



# The Mountain Path

Vol. II

APRIL 1965

No. 2

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

“Kinder far art Thou  
than one's own mother.  
Is this then Thy all  
kindness, Oh Aruna-  
chala ?”

—The Marital Garland of  
Letters, verse 6.

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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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03

# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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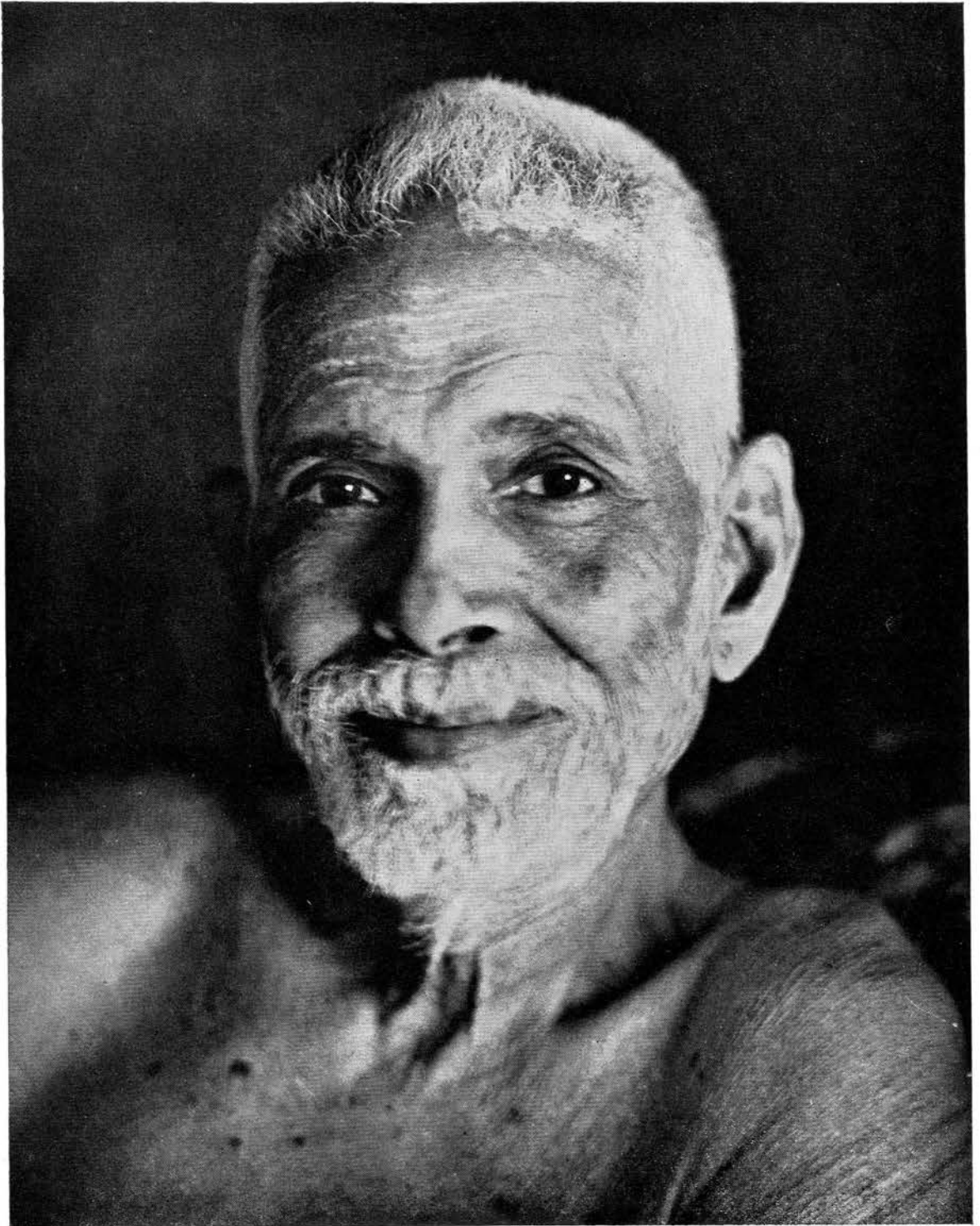
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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

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## SELF-BUILDING

[EDITORIAL]

The human mind turned downwards takes cognizance of the world reported to it by the senses; turned upwards it receives intuitional knowledge and directions from pure intelligence, which is its source and essence. The light it receives from above guides it in its behaviour towards the world spread out below.

That is how it should be, but in fact a supposititious self ties a knot at the level of mind, choking off the flow of light from above and claiming direction of the revealed or manifested world below. The result is that a man resembles an old-fashioned egg-timer with the waist choked: that is an upper and a lower cylinder with the passage between the two constricted and almost blocked.

