spiritual discernment until onion skin after onion skin has been peeled away and they become transparencies. I can be patient with them until they have reached that place where 'self preservation' is no longer the first 'law' and the first need. I know it takes patience on my part — and I always hope they will have the courage to persist.

Miracles do happen, some far greater than you would believe if you heard of them. But they are not due to a 'miracle man' — they are due to consciousness and receptivity. Not even Jesus could perform miracles unless he was approached with receptivity. It really makes no difference what degree of spiritual height I attain — it can affect you only by the measure of your receptivity. That is why

no practitioner can ever guarantee the measure of your healing or how long it will take, because it depends on your receptivity. And no practitioner will ever heal everyone because there are those who cannot do anything but seek 'loaves and fishes' and this sets up a barrier. The higher the teacher goes in spiritual realization, the greater will be the works — but only in the presence of receptivity. There is only one reason why healings do not come through. There is a barrier — a lack of receptivity — but be patient!

I could ask you a question: "If you knew this minute that an enemy was going to throw an atomic bomb tonight, what would be your answer if the President should give you the choice of throwing the bomb first or waiting for the enemy to throw it?" Your answer to this question would determine where you stand spiritually because, if you would choose to throw it first, you are still in humanhood — wanting to spare your life. Spiritual development does not include saving your life at the expense of another. Spiritual development recognizes: "Temporal power is not power in the presence of the Christ but, if it takes my human sense of life, I am not going to take the life of someone else." Why might it not stop a war if a group of people should say to the President, "Why should we save our lives?" As a matter of fact that is what would happen, should 'ten righteous men' declare: "I am not taking someone else's life to save my own. I cannot see my life as being more precious in the sight of God than the life of the Russians or the Japanese or the Germans."

In your spiritual life you face this question to some degree every day. In other words you prepare to send your child to school — but have you thought about the child on the other side of the tracks and have you made any provision for him? If not, you are still in humanhood. You cannot live in family selfishness and still believe you are living spiritually. But these things resolve themselves when the Spirit of God comes through, because then you cannot take any credit for being benevolent. You are not doing it — the Spirit is compelling you.

The Christians who were thrown to the lions were not courageous. It was the Spirit of God that did it, for no human being could be that brave or that courageous.

If any of you are satisfied with anything less than the Experience of God,

you are satisfied with too little. NOTHING should satisfy you but the Experience Itself, and you can accomplish that by turning within. It will come. And, when it comes, it must be renewed. Because of the hypotism of the world — it must be RENEWED.

## THE GUIDE ON THE MOUNTAIN PATH

By PROF. K. R. R. SASTRY

For us who take the mountain path the Maharshi is the guide. He came to Arunachala as a boy ascetic in 1900 and for fifty years lived there among us, showing us the way and helping us along it. On April 14th., 1950, at 8-47 p.m., a meteor lit up the sky as his mortal remains returned to dust.

The living Sage of scintillating stillness no longer draws us with his luminous eyes. The hand which fed the cow, the squirrel, the monkey, the crow and the peacock is no more visible. Yet thousands who recall his soothing stillness and his heart glowing with merciful love for all still worship at his shrine, each at that level to which the Master has guided him.

No more need any doubt the presence of God, for hundreds, thousands, have been

remoulded by Him manifested on earth in the form of Maharshi Ramana. Others who never saw Him in this form feel no less His Presence as Ramana.

He recalled us to "that larger dimension of Reality to which we belong," as Dr. Radhakrishnan calls it. Many of us found, when his eyes pierced into ours, that all our doubts dissolved and disappeared. He still continues to appear to some of us in dreams and visions, and to some also who never saw him in the body.

Once when I was enjoying the hospitality of a friend in America I called on him: "Oh Master! Ramana! You who rescued me midway on life's course!" And suddenly, spontaneously, all the wisdom of the Upanishads rose up in me in Silence.

*When a pot breaks, the space that was enclosed in it merges with universal space; similarly, when the mind becomes pure only the immaculate Atma remains. No differentiation whatever is then seen.*

— AVADHUTA GITA, 1, 30.

*Human birth is a rare gift. It is difficult to obtain it over again.*

BHAKTA MIRA.

*This knowledge is direct: it is so very plain. God is in our grasp, but we have no experience.*

— TUKARAM.

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## “CAST NOT YOUR PEARLS BEFORE SWINE”

By SAGITTARIUS

What are the pearls and who are the swine?

There can be no clearer statement in any religion that there are esoteric truths to be revealed only to genuine seekers and not to the public.

There is a modern tendency to demand that democracy should extend even to knowledge and secrets be thrown open to all; but do all want them? Einstein's relativity theory is open to all, but how many study it? It may be said that there is a difference, in that all could if they wanted, whereas Christ's injunction implies a deliberate restricting of knowledge; actually however, the difference is not great, since ability to understand and earnest desire to follow are the sole qualifications for explanation. Truth is withheld only from those who do not value it and would therefore misunderstand and misuse it if offered. But they may be the majority.

What Christ said was that to offer it to them would be not merely a useless but a dangerous activity — “Lest they turn again and rend you”. Swine are not interested in things of beauty but only in roots and swill and what fills their belly. Materialists are not interested in things of the spirit. Moreover they are liable to be offended by the implied suggestion that your aspiration rises higher than theirs, that your understanding outstrips theirs, that any one can prefer a pearl to a root — and turn and rend you.

Then what has happened to the pearls? Have the churches still got them? It is known that there are modes of silent prayer and meditation and various spiritual exercises that are not publicly proclaimed. They may be open to the laity also, but only to such of them as show their fitness by going into retreat or seeking guidance for concentrated spiritual effort.

Indeed, to say that they are still guarded by the churches does not mean that every

priest and clergyman is a guardian of them. Some of the swine may be wearing clerical costume also. It seems a rude thing to say, but nowhere near as rude as the things Christ said about the clergy of his day.

There was a powerful tradition of spiritual guidance during the Middle Ages. Towards the end of that period surprisingly frank records of it or of the doctrine on which it was built were left. Perhaps the writers felt that the direct oral transmission was drying up and needed to be fortified by written accounts to tide over the dark age that was already threatening. ‘The Cloud of Unknowing’, an anonymous 14th Century English record, is almost entirely a manual for spiritual practice. Characteristically, it is prefaced by a short note warning off the swine, insisting that it should be read only by those who are genuinely seeking, not by the merely curious. The *Theologia Germanica* speaks even more openly of the possibility of Divine Union. Meister Eckhart was so outspoken about the Supreme Identity as to be accused of heresy. He denied the charge, insisting that his teaching was the true Catholic doctrine rightly understood, but after his death excommunication was pronounced against him. Jacob Boehme, a Protentant cobbler, expounded the less direct mysteries of symbolism and sacred cosmology. Cervantes had the wit to conceal the pearls in a zany.

Moreover, something of spiritual practice also seems to have survived through the dark ages of rationalism. When pioneers such as Evelyn Underhill sought to bring the mystics back in the present century there was more than antiquarianism in their work; the spiritual lifeblood of Christian tradition still flowed, though pulsing now rather feebly and needing to be invigorated. For a spiritual current can be invigorated, sometimes even through an infusion of new life from outside. It is not a fixed quantum

but a living, vibrating force, continually radiating with greater or less intensity, attaining an incandescent heat or cooling down and growing inert, according to the fervour and understanding of those within its orbit. And since every thought, every action, every aspiration, has its repercussions, those who draw sustenance from a spiritual body thereby also increase its potency, while the reverse is also true, that those who devote their lives to its service thereby draw sustenance.

The hidden pearls of esoteric wisdom need not be secret sayings such as the antiquarian or occultist loves to search for. They are far more likely to be profounder interpretations of sayings that everybody knows. The secret is not something that can be communicated but something that must be understood. A still truer description would be that they are wiser and more determined utilisations of interpretations that many people know.

The interpretations can be expounded in books and articles; their utilisation, which is what is of real value, can be taught only by a qualified guide to those who approach him directly.

But is it legitimate to expound even the interpretations openly, or would that come under Christ's ban on making hidden things known? I don't think it would, because this ban seems to be cancelled out by another cryptic saying of Christ's, that at the end all that was hidden shall be made known. This seems to be an age when, as at the end of the Middle Ages (though for different reasons) it is appropriate to disclose what can be disclosed. The real secret is ineffable. On all sides, from the viewpoints of all religions, one sees the hidden truths being expounded, so far as theoretical exposition is possible. Indeed, it may be that so little re-

mains of the practical transmission that its theoretical wrappings no longer need concealment. Or it may be that their display is necessary to help some of those who aspire but do not know where to seek, so that even in our age Christ's word may still be fulfilled, that those who seek shall find. To take only one instance among many: D. T. Suzuki quotes a Ch'an Master as saying, "Ask of your self, inquire into your self, pursue your self, investigate within your self, and never let others tell you what it is, nor let it be explained in words,"<sup>1</sup> Not only don't seek for a theoretical explanation but don't accept one if offered, refuse to listen to one. And yet Dr. Suzuki himself, conforming to the needs of our age, has spent most of his life giving theoretical explanations in books, articles and lectures.

What is far more potent authorisation, however, is the action of Ramana Maharshi himself. The path of Self-enquiry, based on the doctrine of Advaita or Identity, was in ancient times taught only to the few, usually to the recluse who had renounced the world. Indeed, the *Chandogya Upanishad* shows the Sage Prajapati teaching first that the physical individual being is the Self and only going deeper for that pupil who refuses to accept the superficial teaching. But in our time the Maharshi has proclaimed it openly in speech and writing for all who can understand and follow. He wrote: "I have betrayed Thy secret workings. Be not offended! Show me Thy Grace now openly and save me, Oh Arunachala!"<sup>2</sup> Requiring no further authorisation, I shall try to display the hidden pearls.

<sup>1</sup> *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism*, p. 320, Rider & Co., London.

<sup>2</sup> The Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala, v. 98, from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai

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*My speech is silence : dying I live. Existing I do not exist among the people. In enjoyment is my renunciation, in association detachment. I have broken all bonds and ligatures. Tuka says : I am not what I appear to be. Ask Panduranga (God) if you have anything to ask.*

—TUKARAM.

## THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA BIRTH CENTENARY

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

It is hard now to remember to what a low ebb Hinduism had fallen at the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. The Hindus, conquered by a Western country, recognizing its more potent civilization, adopting its education, began to feel dejected at home and despised abroad. Missionaries were not wanting to proclaim that the West's superiority was due to Christianity and India's backwardness to Hinduism. With the Brahmo-Samaj, a Christianised version of Hinduism was offered by Western influenced Hindus. The rigidly orthodox were already outside the current of history and the moderates were inclined to compromise.

Then the presence of Sri Ramakrishna electrified Bengal. Almost uneducated, writing no books, proclaiming no philosophy, by the sheer power of his presence he changed the whole tone of things. Those who were being swept on the current of reformism and agnosticism (like the young Narendra Datt himself) were arrested and shocked back into devotion. Nevertheless, it was still necessary to vocalise and spread this new influence, to create a respect for Hinduism in the West and a self-respect in India.

These were the two tasks into which Narendra, become now Swami Vivekananda, flung himself with his colossal energy, and by and large he succeeded. If some of his books for Westerners now seem elementary, if Hindus seem conscious enough of their great cultural heritage, that does not mean that his task was unnecessary; on the contrary it is a measure of his success, of the vast change that has come about since his work began.

There was no doubt about the Grace that flowed through him. At the famous Chicago 'Parliament of Religions'—famous now only because Vivekananda took part in it—it was not his arguments that impressed people so much as his presence. He had got no farther than "Sisters and brothers of America!" when the entire hall burst into a torrent of applause. From that point on, in speech after speech, contact after contact, people felt the power and grace in him. A



recently published book by some thirty odd disciples and admirers, Hindu and Western,<sup>1</sup> shows this over-powering impression he made on people and the support they derived from him. It shows too how he retained his simplicity and humour despite their adulation, never falling a victim to pride.

No wonder then that Vivekananda is honoured in India as a national no less than a religious hero. Indeed, India and Hinduism are traditionally so closely united that it is sometimes hard to separate the two.

In 1963 the Swami's birth centenary was being celebrated throughout India. Books were published on the occasion, lectures given, meetings held. The enthusiasm was enormous. The celebrations overflowed into 1964, culminating this year in Calcutta and Madras. They showed what a powerful hold the Swami still has on the imagination and loyalty of his compatriots.

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.

## NAGA BABA

By S. P. MUKHERJEE

Naga Baba, who died only a few years ago, was a very aged Swami living in a small ashram on a low hill at Puri. None knew his name or provenance. He was referred to simply as 'Naga Baba', 'naga' meaning 'naked', since he wore not even a loincloth. People merely guessed his age, some of the guesses running into centuries. His manner was abrupt. He did not encourage people to visit him often or to stay long. Typically crabbed was his answer when some one asked him his age: "If you think I am fool enough to identify myself with this body, you are a fool to come here." When a visitor had been sitting in his presence for some twenty minutes or so he was quite likely to say: "Well, you have had darshan, you can go now." And yet people went to him. They felt a strange euphoria, even an exhilaration, in his presence and carried it away with them.

S. P. Mukherji, who was an engineer in a large Calcutta firm, retired in 1960 (while Naga Baba was still living) and settled down with his wife at Tiruvannamalai, building a house near the Ashram. Neither of them had ever seen the Maharshi, but they had immense devotion and felt his guidance. Mr. Mukherji tells the following story.

In 1952 I visited Naga Baba with a whole group of my family and relations. We sat for some time in his presence, but he simply ignored us — did not even look at us.

We were staying at a large hotel in the town. That night I could not sleep. Towards morning I felt restless and went downstairs to the lounge. The air was hot and oppressive. Altogether I felt ill-at-ease. Suddenly I had an impulse to go and see the Swami then and there. I found a rickshaw waiting outside the hotel and went.

When I arrived it was about four o'clock in the morning. I found the Swami sitting alone under a neem tree and had the impression that he was waiting for me. I sat down in front of him, feeling glad to be alone with him, not in a crowd. He smiled and spoke to me in a very friendly tone, saying: "So you have come back."

That showed that he had noticed me earlier in the day, though he seemed not to. I felt happy and at ease in his presence and asked him a few questions that were troubling me, beginning with some reference to the course of my life.

The first was: "When should I begin to lead a life of *sadhana* (quest)?"

He replied simply, "Now."

I explained to him that circumstances were very difficult at present—my daughter was not yet married, my contract with my firm was not renewed, I was engaged in litigation

and had a variety of worries. But he simply answered that that was the best time.

I next asked him whether I should retire in a few years before completing my service, and he said, "Yes."

Then, without mentioning Arunachala by name, I asked him whether I should settle down and make *sadhana* in an ashram at the foot of a hill, to which I was strongly drawn. He closed his eyes for a few moments and then opened them and said: "Yes, you will do that."

After that I asked him a more profound question: "How shall I get rid of my *ahankara* (ego-sense)?"

He said: "What ego-sense? What ego?"

I told him that it was nothing specific but everything I do. For instance, if I do something well I feel proud and have a sense of being a better person.

He said: "That is egoism of the mind. You will get rid of it if you control your mind and start recoiling it to its source. It is like a person flying a kite. As he recoils the thread the kite flies over a smaller and smaller range till at last it comes to rest and stops flying altogether."

After sitting silent for a few minutes, but with no sense of constraint, he spoke again, saying, but in a kind and gracious way: "Well, have you had enough now?"

So I took leave of him and went away, feeling peaceful and elated.

## VEGETARIANISM

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

The Bodhisattva...desirous of cultivating the virtue of love, should not eat meat, lest he cause terror to living beings. When dogs see, even at a distance, an outcaste...who likes eating meat, they are terrified and think: 'These are dealers of death and will kill us!' Even the minute beings living in earth, air and water have a very keen sense of smell and detect at a distance the odour of the demons in meat-eaters, and they flee as fast as they can from the death which threatens them.

From the *Lankavatara Sutra*.

Is there any benefit from not eating meat? Or perhaps the question should be put the other way round: is there any harm in eating meat? I am not considering the question from a medical but purely from a spiritual point of view. One's body is not a mere tenement; so long as one remains an individual being it is a part of that being and, as De la Mare quaintly remarks:

It's a very strange thing,  
As strange as can be,  
That whatever Miss T. eats  
Turns into Miss T.

Various spiritual paths include physical as well as mental and emotional disciplines, aiming at a total harmonisation. On the one hand vibrations set up by a spiritual technique affect the body, while on the other hand the bodily state can facilitate or impede spiritual progress. Diet, therefore, cannot be a matter of indifference.

Considered theoretically, there is something to be said for eating meat; more to be said against it. In favour of it one can say that a sort of alchemy is carried on by the human body through which the lower orders of life are transmuted to the higher. But on the side of abstaining there is the consideration that the subtle essences of the food eaten are absorbed as well as the physical substance, and therefore one who eats meat is liable to strengthen his own animal tendencies. Apart from this, compassion forbids that I should expect other creatures to lose their lives in order to nourish mine. So does *vairaggya*, the quality

of equal-mindedness, which is so important in seeking Realization.

A factual survey of the religions shows no uniformity. The Jews can eat all meat except that of the pig and can drink alcohol. The Muslims are forbidden both pork and wine. Moreover the ban, though primarily on the pig, extends to all animals that do not chew the cud. Apart from this, however, the assertion in the *Quran* that God has created the animals as food for man seems to carry the implication that animal food is not merely, permitted but enjoined. A remark by St. Augustine shows that during the early centuries of Christianity the ban on non-ruminative animals was observed by Christians also. He justifies it symbolically by comparing such animals to people who gulp down information without 'ruminating' upon it, thereby implying that the subtle qualities of the animals eaten are absorbed. The Chinese, like Christians of later centuries, observe no ban. The Vedic Aryans, and indeed the Hindus down to the time of Buddha, ate meat, even beef, and drank alcohol. To-day Brahmins (except so far as they are Westernised) are both vegetarians and teetotallers. So are certain other castes which seek to assimilate themselves to the Brahmins. The Kshatriyas and most of the low castes are meat-eaters. Even among the Brahmins vegetarianism can be variously interpreted: a Bengali Brahmin eats fish, whereas an orthodox South Indian Brahmin abstains even from eggs. Buddha, living in a meat-eating community, allowed his followers to eat meat provided it was not specially killed for them.

What this diversity amounts to is that in a physical matter such as the food eaten different trends of spiritual influence require different modes of adaptation.

For practical purposes the important question is whether there is any regimen which is suitable for aspirants in general in the conditions of the world to-day, and if so what. Because rules governing action are not static and for all time. Changing conditions of life require new adaptations, as may be seen, for instance, in the gradual adoption of vegetarianism in Hinduism. To some extent different religions still carry their separate obligations, but there are various indications that for aspirants in general, and certainly for those who are not following the strict orthodoxy of any religion, vegetarianism is indicated. One quite often meets aspirants who find spontaneously that their path brings them to a point where they feel an inner aversion to meat or even a physical inability to take it. It so happens that I have just to-day, while writing this, received a letter mentioning such a case: "He himself had stopped eating animal food because his body suddenly refused to accept it and he at first could not understand and rebelled somewhat until it gradually dawned on him that this might be a sign of spiritual development."

It is also noticeable that most Hindu ashrams, while indifferent to orthodoxy in general to an extent that would have been unthinkable in an earlier age, are very particular about vegetarianism. Outstanding examples of this are Sri Ramanasramam and Anandashram, the ashram of the late Swami Ramdas. Special food is provided for Western visitors, but even this is vegetarian.

But above all, the Maharshi. In general he refused to give instructions for physical discipline. When asked about postures for sitting in meditation he replied simply: "One-pointedness of mind is the only good posture." When asked about celibacy he would not enjoin it but said that married persons also can attain Realization. But when asked about diet he quite emphatically prescribed vegetarianism: "Regulation of diet, restricting it to *sattvic* (i.e. pure and vegetarian) food taken in moderate quantities is the best of all rules of conduct and the most conducive to the development of *sattvic* qualities of mind. These in turn help one in the practice of Self-enquiry."<sup>1</sup> The passage quoted continues with a Western lady pleading that a concession should be made for Westerners and with Bhagavan refusing to do so. It should be added that in '*sattvic food*' he included milk, though an animal product, but not eggs, which are considered too stimulating or *rajasic*.

It was characteristic of Bhagavan that he would never enjoin vegetarianism on any devotee unless asked, but if asked he was quite categorical about it. It often happened in his lifetime, as it still does to-day, that even without asking his devotees would develop that aversion to animal food which I have mentioned as a general feature in the aspirant in modern times.

In conclusion, it can be said quite definitely that vegetarianism is beneficial to those who follow a spiritual path in the conditions of the modern world, and especially to those who aspire to follow the path of the Maharshi.

<sup>1</sup> *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 157 of the Rider & Co. edition, and p. 200 of the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

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*Neither those who seek Identity nor those who seek duality know the Immutable Essence which is free from both.*

— AVADHUTA GITA, 1, 35

*For him who has himself become God all people are God.*

— TUKARAM.

## TAPAS AND SANNYAS <sup>1</sup>

By SATYA MAYI

Apart from being an outstanding writer on spiritual topics, the author of this article is also the German translator of the *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi* and *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

I have neither father nor mother, neither caste nor family, neither birth nor death; how, then, can I speak of attachment or non-attachment? I am by nature Eternal Freedom beyond all ills.—*Avadhuta Gita*, IV, 21.

*Tapas* is usually translated as 'austerity' or 'penance'; *sannyas* is that form of *tapas* which consists in renouncing one's home and property and going forth as a wandering mendicant, as Christ bade the rich young man and as Buddha bade his son Rahula. Materialistic young India has turned hostile to such *tapas* but many are still drawn to it.

What did the Maharshi say about it? On one occasion he said: "Take the flower of your heart and lay it at the Feet of the Lord and live at peace." But does this surrender of the heart imply physical renunciation or not? Usually his replies were more definite, making it clear that it does not.

"Why do you think that you are a householder? The similar thought that you are a *sannyasi* will haunt you even if you go forth as one. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to live in the forest your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world and makes you think of being a householder. If you renounce it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of the family and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the

forest, why not in the home? So why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever be the environment."<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes also he has been known to reply: "If it were better for you to renounce the question would not arise."

Let us consider the aim of *tapas* before going any further into the question. Its aim is to get rid of the individual I-sense in order to realize the universal Self. This I-sense is deeply rooted in the conditions of our everyday life. One has to work to support oneself and one's family. The nature of the work is usually due more to circumstances and opportunity than to one's own choice. The ego comes in only when the work is done with attachment or aversion; it is these that feed it, not the work itself. The work is neutral. That is why the *Gita* tells us to work without considering the rewards to be obtained and why Bhagavan told us to work impersonally, asking ourselves who it is that does the work. Desire and aversion are the two sides of the same medal, that is of the individual will, desire the positive side and aversion the negative. If we could only get rid of these two the ego-sense would not last long.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 78 of the Rider & Co. edition, p. 94 of the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

<sup>3</sup> Getting rid of desire and aversion means acquiring the quality of *vairagya* on which Hindu teaching lays such stress. See also the explanation by Father Lazarus, in his article published in our last issue, of the importance attached by the Greek Orthodox Church to the quality of *apatheia*, which is fundamentally the same.—(Editor.)

<sup>1</sup> The correct transliteration would be '*tapasya*' and '*samnyasa*', but since this is a practical, not an academic journal, we prefer to use the forms of current speech.—(Editor)

What we have to grasp is that everybody is situated by his own karma in that environment which is most propitious for his own spiritual development — whether pleasant or not doesn't matter. Bhagavan said that our circumstances are not an accident; they are what our nature requires, aversion to our environment simply shows that we have not surrendered; and surrender is the one essential means of destroying the ego, whether we regard it as surrender to God or the Self or Guru or simply to the quest for Enlightenment.

The story of the Enlightenment of the Buddha Sakyamuni under the Bodhi-tree is that after seven years of terrific tapas which brought him to the very limits of endurance he suddenly stopped it and accepted a bowl of rice and milk from a young girl. He then took a bath, made himself a seat of grass and sat down in the shade of the Bodhi-tree. Then it is said that he screwed his will to the highest pitch of concentration, vowing that he would not rise again till he had attained Enlightenment.