Therefore the mind finds itself not merely cognizing and arranging the world reported by the senses but striving to rule it and in fact ruled by it. This is the cruel paradox, for by desiring one thing and fearing another the pseudo-self or ego subordinates itself to the senses and the world they report. Thus it comes to be torn between

conflicting passions and subject to the tyranny of events.

The resultant state is best summed up in the Buddhist Four Noble Truths. There is suffering — not in the sense that life is all pain and no pleasure but that a man is vulnerable to events and will eventually be vanquished by them in the form of sickness, old age and death. There is a cause for suffering — the rise of this supposititious self. There is a cure for suffering — the demolition of this self.

And, the fourth truth — there are a number of ways to this cure. On the whole they fall into three categories. The first is through knowledge, by discovering that this pseudo-self really is pseudo and has no real being; but real integral discovery, not merely theoretical acquiescence. The second is through devotion or submission: provisional acceptance of the pseudo-self as an entity but insistence on its complete submission to the true Self above it and uncompromising acceptance of the sense-revealed world outside it.

The third is a technique of re-establishing contact between the upper (inverted) and lower (upright) cones, thereby restoring man's true nature and rectifying his stunted perceptions and faculties, while leaving to a later stage the final demolition of the pseudo-self that warped or stunted them by cutting them off from their source. This is the underlying principle of Tantrism. It brings about the wedding of the mind with the Spirit.

Who is it that aspires? Pure being can't,  
Nor can that true function of the mind—  
To accept, cognize, respond. Between  
them—what?

However well disguised, the evil ghost.  
Yet effort must be made. But without  
desire.

Till there shall come the union of the  
two—

Pure Being and intelligence of mind—  
Through elimination of what stands  
between.

Methods are many; this alone the task.

It is seldom that any path falls exclusively into any one of the three categories outlined above; however one or another of them will predominate.

What has always proved fascinating in paths of the tantric, as of the yogic, variety is that they develop higher powers and perceptions in the aspirant during the course of his quest instead of leaving them to flow through spontaneously on its completion. They carry on the tasks of demolition and building simultaneously. Every path combines the two processes of contraction and expansion—squeezing the ego until it is small enough to pass through the eye of a needle and expanding the mind to infinite pure intelligence. But on an Advaitic path there is very little expansion until the contraction is completed.

Herein lies the attraction of a tantric path, but also the danger; for the ego will attempt to clutch at the new or expanded powers and use them in its own right. To guard against this it is essential to work

under an expert and give him implicit obedience. Indeed, it is probable that most magic and occultism has its origin in the misuse of powers by those who have proceeded far enough along this type of path to acquire them but then shrunk back from immolation of the ego. It is the most technical type of path and requires skill in means wedded to inflexible integrity of purpose.

Tantrism is an integral part of Hinduism. It is held by its followers to be co-eval with the Vedas. Its extant written texts are of a later date but that is nothing to go by since a religious tradition is normally handed down by oral transmission before being put in writing, and this is naturally much more so in the case of a secret tradition like Tantrism confined to initiates.

Some scholars claim to have found the origins of Tantrism in the non-Aryan Indus-Valley civilization or among the Mongol peoples north of India, but really the question is not very important. It is not to be supposed that these peoples were without any technique of spiritual training, and whether this had more affinity with Yoga, Tantrism or Shamanism can have only an academic interest. Certain it is that Tantrism is an intrinsic form of Hinduism and has been so from remote antiquity.

In one sense Tantrism might be held to be more of a popular religion than that of the Vedas, being open to persons of all castes and both sexes, whereas Vedic ritual was to be performed only by those of the upper castes and most of it only by men. In another sense, however, it was and is more restricted, not being a religion for a whole community but (like Yoga in India and Shamanism among other peoples) a path of spiritual development available only to those who are initiated into it. It can best be described as a science of spiritual development having both its theory and practice, like any other science, and verifiable by the results of its practice.

Its scriptures, therefore, the Agamas or Tantras as they are called, are on the whole

less concerned with theoretical exposition than the Upanishads and more with practical directions for sadhana. For this reason they are apt to be cryptic and abstruse so as to guard their secrets from unauthorised students. However one cannot generalise about this: for instance two Agamas which express pure Advaitic doctrine were translated from Sanskrit into Tamil by Bhagavan and are contained in English among his 'Collected Works'.<sup>1</sup>

One might say that Tantrism is pre-eminently a polytheistic form of Hinduism, consisting largely of the invocation and worship of various gods and goddesses; and yet, paradoxical as it may appear, it is at the same time pre-eminently self-reliant, being a science of development of the potentialities latent in man. What resolves the paradox is the understanding that the same formless Spirit which manifests as the universe with all its forms and powers manifests simultaneously as and in the individual. Therefore the same forces which appear to manifest outwardly as gods and goddesses are to be developed as latent potentialities of the sadhaka himself.