There is another interpretation, however, which appeals to me more. After all, had he not sought Enlightenment all through these seven terrible years of fasting and mortification, and was not that a constant exercise of will-power? Will-power itself is an assertion of the ego, even the will to attain Enlightenment. The Buddha realized, he declared later, that his terrific tapas had been a mistake; and this must mean that his will or desire for Enlightenment had been powered by the ego. I believe that he attained Enlightenment at the very moment that he gave up craving for it, since this craving was his last wish and therefore the sole remaining obstacle on his path. By this final act of renunciation he acted according to the first injunction of Bhagavan that I quoted: "Take the flower of your heart and lay it at the Feet of the Lord and live in peace."

This is a very subtle and dangerous line of doctrine, where the division between truth and error is as fine as a razor's edge. Rightly understood, it means that one must totally renounce the idea of getting, even getting Enlightenment, and substitute for it the idea

of giving, even giving up the self who desires Enlightenment. Perhaps even more appropriate is the word 'accepting', accepting what is. And then there is no one to achieve; there just IS; and that is Enlightenment. But it is fatally easy to misunderstand it as accepting separate individual being as one's natural state and giving up the attempt to surrender it.

The five disciples who had been following Gautama before his Enlightenment must have thought that he had fallen into this error, because, seeing him begin to take normal food, they considered him a quitter and turned and left him.

It was perhaps to guard against this error that the Maharshi sometimes stressed the negative side of the quest, saying: "All that you have to do is to disrealize unreality and Reality remains."

Now let us turn to Bhagavan's cryptic saying: "If it were better for you to renounce you would not ask." There are people whose karma leads naturally to sannyas in this lifetime. Bhagavan himself was one such. In that case circumstances adapt themselves; the person falls away from social life like a ripe fruit from a tree. The question in fact does not arise; it just happens so. Bhagavan once expressed this by saying: "Sannyas comes of its own accord." This implies that a person's worldly karma stops when the time for sannyas has come. It may be, however, that in the conditions of the modern world even this final renunciation takes an inner form as a change of attitude towards unchanged outer conditions.

There is no doubt that sannyas in its traditional form, that is taking the ochre robe and adhering to certain vows, brings experiences peculiar to itself. That does not mean, however, that such experiences are necessary for every one who takes a spiritual path. Life does not flow to a set pattern but consists of countless individual dreams all awakening eventually into the One Consciousness. One of the ways will always be that of sannyas.

The Hindu sannyasi, the Muslim fakir, the Buddhist bhikkhu, the Christian monk, all have the same attitude to the world, all alike

renouncing worldly values. Also, all alike are regarded in the same way by society, revered by some, condemned by others.

It is fashionable nowadays to regard tapas as an unhealthy deviation from normal life and the ascetic as a psychological aberration and a parasite on productive society. A parasite is one who is supported by society without performing any corresponding services; and what service, it is asked, does the sannyasi perform? But the same question could be asked of many scientists. Millions are spent on scientific research which brings no practical benefits. And what about academic philosophers? They receive not merely maintenance from society but comfortable salaries; and are their theses and discussions of any more use to society than the tapas of a sannyasi? Far less, because they are merely mental, whereas from the latter a spiritual influence emanates. On this point Bhagavan often and quite firmly reassured those who doubted. For instance: "Realization of the Self is the best possible help that can be rendered to humanity. Therefore saints are said to be helpful even though they remain in the forests."<sup>4</sup>

Eastern peoples have always appreciated this, but now China has been captured by a materialist ideology, and even in India many have succumbed to the modern Western attitude and would like to do away with sadhus and sannyasis, driving them all into factories. The sannyasi is one who has given up the life of a householder for a much harder way in his quest of Realization. Is that only to benefit himself? He may think so, and indeed it can give a dangerous foothold to egoism to think of helping others spiritually before one has attained the goal oneself; but indirectly and invisibly his progress helps others, as the Maharshi assured us. And the renunciators are following the great Masters

—Jesus or Mohammad, Buddha or Sri Krishna — whose tapas has in fact poured out blessings on countless others.

By his very existence the sannyasi keeps people in mind of the great Masters. His voluntary poverty is a silent protest against man's slavery to possessions and craving for property. His inactivity is a rejection of the constant restlessness which rushes men from work to pleasure and back again to work ceaselessly, till they no longer experience peace of mind, that creative peace in the spiritual depths of the heart. He confronts the noisy creeds of 'having' and 'doing' with the eternal silent gospel of 'being'. His voluntary homelessness preaches silently the gospel of the spiritual home not to be found through attachment to any worldly abode. Thus, even apart from the influence which may radiate from him, his service to society consists in reminding it by his mere existence of the power and grace of another, greatly Reality.

The modern ideal is rather dedication of oneself to the physical well-being of others through social service. Can both ideals be right? The answer is that man's own nature, which is the fruit of his karma, drives him in one direction or the other, though he may think that it is he who decides. Both can be useful to those who follow them sincerely; both also can indirectly help others.

People cling to the ideas of what they call a 'normal life' on as high a level of material well-being as possible; but no such pattern has enduring reality. It is a dream sooner or later to be broken up by events. But in spite of events people do not learn.

The sannyasi points to the unreality of such goals by the mere fact of his seemingly abnormal life. There is a meaning and a reminder in his silent presence in the thick of modern civilization. He is indeed a sign of continued spiritual life, for the ideal of renunciation cannot flourish in a completely materialistic society, whether it be primitive or mechanised.

<sup>4</sup> *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 92 in the Rider & Co. edition, p. 113 of the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

## THE SECRETS OF ARUNACHALA

By T.K.S.

"That is the holy place! Of all Arunachala is the most sacred. It is the heart of the world. Know it to be the Secret and Sacred Heart Centre of Siva. In that place He always abides as the glorious Aruna Hill."  
—Skanda Purana.

What is the Mountain Path? The mountain is Arunachala, and there are two paths, one to the summit and the other around the base.

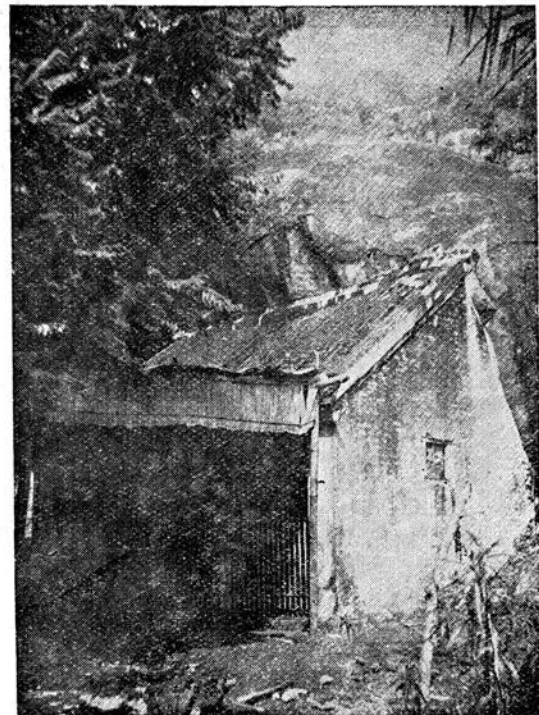
Arunachala shines as Paramatma, the Supreme Self made manifest, the Self of all creatures, not only men but gods and heavenly beings. This same Self was Bhagavan Ramana who declared: "Annāmalai<sup>1</sup> is my Self". This implies that he, being the Self, is not any of the three bodies, gross, subtle or causal, pertaining to the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, but is the Self-aware Witness of all three. In that supreme state he is the screen on which the cinema show of name and form is projected; he is also the light by which it is revealed and the person who sees it. He is Arunachala, the Self of all. We have seen Him here on earth as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great Path-Maker.

In the days when he lived in a cave on the hill we used to climb only to where he was — Virupaksha Cave or the Mango-Grove or Skandashram, whichever it was — for he was both the path and the goal, and there was no other happiness comparable to being with him and absorbing the radiance of grace that flowed forth from him.

On the path to the summit, starting from the northern *gopuram* or tower of the great temple or from a small village opposite the hospital at the south-east of the hill, the first landmark is Guhai Namasivaya Cave, the abode of the famous Guru who had an even more famous disciple also called Namasivaya. This disciple he sent to Chidambaram to found his own centre. There the

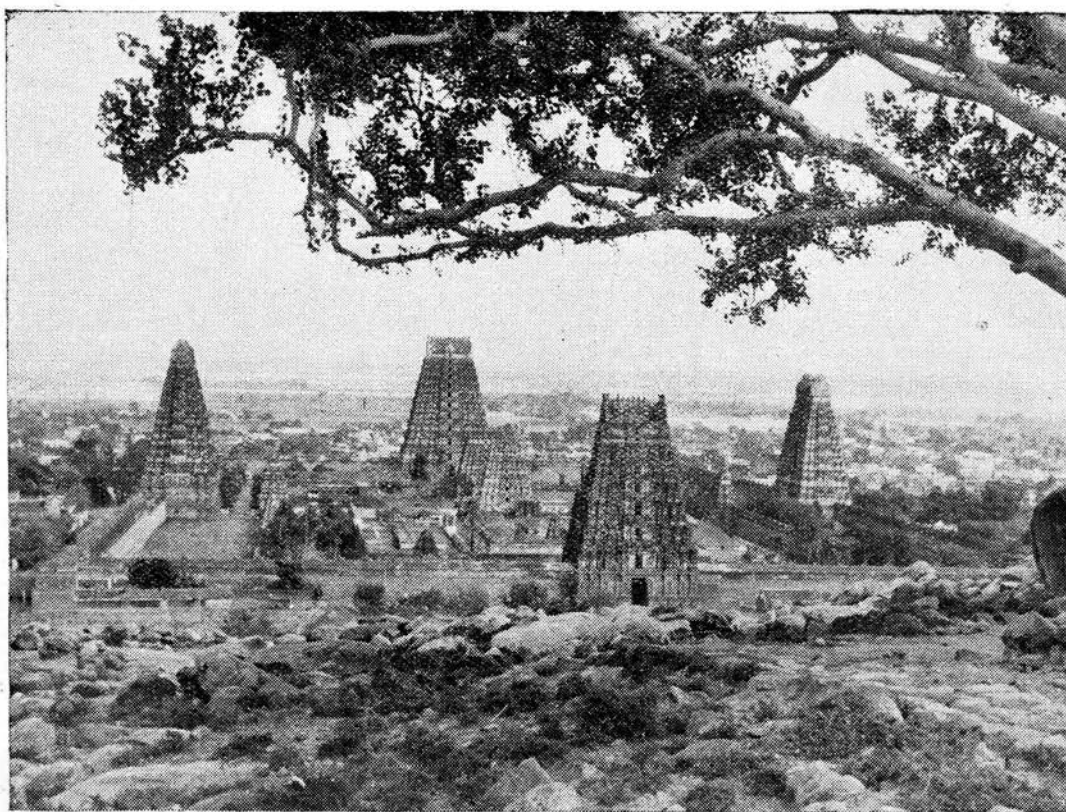
disciple became known as Guru Namasivaya, while his Guru was called Guhai Namasivaya.

Proceeding further, we come to Virupaksha Cave, which was already famous before Sri Ramana sanctified it by his abode. It is named after the great Master Virupaksha who lived there and who is said, on death, to have converted his body into a Vibhuti Lingam, a lingam of sacred ashes. There is a small shrine to him there. The cave is said to be in the form of OM, and it is said that, sitting silent in it, one hears the sound of OM.



Virupaksha Cave

<sup>1</sup> Annāmalai is a name of Arunachala; it means literally 'Supreme Mountain'.



*The great temple in Tiruvannamalai seen from Arunachala Hill*

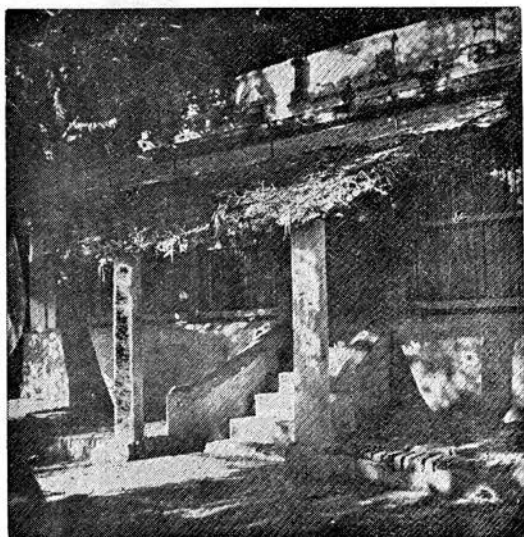
Just above Virupaksha Cave is Skan-ashram, a more spacious cave where Bhagavan moved after leaving Virupaksha. It was here that an ashram first grew up around him, with food being cooked and his mother presiding. The cave was built out to enlarge it, a spring was released which since then has proved a perennial supply of water, even a few trees were planted. The Ashram now maintains Skandashram and keeps a caretaker there, and it is one of the places that devotees must visit.

Higher up, the path curves round to the east slope and, directly below the main peak are the Seven Springs in small crevices of a huge rock with their perennial storage of cool water even in the hottest weather. Just above them is a mound of boulders at the entrance to a deep cool cave. Bhagavan often sat there with his devotees. Saints and rishis have lived there in the past.

From here up to the main peak is a steep climb and indeed may take as long as the whole climb from Virupaksha to the Seven Springs. At last we reach the summit, where is a large flat stone with enormous rock-cut feet on it. It is here that the huge cauldron is placed every year at the festival of Kartikai (about which I will write in a later article) when a beacon of ghee (clarified butter) brought by devotees is lit, visible far around. What is the significance of the feet? Obviously they are the feet of Arunachala. You go to the top and you find there the feet: because in Arunachala, the Supreme, there is neither top nor bottom, there are no parts, there is just wholeness. Also because what is highest in principle is lowest in manifestation; the first is last and the last first.

On the northern slope, far from the path, is the place where Arunagiriswara, the great

Siddhapurusha, the Spirit of Arunachala, abides under an enormous banyan tree. And it should be mentioned that it is this sage, "God in the form of Arunachala", who is worshipped in the great temple in Tiruvannamalai. There is an ancient legend that



Skandashram

any one who can find his way to this eternal Sage or Spirit in his almost inaccessible abode will receive Realization. Only Sri Ramana succeeded in doing so, and he already had Realization. Can one see in it a symbol of the direct path of Self-enquiry, which had been withdrawn from use in our spiritually dark age, and which Bhagavan Sri Ramana brought down from its inaccessible retreat to his Ashram at the foot of the Hill, making it accessible to all, so that none now need to seek the ancient Siddhapurusha?

Bhagavan used to say that there were many paths to the peak. Indeed, he would scramble up to it from Skandashram, often following no path at all, and be down again in less than an hour's time. He used to speak also of caves in the hill and of Siddhas or Sages with supernatural powers who live there. There are legends of cities and gardens within the hill and of great souls sitting in perpetual tapas seeking to attain the Conscious Identity with Lord Aruna-

chala which is Bhagavan's natural and permanent state. When some one asked him once whether all that does not exist only in the mind, he waved his hand round to indicate the physical, phenomenal world of everyday existence and said: "So does this."

Strangely enough, more emphasis is laid on the path around the hill. Bhagavan always took an interest and looked pleased when devotees took this path, making *pradakshina*, as it is called. He would often ask what time they started, how long it took, at what places they rested by the way. Recently Major Taneja, a devotee from the Punjab who came here first in Bhagavan's lifetime, had been making *pradakshina* night after night and intended next day to climb to the peak, but that night he dreamed that he was standing facing the hill and a voice came forth from it saying: "Why should you go to the top? My fire is at the base."

The eight-mile walk around the hill, going from east to west, that is to say keeping the hill always on one's right, is a pilgrimage and is supposed to be made barefoot and at a slow pace, in a state of remembrance or meditation. It is said that whatever one wishes or prays for during the *pradakshina* is fulfilled, but it is also said that it is better not to wish, for this is a path to the desirelessness of the Self, and every wish or prayer, however noble it may seem to one, is an affirmation of the limited pseudo-self who wishes and thereby an obstacle to the realization of the desireless Self.

*Pradakshina* is often made at night, especially when the moon is full or nearly full, because, for a large part of the year, it is uncomfortably hot to go round by day. Most devotees start from the Ashram, nowadays, silently seeking Bhagavan's grace before starting. According to the old Brahmin tradition, however, a Brahmin would start out after bathing in the Indra Tirtha or tank on the eastern side of the town. From there he would proceed to the gates of the great temple, prostrate there, and walk slowly on, meditating on the Lord Arunachala. Starting from the Ashram also, one is expected

to pass through the temple, from one great gate to another, but on the way back.

The eight directions of space on the way round are marked by a monolithic stylised sacred bull, a tank and a Siva Lingam. Sri Ramanashram is at the southernmost point beside the *mantapam* or diminutive chapel of Dakshinamurthi. In Hindu mythology Dakshinamurthi (and one interpretation of the name is 'The Southward Facing') is Siva manifested as a youth surrounded by elderly disciples and teaching them in silence. The Guru is the North Pole and therefore traditionally faces south. Bhagavan was often equated with Dakshinamurthi.

Due west is the sacred tank and lingam of Unnamulai, that is to say of Uma, the Consort of Siva, who came down on earth to make tapas on Arunachala. The tapas was guided by the Rishi Gautama<sup>1</sup> whose Ashram is just beside her tank. The myth is that Uma once in sport put her hands over the eyes of Siva, thus closing them, and this plunged the whole universe into unseasonable *pralaya* or dissolution, since all exists only in His sight. In penance for this she had to descend and undergo austerities on Arunachala before again being taken back as an integral part of Siva. These old myths are not always easy to interpret. According to Hindu teaching, a phase of manifestation of the universe is succeeded by a phase of dissolution when all is gathered back into undifferentiated uniformity. Uma, the Consort of Siva (knows also by other names such as Durga, Parvati or Kali according to the role she has to play) signifies the Divine Energy or Word. It is this which creates, but also, since all creation contains within itself the seed of destruction, all growth of decay, all birth of death, it is she also who destroys and brings on the *pralaya*. During the *pralaya* the Divine Energy is no longer manifest, no longer the Consort of Siva, but undergoing purification for a new cycle of manifestation.

After completing her tapas, it is said that Uma went round Arunachala on the full moon night of the month of Kartikai and was re-assumed by Siva; and it is in com-



A stylised lion on the road round Arunachala

memoration of this that the beacon is now lit on the mountain peak every year at this date.

In the course of her tapas, Uma had to fight and slay the demon Mahishasura, who attacked her. This she did in her aspect of Durga. This fight with the force of evil is commemorated by Khadga tank and Papanasa Lingam beside it, that is by the 'lingam that destroys sins'. A figure of Mother Durga standing in victory over the head of the vanquished Mahishasura is to be seen in her temple next to Pavalakunru. This place is very popular among those who have boons to be granted. At this Pavalakunru also Bhagavan resided for a while as a young man, and there is a Sri Chakra in the Durga temple which he held in his hands during a consecration in the temple.

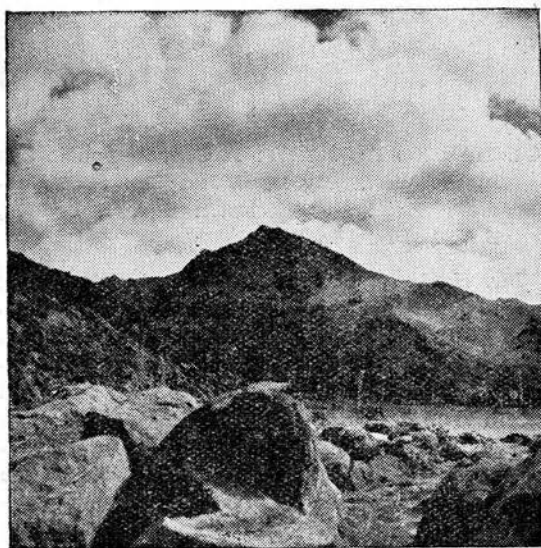
Farther round the hill than Gautamashram and the tank of Mother Uma is the ancient village of Adiannāmalai. Here is a

<sup>1</sup> Not the same as the Buddha Gautama.

beautiful and sacred old temple. People walking round the hill often go and worship there. Here is the temple of Sri Manickavachakar, author of the *Tiruvachakam*, one of the most ecstatic of the Tamil poet-saints.

Coming round to the east side of the hill, we come to the temple and shrine of a much more modern Swami, that is Isana Desika Swami who lived about the 18th Century. He was a saint of great power who is said to have had *ashtama siddhis* waiting to do his bidding. He is said to be very benevolent and to bestow his grace not only on Hindus but on Muslims and Westerners also who pray at his shrine.

The path round Arunachala is very sacred. As one sees the many varied aspects of the hill on going round, one finds that the hill itself is a Sri Chakra, a Sacred Wheel. There is scarcely a day or a night without some one going round. Some devotees go on a fixed day every week, some every full moon day, some for a regular cycle of forty consecutive days, some indeed every day. Of course, there are particularly auspicious occasions for the *pradakshina*, the most outstanding of these being Sivaratri, the Night of Siva, and Kartikai, the night when the beacon is lighted on top of the hill. Holy in itself; the path is made more holy still by all the great saints and Rishis who have trodden it, even by Mother Uma herself, and in recent times by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi who, as long as health and vigour lasted, often went around, sometimes alone, sometimes with a whole body of devotees.



A view of Arunachala

It is said that the pilgrim is accompanied by an invisible host of *devas* and Rishis.

This outwardly; inwardly the Mountain Path is the path laid down for us by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the path of Self-enquiry, the path leading to the experience 'I am the Atma; I am not the perishable body'. How is this experience to be come by? By the Grace of the Guru. So the Guru is both the way and the Goal. Arunachala is open to all on whom its Grace has descended and is the same as Ramanachala. May Sri Ramana Arunachala cut the knot of our primal ignorance and lead us by his path to our final Goal.

## BHAGAVAN IN THE HEART

(From a record kept by Ethel Merston)

I was torn as to whether to return to Europe to see my friends and relatives after nine years of absence or whether to stay on with Bhagavan ... I could not make up my mind. In the end I put the question verbally to Bhagavan himself. I sought him out on the hill during his morning walk and he

replied in English that destiny decides where the body shall go; I couldn't. But my real nature always stays everywhere with me wherever I am. "So be in it. Wherever you are, remember, Bhagavan is there in your heart watching over you."

## Book Reviews<sup>1</sup>

ON HAVING NO HEAD: A Contribution to Zen in the West. By D. E. Harding. (The Buddhist Society, 58 Eccleston Square, London, S.W. 1, Price 4s. 6d.)

Mr. Harding's little book begins by describing an undoubtedly genuine experience of Realization. The author then proceeds to discuss this in the epigrammatical and paradoxical vein beloved of Western followers of Zen. What is of practical importance is his statement of what, having had this experience, he considers it necessary to do in order to approach nearer to the state of mind which culminates in it and to secure its repetition and eventual stabilisation. The findings of one who has proceeded far along the path and been granted a large measure of success must always interest those who come after, even though, as in the present case, he has the wisdom and humility to see that his way may not be that of others.

In the first place, he warns that hard work and persistent effort will probably be necessary: "for myself and most others it is necessary to set off prepared for a very long and hard journey, as if only the most strenuous efforts could see us Home." Note the 'as if'. We may be already that, as the Maharshi sometimes reminded us, but since we do not realize this we have to strive as if there were a long and arduous journey to be made. He speaks of the importance of effortlessness but (and here again he might be quoting the Maharshi) reminds us that effort is needed to retain it: "if effort is needed, it is rather the effort to hold effortlessness." Again he is in line with the Maharshi's teaching in warning against renunciation: "withdrawal from ordinary life is no help: in fact it tends to hinder."

About his actual practice he has this to say: "Anyhow it is only of my own experience that I am qualified to write. I have already mentioned that my long labour of self-investigation involved no meditation as such. And I still find (after having given systematic practice a fair trial) that my best course is to avoid set times and topics and postures of meditation, and indeed any deliberate spiritual discipline. For me it is enough to attend to the Void as it is given, as often and as long as happens to be convenient."

It is not quite clear what he means by 'self-investigation' and by 'meditation'. Certainly self-enquiry as the Maharshi taught it, is not meditation on any topic. In fact he explained that the difference between self-enquiry and meditation is that in meditation there are subject and object, whereas in self-enquiry there is only the subject.

Many people do find it helpful at first, and often for many years or even permanently, to observe regular hours of practice but, with the use of self-enquiry, a spontaneous and fairly continuous undercurrent to outer awareness is likely to arise. Then, as Mr. Hardings says, "It is so natural that from outside it is unobservable and therefore can be enjoyed any time and anywhere." He also adds, "Often it arrives uninvited." This also accords with the Maharshi's teaching that Self-enquiry should be carried on always, not only at fixed times and in set postures. One who finds himself in this state without a preliminary period of regular discipline is fortunate. One who finds the regular discipline helpful, however, should practice it.

It often happened that some one questioning the Maharshi would express the fear that a constant flow of 'remembering' or 'meditation' would render him unfit for practical life, and he always assured them that it was not so. This also Mr. Harding confirms from his own experience: "This does not mean that one is dangerously unconscious of what's going on. Quite the reverse: the chances of getting run over are lessened, because one's thoughts are no longer elsewhere."

Despite its cleverness, this is a book of solid value which many seekers will find helpful.

HOLY MOTHER, Being the Life of Sri Sarada Devi, Wife of Sri Ramakrishna and Helpmate in his Mission. By Swami Nikhilananda. (Allen and Unwin, 32s.)

Several of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna initiated disciples after his death, but his foremost successor, recognized and revered by them all as such, was his wife, Sarada Devi, whom they referred to as the 'Holy Mother'. If she was little known publicly it was because her humility was as great as her power and she preferred to remain inconspicuous. An uneducated Bengali woman occupying herself with ordinary

<sup>1</sup> All unsigned reviews are by the editor.

household tasks, she was at the same time a fount of love and source of power. She had many disciples. On initiating them she gave a mantra which varied according to her intuition of their needs and also bade them meditate on some Divine Form. It is interesting to note that this was not always the form of Ramakrishna, though it often was. She was also a great advocate of work. Apart from the time devoted to meditation, the waking hours were to be filled with useful work. Indeed, she held that idleness was one of the greatest obstacles to mind-control.

Swami Nikhilananda, himself a disciple of hers, writes with understanding and sensitivity. This makes it the more remarkable that he should keep up the childish pretence that no spiritual Master has appeared on earth since Ramakrishna. He even goes out of his way to assert this: "Sri Ramakrishna is recognized by his followers as the Divine Incarnation of modern times, embodying in himself the spiritual experience of past prophets and the truths of all religions... He is the only Incarnation of God who has been photographed." Is it possible that he has never heard of the Maharshi? Or that he has not understood that the Maharshi is Bhagavan?

**HONEST TO GOD:** By John A. T. Robinson.  
(SCM Paperback, 5s.)

There is a core of truth in Bishop Robinson's much discussed book 'Honest to God'. That is that God is not a being somewhere in the universe or outside it, the question of whose existence can be disputed, but ultimate reality, being itself, what Tillich calls 'the ground of our being'. What he fails to see, however, is that man also is not a being whose immortality can be disputed but being itself temporarily limited by form but returning ineluctably to its Source. "All religious postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God, but it is only the one Reality that manifests Itself as these three." (*Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 2)2

He also imparts a false simplicity into his argument by failing to see that insofar as a man regards his own individual being as a reality, just so far a personal God is also a reality for him. This makes the book not only shallow but positively harmful. There are many (corresponding with all who follow the path of *bhakti* in other religions) who, without being able to conceive of the Oneness of Being, still approach it

by striving to submit their individual being to the Being of God from Whom (so far as beings exist) it springs and to Whom it returns. It is people such as this who need religious guidance, and for them this book will seem to be in the Liberal Protestant tradition of scuttling the ship for fear of storms, appeasing the enemy by surrendering even more than he demands.

In speaking of Christ, the author does come near to understanding the true nature of man when he says that God could act through Christ only because Christ made himself "utterly transparent to him" by eliminating all self-will and being "nothing in himself". He immediately negates this intuition, however, by asserting with the smug assurance of the Christian monopolist that this has only happened in the case of Christ. How does he know? One is reminded of Sariputra's enthusiastic outburst that Gautama Buddha was the greatest Master the world had ever seen or ever would see, and Gautama's gently sarcastic reply: "I take it that you have known all the Masters the world has ever seen or ever will see?" Such a claim of unicity is particularly out of place in a book like this which is attempting to replace what the author calls the 'mythology' of divine beings and events by the universality of intellectual principles.

**MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN:** By G. Gurdjieff. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30s.)  
Gurdjieff's 'Meetings with Remarkable Men',

now re-issued in a revised translation, is in fact a rambling but well written autobiography. It builds up the picture of a resourceful and versatile man completely without scruples in his ways of obtaining money and always prepared to hoodwink people and pass under false pretences, as for instance, when he masquerades as a Muslim Syed.

What is most important in view of the controversies that have grown up around him is that the book shows no sign at all of spiritual understanding. He speaks constantly of his interest in the occult and his search for forgotten secrets in ancient manuscripts and hidden centres, but there is nothing spiritual in all that. Truth is hidden only by men's obtuseness and is to be found not in old documents but in the heart. Typical is his saying that he penetrated to Mecca and Medina, masquerading as a Muslim, in his search for the essence of Islam and then learnt that it is preserved not there but in Bukhara. For one who can understand, it exists, independent of time and place, in the *shahada*: 'There is no god but God.'

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

He may have acquired psychic or hypnotic powers in the hidden centres he claims to have visited—and indeed, the extraordinary influence he later exerted makes it seem probable that he did—but there is nothing spiritual in that. The Maharshi said: "Truth is simple but people don't want Truth, they want mystery." For those who want mystery Gurdjieff's book may prove tantalising with its constant hinting at secret knowledge which, however, he is careful never to divulge. For those who seek Truth there is nothing in it.

**THE ONE WORK: A Journey towards the Self.**  
By Anne Gage. (Vincent Stuart, 21s.)

Miss Gage had a youthful experience which, although not a pre-glimpse of Realization, was at any rate powerful enough to create in her the urge to be numbered among those who seek and who expound. She travelled to India, where she admired the Ajanta paintings; on to Siam, where she told a Buddhist priest that she wanted to hear the ultimate Truth, but quick because she had not much time; to Angkor, Bali, Japan. She is at her best in the intermediate world of traditional art and symbols, about which she really does write with feeling and understanding. Unfortunately, however, she aspires to make her visit to the sacred mountain Arunachala the climax of her book. There were people who could have explained the direct, simple teaching of the Maharshi to her if, as is evident, she had not understood it from reading; but instead she contacted some mysterious or fictional swami on the hill at twilight, in whose name she gives us a lecture on the difference between the individuality and the personality, reminiscent of Western Hermetism but poles apart from the Maharshi's teaching of the One Self.

**THE SEARCH OF A YOGI: Himalayan Pilgrimage.** By Dom Denys Rutledge. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30s.)

Father Rutledge believes that there is no such thing as a Jivan Mukta or a miracle-working yogi. He does not seem to know the difference between the two. At any rate he uses the terms indiscriminately. He tells us that he had a few weeks time to fill in before taking his ship back to England, so, despite his disbelief in their existence, he travelled down the Ganges from Almora to Rishikesh looking for samples. He returned triumphantly unsuccessful. As well might one make a tour of the churches of Rome and end up with the triumphant conclusion: "I saw no miracles worked; therefore there is no such thing as a Catholic saint."

All this is rather ridiculous than sinister; what makes the book really pernicious is the author's avowed belief that Hinduism is satanic. It is a great pity that in an age when the forces of unbelief are so powerful one who has belief should display such fanatical ignorance and malice towards other forms of belief.

**HUNTING THE GURU IN INDIA:** By Anne-Marshall (Gollancz, Pp. 205, Price 25s.)

Christ declared that he who seeks will find; but seeking implies an attitude of humility and this is just what Miss Marshall lacks. She has not the deliberate hostility and determination not to find that Fr. Rutledge has; rather she interviews her gurus from a pedestal of superior cleverness, with a snigger seldom far removed. Typical is the comment on Swami Purushottamananda, a venerable recluse living in a cave in the Himalayas near Rishikesh. In reply to her request for a message he tells her: "Know yourself and be free." She comments: "Probably he felt he had to say something." The implication is that the message was inane; actually it is the comment that is inane.

The nearest she came to a spirit of reverence was at Tiruvannamalai, "...in view of my disappointment at Pondicherry, I very nearly left the Ramanashram of the Maharshi out of my itinerary. It would have been a pity if I had done so. After an all night train journey, I arrived at Tiruvannamalai just as the sun was clearing the horizon. The stars were fading out of the sky and the *gopurams* of the temple were silhouetted against the perfect cone of Arunachala Hill. It rose three thousand feet out of flat terrain and being so close it completely dominated the scene. The summit was at that moment hidden in a cloud which deepened to a crimson coronet as it caught the first rays of sunlight. Ten minutes later the display was over and the heat of the day began. I had seen the Taj Mahal by moonlight and the vast expanse of the snow-clad Himalayas stretching for a hundred miles, but in all India I never saw anything to equal this first glimpse of the holy hill, rose-crowned by the glory of the morning light. It so dominated my mental horizon that I felt unequal to the task of impartial judgment. To many Arunachala is just an ordinary and rather uninteresting hill covered with rough grass and shale, but I always see it through the rosy glow of that cloud on the summit. Arunachala Hill is, according to local myth, the symbol of Spirit incarnate in Matter. The Tamils declare that it is the oldest hill in the world, the heart of the earth and its centre; Mount Meru in fact."

She was impressed too by the Maharshi. She says of devotees she visited: "Their house is adorned with many pictures of the sage, and I was at once struck with their tremendous range of expression. In the later pictures especially, he wears a look of such unbelievable tenderness that involuntarily I exclaimed, 'What a beautiful face!' Always it was these late photographs that drew me and held my gaze over and over again. If he can impress like this from a mere photograph, how much greater must have been the impact of the living man." Yet even with the Maharshi she felt quite competent to offer her own superficial emendation to his teaching as contained in the *Forty Verses on Reality*.

What makes her attitude the less excusable is that (like Koestler, another supercilious sceptic) she has herself had experience of non-physical, supramental awareness, as she explains at the end of the book.

**THE MEANING OF LIFE:** By S. Subramanya Iyer. (Published by the author from 'Mysore Lodge', Madanapalli, A. P., Re. 1.)

Sri Subramanya Iyer's little book on the meaning of life is composed of terse, sutra-like sentences, stating, not arguing.

The art of living consists in being in tune with nature, in tune with the law of life.

It starts with self-enquiry: 'Who am I? Whither do I come? What is the purpose and meaning of life?'

It is based on self-knowledge, the principles of dharma and the law of karma.

It will be seen that this is not the 'Who am I?' taught by the Maharshi, which is a quest of the 'I' that neither comes nor goes and has no purpose but just *is*. Nevertheless there is much in the author's reflections that readers may find interesting.

It is regrettable, however, that the first two items in the book are vitiated by the illusion so common in India that by cutting language up into lines beginning with capital letters you can make poetry of it.

**ASHRAMS, LES YOGIS ET LES SAGES:** By Arnaud Desjardins. (La Palatine, N.F. 12.60)

Arnaud Desjardins prepared a television round-up of the ashrams and sages of India to-day, and his delightfully written book comes as a further exposition of this. Especially for those who have remained doubtful as to whether there really is a path or any Goal to seek, the sentence repeated almost as a refrain in the early part of

the book: "But supposing it should be true," will strike a note.

The ashrams which he and his wife visited were, in this order, those of Swami Sivananda, Ananda Mayi Ma, Swami Ramdas and the Maharshi; and it should be added that Swami Sivananda and Swami Ramdas were still living at the time.

The first chapter is very skillfully written, bringing in much information about ashrams and swamis, paths and doctrines, so mingled with local colour and descriptions of people and events that it never becomes heavy or tedious. Throughout the chapter he adroitly avoids saying whether he is really convinced by the swami.

In the next chapter he is completely captivated by Ananda Mayi Ma, the Bengali woman saint. He mentions the hardship that a Western devotee faces in following her — no fixed abode, as she moves constantly from one ashram to another; no satisfactory provision for Westerners, as her immediate entourage are orthodox Brahmins; dependence on translators, as she speaks no Western language—but he considers it all well worth while for the benefit of her presence.

He and his wife were delighted also by the exuberant happiness and the atmosphere of purity and goodness emanating from Swami Ramdas at Anandashram, and by the strength and serenity that they felt in Mataji Krishna Bai. But there is not the same personal devotion as to Ananda Mayi Ma.

Only the chapter on the Maharshi is disappointing, perhaps because the author was too late to meet the Maharshi personally, perhaps also because he was less drawn to the path of pure Advaita. There are a few mistakes, as when he says that the Maharshi put *bhakti* first, calling it 'the Mother of *Jnana*' (and why does he give this supposed quotation in Hindi, when the Maharshi spoke Tamil?). Actually, the Maharshi did prescribe the path of *bhakti*, but only as a second choice, for those who found *Jnana*, the path of Knowledge, too arduous. The principal fault, however, is one of atmosphere or emphasis: lacking the personal touch that lends such charm to the other chapters, his style becomes ponderous and he gives an impression of the Maharshi as a philosopher sitting on his couch lecturing on predestination. Actually the Maharshi avoided theorising as far as possible, always turning the questioner to practical considerations of *sadhana*; and his expositions, when he did give any, were always lively, often humorous.

It is unfortunate, but perhaps natural, that one who has visited gurus should feel the urge to claim that they are 'the same as the Maharshi'.

Swami Ramdas often used to say: "Ram told Ramdas to say so and so." ('Ram' is a name of God, and 'Ramdas' means 'slave of God'.) Some one once told Bhagavan this and asked him whether it was true. Waving his hand around, he said: "As true as all this." That is to say that it is part of the universal Maya. Ultimately there is neither Ram nor Ramdas; there just IS. And that is Bhagavan.

HOEHLEN, KLOESTER, ASHRAMS. Edited by Ursula von Mangoldt. (Otto Wilhelm Barth-Verlag, Weilheim/Oberbayern, West Germany, price not stated.)

A similar work has been published in Germany, only in this case it covers a wider ground and is a symposium, the different gurus and ashrams being described by different persons.

The editor herself writes on Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Arthur Osborne on the Maharshi, and his Ashram and also on the Ashram of Sai Baba at Shirdi, K. Ramachandra on Swami Ramdas and Ananda Mayi Ma, Gebhard Frei on Swami Sivanda. Apart from this, Savitri Devi, a German lady turned sannyasin, has contributed a chapter on the Ramakrishna Mission, of which she is a great devotee, and one on 'Caves in the Himalayas', which she knows personally. Finally there are two chapters on Japanese Zen, one by Ernst Benz and the other by Takashi Hirata.

#### POET-PHILOSOPHERS OF THE RIG-VEDA:

By Dr. C. Kunhan Raja (Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Ltd., Madras-17. Pp. xxv and 330. Price Rs. 20.)

The late Dr. C. Kunhan Raja was an eminent Sanskrit scholar who chose Vedic literature as his special field of research. In the present book, he gives a lucid account of the philosophies of some of the Rig-Vedic poets, adding whatever information could be gathered about their lives and times. Dirghatmas, Brihaspati, Sunassepa, Yama, Manu and Angiras are the poets discussed in a sequence of six chapters. The reason for selecting these poets is that they were the founders of religion and philosophy, and each of them was a type by himself. For example, Yama was the first to find the Path, and Manu was the first to institute religious rituals. A few of the other teachers are mentioned in chapter seven. In the chapter that follows, the views regarding the formation of the world are analysed and explained. The final chapter entitled *Samvnanana* (Integration) is a commentary on a small poem of four verses, pleading for the continuance of unity

among the people. In the Appendix are given the poems themselves in Roman script and their English rendering.

The Introduction sets forth certain conclusions reached by the learned author regarding the nature of Vedic civilization and poetry. He is convinced that the Vedic poets were not primitive people addressing their prayers to forces of nature personified in fear and dread. Vedic poetry is of a high grade. Vedic civilization was an advanced civilization which had been preceded by a long period of civilized existence. Again, Dr. Raja does not agree with the view that there is an evolution in the hymns from naturalistic polytheism to monotheism and monism. It is wrong, he believes, to regard certain *mandalas* of the Rig-Veda as later compositions on the ground that they contain "evolved" thoughts. He sees in the philosophy of the hymns attempts at integration and harmony.

This book opens up many lines of inquiry into the contents of Vedic lore. This is a publication which those scholars who are interested in Vedic studies cannot afford to ignore.

DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN.

RIGVEDA MANDALA VII: By H. D. Velankar. (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7, Pp. xxxii and 80 and 288, Price Rs. 20.)

This is a critical edition of the Seventh Mandala of the Rigveda with an introduction, English translation and critical notes. The learned editor, Professor Velankar, has to his credit long experience in teaching and research. He has taught the text to several generations of post-graduate students and knows what critical aids they require for understanding it. Although he has planned to publish an annotated translation of the entire Rigveda, he has selected the Seventh Mandala first because it "has figured very prominently" among the prescribed texts for the M.A. Sanskrit course.

The text is printed in Devanagari, and is followed by an annotated translation which is clear and faithful. As appendices are given a select glossary of Sanskrit terms, a general index, an index of deities, and an index of metres. In the scholarly introduction, the editor discusses the contents of the Mandala under certain topics. In the section on 'Vedic Word Deva and Idolatry', Professor Velankar lists what he calls the contrasts between the loyalties of the Vedic Aryans and their rivals, the non-Aryans. But there is room for doubt as to whether the terms 'Aryan' and 'non-Aryan' bear a racial significance.

DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN.

## SANKARA'S TEACHINGS IN HIS OWN WORDS:

By Swami Atmananda.

## RAMANUJA'S TEACHINGS IN HIS OWN WORDS:

By M. Yamunacharya.

## MADHVA'S TEACHINGS IN HIS OWN WORDS:

By B. N. K. Sharma.

(All three published by Bhavan's Book University, Chaupathy, Bombay-7, Rs. 2.50 each.)

The Hindu Religion has been described as the *sanatana dharma*, the eternal Law of life, because it has known no death, no irresistible decay. The truth of the Spirit that has actuated it from its dateless beginnings renews itself constantly in new and newer forms but always preserves its innate character. It has been a fundamental Truth of the Hindu religion that the Divine is indeed One but it has several aspects or statuses in manifestation and the human soul can approach and realise the Divine in any of them. All are facts of spiritual and intimate experience; all are equally true. The three treatises before us are a worthy testimony to this spirit of the Indian tradition.

Spearheading the movement of revival of the ancient Hindu religion after a long period of stagnation, Acharya Sankara (8th century A.D.) reaffirmed the Vedantic Truth of the One Brahman without a second. The Reality is One, the Transcendent, the Absolute. The universe is only relatively true, a play of Maya on the Being of Brahman. The existence of man also has the same character. In his core, man is none other than Brahman. But he is involved in this play of Maya. His ultimate destiny is to realise this true nature of his being. The process thereto is one of mental understanding, preparation and inner purification for translating the knowledge so gained into terms of living, and finally one-pointed absorption in the yoga-sadhana to achieve liberation and union with the Divine.

Swami Atmananda gives a well phased exposition of Sankara's teachings on the subject, quoting from the original writings of the Acharya in profusion. The Shruti, Karma, Upasana, Jnana, are some of the headings of the sections in the book.

Some three centuries later rose another Acharya, also a figure of towering spiritual attainments, who gave expression to another possible realisation of the Divine. Brahman is One, he agreed, but it is qualified by two attributes: matter and souls, the world and individual beings (*jivas*). Both the *jiva* and the world are creations of the Divine who is conceived as the Lord, Vasudeva, and are dependent on Him. The Lord is eter-

nally at play with his creations and it is the goal of man to divest himself of the folds of ignorance in which he is clothed and emerge into the august proximity of the Lord and participate in the Divine game or *Lila* consciously. There is a strong element of theism in this philosophy and Prof. Yamunacharya is lucid in his exposition, with apposite quotations, of the path of surrender that man is called upon to tread and of the importance of Grace in the deliverance of the human soul.

Madhavacharya (13th century), basing his philosophy on his own spiritual realisation, propounded the Doctrine of Dualism. There are, he said, three real entities: God, Soul and the Universe, the latter two being dependent on God. There can only be one relation between man and God, that of servant and Master. There can be no identity between either God and man or God and world. Dr. Sharma is to be congratulated on the classic quality of his work in which he not only gives the fundamentals of the Dvaita philosophy, but points out the special contribution made by the Acharya to the national heritage by his commentaries on portions of the Veda, the Upanishads, the epics etc.

All the three books are weighty. As Sri Diwakar observes in his Foreword to the second book, "the emphasis which all the three Acharyas have given to Bhakti, the prominence which they gave to daily discipline and the principle of dedication of every act to God have enriched truly religious life and made it easier for the common man to tread the Path of God."

M. P. PANDIT.

BHAGAVAD GITA: By C. Rajagopalachari. (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7. Price Rs. 2.50).

The Gita represents a great effort at synthesis of the many lines of philosophy and practice of inner life that came to be developed by the Aryan genius in India. It serves as a link between the Vedic and Upanishadic past and the subsequent ages of the Darshanas. That is how it occupies a unique position in the scriptures of Hinduism and has been commented upon by practically all the leading Acharyas of the land.

The present book is intended to serve as a handbook for beginners who do not know much about this text. It gives a rapid idea of the contents e.g. Soul, Karma, Nature, Meditation, Austerities, Karma-Yoga etc. Select verses are given under each head with translations and helpful notes. The compilation amply fulfills the intention of the

author: it awakens the interest of the reader in the original and also induces a faith in the higher life possible for man.

M. P. PANDIT.

IMMORTAL WORDS, An Anthology: (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7. Price Rs. 2.50).

Brought out on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Bhavan which has done such splendid work in the propagation of the higher values of Indian tradition, this volume consists of inspiring selections from the writings and utterances of the seers, sages and wise men of all lands, of all ages. They are arranged in twenty-four sections, e.g. Culture, Devotion, Faith, Life, Love, Work etc., and make for very instructive reading. The publication answers to the requirements of a good book as laid down by Louisa M. Alcott (and quoted on page 110): "That is a good book,

it seems to me, which is opened with expectation and closed with profit."

M. P. PANDIT.

THE PSALMS FOR THE COMMON READER.  
By Mary Ellen Chase. (Michael Joseph, 21s)

The Book of Psalms is really five books put together, each one of them probably an anthology, Miss Chase explains. Writing lovingly of them, she describes how the scholars divide them into categories such as hymns, thanksgiving, laments, historical and so on. She also distinguishes between those meant as choral anthems and those that seem to be personal outpourings. Her appreciative exposition extends to the poetry as well as the religion of them.

In a lengthy supplement she gives a brief account of the long and tangled history of Israel so as to show the background from which they arose.

SAGITTARIUS.

## FIGHTING SLEEPINESS

By D

I was powerfully drawn to Bhagavan. His teaching, when I read about it, spoke direct to my heart and I felt that this was the only way for me. When I came to his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai I felt great peace there, not an idle, sleepily peace but vital peace with great beauty. Only one thing distressed me: that whenever I sat in 'meditation' as we call it, enquiring into the Reality of me, as Bhagavan taught, an overpowering wave of sleepiness came upon me. The annoying thing was that if I gave up meditation and started to do something else the sleepiness left me.

I asked one of the older devotees about it and he explained that this was just one of the ego's defences against meditation. What he said was: "Normally when we stop

thinking we go to sleep, but the sort of 'meditation' Bhagavan teaches involves suspending thought while still retaining consciousness. The ego fights against it in two ways—by introducing thoughts even though we decide to stop them or by giving up consciousness along with them, that is to say by going to sleep as soon as they stop. We simply have to persevere and resist both."

I took this advice and after some time the attacks of sleepiness ceased to trouble me and I found that it really was possible to remain awake but undisturbed by thought, if only for a short time. I am writing this now with the idea that it may be of help to other beginners who suffer from the same difficulty that I did.

# Ashram Bulletin

Soon after our last bulletin went to the press we received a visit from the North Indian woman saint Godavari Mata accompanied by a group of her followers. All who came in contact with her felt her kindness and goodwill.

JAYANTI, Bhagavan's birth anniversary, fell on December 31, this year. It is always a festive occasion. There was a large gathering of devotees, old and new, representing not only India but Australia, England, Germany, France, Holland and Switzerland. The same outpouring of Grace was felt as used to be experienced in former years.

It was possible to remove the scaffolding for the occasion and reveal the beautiful new structure of Bhagavan's shrine (samadhi) made by a highly skilled group of hereditary stone-carvers out of stone from Aurnachala. This is a peculiar kind of stone which, when polished, goes jet black and as smooth as marble but when unpolished is light grey in colour, so that it is possible to obtain carving in two colours from the same stone. It will be some years yet before the hall which is to enclose the shrine is completed.

On the same date a Board of Trustees for the management of the Ashram was set up according to a scheme previously drawn up by the Madras Government, consisting of the Ashram President and four trustees. The Board consists of the following persons:

Sri T. N. Venkataraman—President.

Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, Medical Practitioner, Madras.

Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

Sri S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, Banker, Tiruvannamalai.

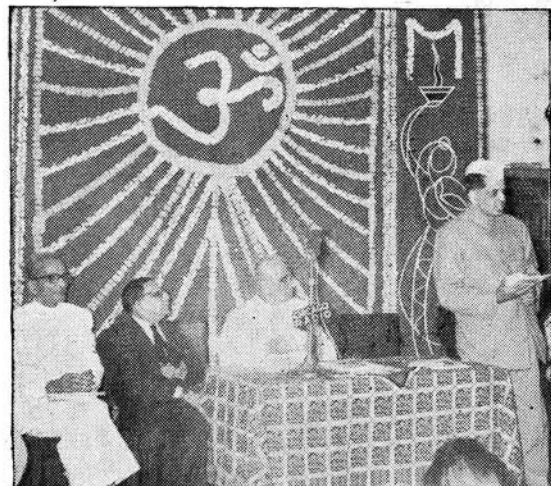
Sri K. Srinivasachariar, Advocate, Tiruvannamalai.

The previous managing committee, which was registered in 1950 under the Societies Registration Act, was dissolved on January 1, 1964. However, Ashram affairs will continue to be run as smoothly and efficiently as before and with no change of direction, especially as all but one of the new Board of Trustees were also members of the previous Committee.

Actually the ordinary devotee or visitor is very little affected by the Ashram management. Facilities are provided for his accommodation and meditation, the premises are kept clean and reasonably quiet, the meals and services are punctual, the library is available for use; and really that is all that concerns him.

The official publication ceremony of 'The Mountain Path' was also held on Jayanti. Three months after the idea first descended upon its originators the copies were here, ready for distribution. That may seem ample time, but actually there was a lot to be done — organization, publicity, financial support, as well as mobilising a team of writers and obtaining the articles. The guest of honour and chief speaker for the occasion was Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Head of the Philosophy Department of Madras University and a known devotee of Bhagavan and exponent of his teaching. Several other old devotees also spoke.

A little later an inaugural ceremony was also held in Bombay in the hall of the Bharatiya



The Publication ceremony of 'The Mountain Path' at Bombay, under the auspices of Sri Ramana Jayanthi Celebration Committee. Sri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, Minister for Civil Supplies and Housing, Maharashtra, is seen with the journal in his hand, announcing its publication. Sri S. K. Patil is in the chair presiding

Vidya Bhavan (Bhavan's Book University), kindly lent for the occasion, by the Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee, Bombay, with Sri Homi Taleyarkhan, Minister for Civil Supplies and Housing, Government of Maharashtra, presiding. Bombay has always been a stronghold of Bhagavan's followers and there was considerable interest and a wide attendance.

The Ashram has usually managed to publish or republish some book on the occasion of Jayanti. This year it republished "Crumbs from his Table" by Ramananda Swarnagiri. This, as mentioned in the book review section of our previous issue, was the first book of reminiscences of Bhagavan ever written but had long been out of print.

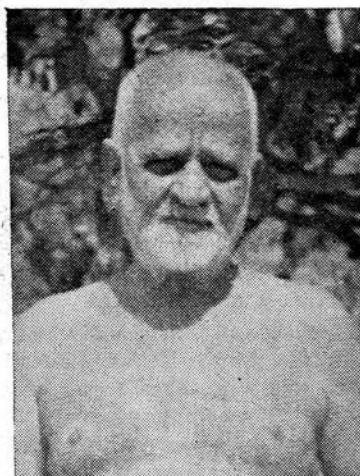
There has been the usual flow of visitors from India and abroad. Outstanding perhaps among those who have come during this period (apart from Godavari Mata, already mentioned) were the concert pianists Jerry Stofsky of New York and Annie Alt of Switzerland. In the midst of a world tour of concerts they found time for ten quiet days at Tiruvannamalai. Annie Alt is an old devotee who had been waiting twenty years for the opportunity of coming here. It was she who made the German translation of 'The Maharshi's Gospel'. Another distinguished visitor was Mr. Robert Linssen, an exponent of Zen Buddhism. He has also written a book on Zen.

#### ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION

The Ashram intends to build accommodation consisting of four single rooms with bathrooms attached outside the Ashram premises adjacent to the guest houses recently built for Smt. Padmanabhan and Sri Khanna. This is for the convenience of lady visitors, since ladies are not allowed to stay in the Ashram premises. It is hoped to complete the work this year.

#### RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA

The Ramana Bhakta Sabha of Alwarpet, Madras, has been absolutely regular in its weekly Sunday meetings ever since its foundation in 1950. Its Jayanti meeting on December 29, 1963, was addressed by Mr. Justice M. Anantanarayanan who, elaborating on his preface to Part I of 'Ramana Anubhuti' quoted examples from 'Muruganar and other Tamil poets to show how poetry stands midway between the ever-fresh wonder of childhood and the still, wordless experience of Infinity-in-an-instant.



Swami Ramananda Saraswathi, compiler of 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi', about whom we wrote in our January issue

#### IN MEMORIAM

It seems appropriate to mention one or two old devotees who have passed away.

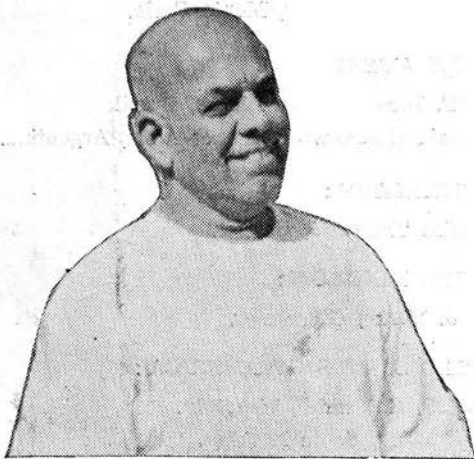
We still occasionally receive enquiries about YOGI RAMIAH on account of the high praise bestowed on him by Paul Brunton in 'A Search in Secret India'. He passed away in 1962. He came of a simple agricultural family in Andhra and had no higher education. He approached Bhagavan for spiritual guidance in the early twenties, before Bhagavan was widely known, and remained a staunch devotee ever after. He made considerable use of *pranayama* (breath control) which Bhagavan permitted in certain cases, although he did not actually prescribe it. It was for his benefit that Bhagavan translated his *Upadesa Saram* ('Thirty Verses') and *Ulladu Narpadu* ('Forty Verses on Reality') into Telugu, as Yogi Ramiah did not speak Tamil. A man of generous disposition, he gave freely to religious causes. He contributed liberally to the Ashram in its early days.

M. V. RAMASWAMI IYER was a retired engineer and a gifted musical composer who first came to Bhagavan as early as 1909 when Bhagavan was still living in Virupaksha Cave. He followed *bhakti-marga*, the path of devotion, worshipping Bhagavan as God. Some of his songs are very popular, especially the one called 'Saranagathi' (Surrender). He passed away two years back.

N. S. RANGANADIER of the Trichinopoly bar, who passed away a few years ago, was a diligent student of the Bhagavad Gita and its commentary by Sri Sankara. His deep advaitic understanding drew him to the feet of the Maharshi, to whom he surrendered himself. He was of great help to the *Sarvadhikari* in the work of Ashram management and also in the founding of the Sundara Mandiram at Tiruchuzhi, the Maharshi's birthplace, and of the Sri Ramana Mandiram at Madurai, the town where Ramana was living when he attained Realization as a schoolboy of sixteen. He managed this latter institution until his death. His whole family are devoted to Bhagavan, who is for them the Supreme Lord.

RANGA RAO served Bhagavan for more than 30 years. He was a tireless worker in the Ashram kitchen during the thirties and forties. He also had knowledge of ayurvedic medicine. When he passed away a few months ago the Ashram lost a devoted and sincere worker.

SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA passed away quite suddenly and unexpectedly at Sri Ramana Ramam on January 31st this year. He had been the editor of 'The Call Divine' since its in-



Swami Rajeswarananda

ception twelve years ago. For the past two years, although it continued to be published in Bombay, he had been resident here and edited it from here.

### AN APPEAL

The Managing Committee of SRI RAMANASRAMAM has now resolved to open a roll of Donors and Life Members, the contribution being Rs. 1,000/- and upwards for the former and Rs. 100/- and upwards for the latter (£ 100 & \$ 300 and £ 10 & \$30).

Such contributions will be deposited in a Bank and the interest realised thereon utilised for the upkeep of the Ashram and for providing facilities for its members and visitors.

The Members who so contribute will have the satisfaction of helping the Ashram build up a capital fund and also of forwarding its activities by enabling it to avail itself of the interest thereon.

The management request you kindly to enrol yourself as a Donor or Life Member and also to recommend such of your friends to do so as may feel an urge.

May the Grace of Sri Maharshi be ever with you and yours.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,  
President.

Born in Madras, he was early drawn to a religious life and approached the Ramakrishna Math and its President, Swami Sharvananda, inspired by contact with whom he took the name of Sat-chidananda. Later, however, while travelling in North India, he was initiated into formal sannyas by Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, known widely as Mahapurusha Maharaj, who was then the President of the Ramakrishna Order, and was given the sannyas name of Rajeswarananda.

After becoming known as a writer, editor of periodicals and swami he came to Tiruvannamalai to seek the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, whose devotee he remained thereafter.

Woo poverty. It is the great matchmaker between you and God.

—BHAKTA MIRA.

## The Mountain Path — Life Subscribers

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## Letters to the Editor

Having read your books, I am sure that your journal will be a great success. The title itself is most inspiring, and so are the contents of the first issue.

With my best wishes for the success of your journal.

LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA,  
Dinapani, Almora Dist.

\* \* \* \*

I offer my congratulations on the magazine—may it fulfil its mission of being a help to all those who—East or West—seek some real teachings of the path that lies beyond all the conventional creeds... Long may it flourish.

SRI KRISHNA PREM,  
Mirtola, Almora Dist.

\* \* \* \*

'The Mountain Path' is a very good beginning towards the radiation of Bhagavan's Atmic rays through the word. The get-up is excellent and the substance valuable. Let it be a legacy of spiritual treasure bequeathed to pilgrims of eternity.

YOGI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI,  
Madras.

\* \* \* \*

May we send you our congratulations and gratitude for the production of such a fine publication. It will enable us to feel more deeply in our hearts the ever living presence of our beloved Master and it will throw new vistas and light on the Path of Truth and Peace which he has traced for modern times.

INSTITUT UNIVERSEL SOUFI,  
Suresnes, France.

\* \* \* \*

I think you have made a good job of 'The Mountain Path'. It is full of variety and interest. I liked your own article on Religion and Art especially. It is very much how I look at it.

DOM BEDE GRIFFITHS, O.S.B.,  
Kurizimala Ashram, Kerala.

\* \* \* \*

Among so many quite excellent articles I have to give your own on 'The Relations between Religion and Art' the priority, but I was enchant-

ed by two of the shorter ones, that called 'Is Sufism Islamic?' by Abdullah Quibuddin and 'A Visit to Anandashram' by Unnamulai. Dr. Krishnaswami's 'Outside the Scriptures' seems to me to be a truly remarkable intellectual achievement, bringing the outlook of Ch'an Buddhism into harmony with that of Vedanta, by means of Maharshi's words, with extraordinary success .... If you can maintain this standard the circulation can hardly fail to increase rapidly, and it will be recognized as the best quarterly in English dealing with the esoteric aspects of religion.

A real triumph is the English itself; to anyone used to suffering from the anglo-oriental language of, I think, all other such publications, i.e. from English as she is written in the East, its impeccable style is like balm to the suffering palate.

TERENCE GRAY,  
Monte Carlo.

\* \* \* \*

The article 'Outside the Scriptures' by Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami was interesting at the first reading, whereas on the second reading, after a month, it was lovely. I feel like expressing my appreciation to T. N. Krishnaswami direct, but for an inner warning that it would be rank impertinence on my part to do so.

K. G. RATHNAM,  
Bombay.

Not at all. A writer always likes to know that his work is appreciated.—EDITOR.

\* \* \* \*

I congratulate you on a very good publication. I thought your own articles, especially the editorial, very good indeed; and the article about Moral Rearmament most illuminating.

MARIE B. BYLES,  
Cheltenham, Australia.

\* \* \* \*

Reading Wei Wu Wei's article in the first issue of 'The Mountain Path', I feel strongly that he can explain Sri Bhagavan's significant preaching through 'silence' in his cryptic style better than most people in long articles.

I hope we shall have more contributions from him.

'SEIN',  
Tiruvannamalai.

\* \* \* \*

I have just read in 'The Mountain Path' Unnamulai's article about Anandashram. It culminates at the very end in the inexpressible experience that Papa and Ram-Nam are one. This experience of hers is mine also. The Being who was manifesting Itself through that vehicle called Papa is directly experienced within oneself as oneself by taking the Name. It is true to say that Papa or Ram and his Name are One. But we cannot comment on this most subtle awareness of the Oneness uniting our heart with all hearts or we should obscure this bright sky with dark clouds of concepts which mean division. It is a knowledge direct from heart to heart. I am very happy that Unnamulai hinted at it in what she wrote.

H. M., Anandashram.

\* \* \* \*

I loved the leader in the first issue of 'The Mountain Path' and the poem 'The Few' that followed it. I had to read the poem aloud, it was so beautiful. I liked the two poems in the article on 'The Relations between Religion and Art' too, but not as much as 'The Few'. You were really inspired when you wrote that.

But I hope you won't take anything more from Sagittarius. 'An Aggressive Teacher' is such nonsense that it just made me laugh. I couldn't even take it seriously enough to criticize it.

VALERIE FREEMAN,  
Melbourne, Australia.

\* \* \* \*

Each reader will have his preference, but I was particularly impressed by the refreshing viewpoint and vigorous style of 'An Aggressive Teacher'. Only I could have wished that Sagittarius had lengthened it by pointing out that Christ was in the aggressive tradition of the Hebrew Prophets, all of whom had denounced the vices of the people and the sins of their rulers, whereas Buddha was in the aloof tradition of the Hindu Rishis who retired to the forest and waited for disciples to come to them.

W. MC. K. AITKEN,  
Kausani, U. P.

\* \* \* \*

Assuming, as Sagittarius apparently does, that Christ was a private individual expressing his personal opinions and uninvested with any divine authority, his teachings and actions were certainly arrogant. To the Jews they were more than arrogant and therefore they crucified him. For though it may be permissible in the Hindu tradition for a man to equate himself with God, to the strictly monotheistic Jew it could be no less than blasphemy.

But for Christians he is the Son of God and for Muslims a Prophet of God. He was acting and teaching not of himself but simply as the agent and mouthpiece of the One who had sent him. Christ himself frequently insists on this point in the Gospels. Similarly we find the more 'arrogant' of the earlier Hebrew prophets complaining bitterly of the dangerous and troublesome office that had been thrust upon them. They had been entrusted with a message and had to 'get it across' to a generation many of whom had more than a little dust in their eyes. In the context the complaint of arrogance is surely out of place.

"SCORPIO",  
Nagore.

\* \* \* \*

I am amused by Miss Freeman's amusement. I agree with Mr. Aitken that it would have been better to lengthen my article so as to link Christ up with the aggressive tradition of the Jewish Prophets and Buddha with aloof tradition of the Hindu Rishis. I would like to remind 'Scorpio' that I do not speak of Christ's manner as 'arrogant', a term which implies moral reprobation, but as 'aggressive', which it undoubtedly was. An aggressive manner may be demanded by circumstances, an arrogant manner never. I would also remind him that I distinguished between the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' aspects of a divine message, that is between the message itself and the mode of delivery. The former is universal and divine, the latter specific and individual.

"SAGITTARIUS".

\* \* \* \*

I wish some pages could be set apart in 'The Mountain Path' in which devotees could describe their spiritual experiences and narrate incidents when Bhagavan's Grace has brought them solace or conferred some benefits on them.

G. R. TRIVEDI,  
Rajahmundry.

Any such accounts will be welcomed by the editor and carefully considered for publication either as items in the magazine or as letters to the editor.—EDITOR.

\* \* \* \*

Ramana Maharshi's books are certainly wonderful. They agree in entirety with Ch'an and Zen Masters, who speak or point at the pure and clean Self-nature.

Sri Ramana said again and again that the body is the main obstruction to the realisation of the Self, that man identifies his real self with the mind and body and that that is the main thing to go beyond. In other words the real self is not the physical mind-body as everyone supposes. The Buddha would say that body and mind just don't exist in the Self-nature.

My question is why do you have so many pictures of Sri Ramana in all of this books and even on your letterhead? It would seem to me that this would be very misleading to devotees.

It looks like you are trying to eternalize the physical body rather than the pure spirit or as Sri Ramana would say Pure Consciousness.

Please don't for a minute think that I am being critical or disrespectful, it is that it seems so incongruous to see a physical body photographed so often when Sri Ramana's chief message was "you are not the body."

It would seem to misdirect devotees back to the body as against the Self or Pure Consciousness that seems to me to have been Sri Ramana's chief message.

Sri Ramana said "a sage knows his bodiless existence just as an ordinary man knows his bodily existence."

J. G.  
Alabama.

*It is true that you are not the body; but so long as you feel that you are you also feel that there are other bodies and you are influenced by them in various ways and to varying extent. The most powerful of all these influences is that of the Guru. It may happen that, just as an ordinary person's way of living and thinking shows in his face, so the grace and wisdom and power and beauty of a Guru do. This was so with Bhagavan. Many people were moved to the heart by just seeing him. Some people have been so powerfully moved by seeing a picture of him as to lose consciousness. One German devotee was awe-struck and taken immediately inward, when she saw a photo of Sri Bhagavan in a hut in the middle of a forest in Germany, after the*

*second world war. She did not then know that it was Bhagavan. One Englishman who came here told us that he was the owner of an antique shop. One day a lady came in as a customer and as she opened her bag a picture of Bhagavan fell out. He fetched a chair and made her sit down and tell him about it, and from that day, his intuition told him that Bhagavan was his Guru.*

*Certainly Bhagavan said that the outer Guru serves only to awaken the inner Guru in the heart and ceases to be necessary when that has been done; but it may take some time to do that, and until it has been done the impact of grace from the outer Guru can be terrifically powerful. As long as, for instance, a man's wife or child or parents are real to him, the outer Guru is even more so. And as long as an evil contact can harm him, so long can a blessed contact help him.*

*The question is not whether a Sage knows his bodiless existence, but whether you do. Until you do, other bodies influence you, and the more blessed that influence is the better it will be for you.—EDITOR.*

\* \* \* \*

Ever since I first read about the late Sri Ramana, I have been a great admirer of Him and His teachings. He is exactly the kind of master I would have liked to have known and followed.

What I would like to know is whether there exist here in the West, either in Canada or the U.S., any fellowships, societies etc. devoted to the study and application of his teachings. I do know of some other spiritual societies here but they have been founded by Yogis and Swamis of a different type than Sri Ramana. They follow mostly the Bhakti approach and I am more of the Jnanatype.

If no fellowships exist here, how would it be possible to come into contact with other people in the West who share my admiration for Sri Ramana?

I hope that you will be able to help me, a little bit on the road to Self-realization. It becomes very lonesome at times when one's interests are so very different from those of one's neighbours.

J. WISPELWEY,  
Kinistino, Saskatchewan, Canada.

*The way to Realization is always a lonely road. It is a turning away from outer fellowship to the Self in the heart. In particular, the path shown by Sri Ramana is less dependent on groups and fellowship than most others, since it is a direct inward seeking free from outer activity.*

*Perhaps you will best be able to maintain communication with others on the path through this quarterly, and especially through the 'letters to the editor' column.—EDITOR.*

\* \* \* \*

For the last two years I have been searching for the Self. I attain stillness within three or four minutes but the voice of the 'I' is not yet found. Kindly help me and instruct me how to proceed further.

VASU BHATIA,  
Lucknow.

*Never mind about the voice of the 'I'. There are not two selves in you, for one to hear the other. There is only one Self, and that is pure stillness, which is the same as pure consciousness or pure being. Try to hold on to that. Or rather, since 'holding' is an individual act, try just to let it be without interfering, without stopping it by thinking.—EDITOR.*

\* \* \* \*

Satori seems to be a lower degree in comparison with the highest state of realization or samadhi. Am I correct? To describe satori as a pre-glimpse of the supreme state, as written by you, is rather cloudy.

Wei Wu Wei's writing on Zen with reference to Bhagavan's teaching and attempting to bring out a similarity is rather forced. I have not yet found any Zen book prescribing 'Who am I?' as a koan except in Wei Wu Wei's own writings. Have you heard it from any Zen or Ch'an Masters or met any such?

It is natural for a Realized Man to advise others to remain in *samsara* while following the quest, but is there any one who has realized his Self while simultaneously carrying on with all the responsibilities of *samsara*?

Doesn't the sense of 'non-doership' obstruct the whole-hearted attention of the actor to his actions? How can he work efficiently unless he considers himself the doer? On the other hand, can't a murderer defend himself on the plea that he is not the doer?

Latent tendencies, pure and impure, come out in me when I sit in meditation and impede my concentration or holding to one thought. What is still worse, they bring a sense of despair and helplessness and undermine my faith. My mind tells me: "What is the use of doing all this? You won't be able to reach the goal till the end

of your life owing to your inherent weakness and faults." Please advise me what to do about this.

K. K. GHOSH,  
Calcutta.

*The term 'satori' is used with different content according to the understanding of the writer, but in its true and highest meaning it is a pre-glimpse of the Supreme State, as I said. There is nothing cloudy about that — it is just what it is.*

There is also nothing forced in Wei Wu Wei's showing a similarity between Zen and Bhagavan's teaching. After all, the Goal is the same by whatever road you approach it; the ultimate experience is the same through whatever religion you try to indicate it.

So far as I remember, 'Ch'an and Zen Teaching' by Charles Luk (Rider) and 'The Practice of Zen' by Chang Chen-chi (Rider) both remark on the use of 'Who am I?' as a goan. I have also come across instances of it personally.

There have been saints in all religions who have carried on a normal life in the world. In India King Janaka is the classical example. It is not your work that binds you but your false idea that it is you who are doing it—as if the Brutus in Shakespeare's play were to forget that it is a play and think that he was really the enemy of the stage Caesar. If he did he would have the 'I-am-the-doer' illusion and would be shut up in a mad-house. And he would not act his part any more efficiently; rather less so, because his ego-illusion would break through. In the same way efficient action in your allotted role in life is not at all dependent on the false idea that you are the limited individual who acts. As to your example of a murderer claiming impunity on the plea that he is not the doer, why does he commit the murder? Necessary and harmonious actions can be performed without the intrusion of the ego, without any egoistic motive; but if a murderer has some ego-based motive or believes himself to be judging and deciding that the murderer should be committed he also believes himself to be the doer.

Can you imagine somebody who is full of vasanās or latent tendencies attaining Realization? Of course not. Therefore it follows that in the course of practice they must be squeezed out. It is a good thing to see them; it enables you to recognize them and determine not to be influenced by them any more. In that way they are gradually cast out; but it often takes time and requires great perseverance.

*One should never give way to despondency. It is one of the worst obstacles to progress and has to be fought. Religiously it is represented as a sin, a temptation of the devil; metaphysically it is an error. The whole purpose of the practice is to realize that you are not the individual self; so as long as you believe that you are and that this individual self is weak and sinful, how can you realize that you are not?—EDITOR.*

\* \* \* \*

You stated in your books about Ramana Maharshi that he attained sahaja samadhi in his 17th year. Yet in his biography B. V. Narayana Guru quotes Bhagavan on p. 94 of the 5th

edition as saying: "One day some years ago I lay down but I was not in samadhi." How are the above statements reconciled?

T. R. NICOLL,  
London.

*Bhagavan was in a permanent state of samadhi with simultaneous awareness of the outer world, that is to say 'sahaja samadhi'. Sometimes, however, he sank into samadhi without this outer awareness and then we used to say, "He is in samadhi". He also sometimes used the expression in this way. In the sentence you quote he meant merely: "I was not unaware of what was happening."—EDITOR.*