Those who are accustomed to think of religion as a combination of belief and devotion may query whether technical and what seem even to be mechanical disciplines really can lead man to recover his potentially divine state as is claimed in Tantra and Yoga. What they forget, and what almost all Western dabblers in Yoga overlook in practice, is that the first two steps of Yoga are Yama and Niyama, both implying control of character and behaviour, the former more in a negative sense and the latter in a positive. Yama involves rejection not only of egoistic and immoral actions but even desires and Niyama contentment and aspiration. The ethical basis of Tantrism may not be formulated in such detail but it is no less obligatory. In Hermetism also, the nearest Western parallel to Tantrism, it was constantly stressed that the secrets of the

true alchemy would reveal themselves only to the pure in heart. This, like everything else in the divine science, is quite logical and practical, since a man whose desires are turned downwards or outwards to worldly things cannot at the same time be aspiring upwards, or at any rate not with sufficient force and persistence to achieve anything. Even a physical machine will not generate enough power to accomplish its work if the steam leaks out through unauthorised apertures. Neither spasmodic effort nor a general vague desire for achievement can so vivify the technique of sadhana as to make it effective. A steadily burning upward turned flame of rightly guided aspiration is necessary for that. In fact the more elevated a man's consciousness becomes and the more his higher potentialities are activated the more dangerous to him is a divided state of mind with desires pulling him both ways.

\* Basic to Tantrism is the worship of Siva and Shakti, God and Goddess. Siva is God as pure Being and Consciousness, that is to say viewed statically; the Shakti or Mother is the Divine Energy. This is equivalent to the Christian conception of the Logos; and it may be that in Mediaeval Hermitism this conception was also developed into a divine science. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men."<sup>2</sup> Word for word this would apply to the Shakti. It is often stressed that she is not only with Siva but is Siva, that she is with Him from the beginning, from all eternity, that she is the Mother and Creator of all that is. Therefore prayer is directed mainly to the Mother. God as the Father, as pure Being, pure Consciousness, does not take cognizance of the individual; it is the Mother, the creative and redemptive energy, the Logos, who creates the seeming universe of the individual and draws him back out of it to realized Oneness with the Father.

<sup>1</sup> Published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, and Rider & Co., London.

<sup>2</sup> *St. John*, I, 1-4.



There are various Tantric techniques but central to them is Kundalini marga. Kundalini could best be described as the spiritual vitality of a man or as his shakti. In ordinary man she is a serpent sleeping coiled up (*kundali*) at the base of his spine. She has to be awakened and directed up the sushumna, the central column along the spine. Along this there are seven chakras or wheels which she has to pierce on her route. Each of them has its colour, form, symbolism, and opens the way to a new mode of consciousness with its attendant powers. Highest of them is the sahasrara or thousand-petalled lotus in the crown of the head. This is the seat of Siva, and its activation (which may also come spontaneously to aspirants who do not follow the path of Kundalini) is the union of Siva and Shakti. It is like the blazing of a thousand suns with indescribable lightness and bliss.

The awakening of Kundalini and her direction to one after another of the stages of ascent is achieved by a sadhana which employs breath-control, incantation and concentration on the centre to be activated and its symbolism. It is, needless to say, a highly technical path.

This is the barest and briefest description of the path of Kundalini, omitting all the subtleties and technicalities. What has to be stressed is that, on the one hand, the sushumna and chakras are not physical organs nor Kundalini a physical force (although its rising has powerful physical repercussions); nor, on the other hand, are they imaginary or metaphorical. They are very real and potent: not a part of the purely physical state of man (if there is such a thing) but a means by which to transcend it.

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## THE DANCE

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Away, away!  
 Into the sky I dance!  
 Bending, swaying lightfoot leaping,  
 Tireless staying, rhythm keeping,  
 Up in the air!  
 The rhythm and sway  
 Now here, now there!  
 Swift and smooth as a maiden's glance,  
 I sway and I glide  
 And nimbly I ride,  
 With never a care,  
 As inly I throb to the cosmic tide:  
 No outer step, no body stride.

\* \* \* \*

Thus the rhythm keeps its track  
 In a stiff old body with arthritic back.

---

## TANTRIC SADHANA

By DR. I. K. TAIMNI

A study of the tantric methods of attaining higher states of consciousness may give the impression that the process of acquiring Self-Realization is to a large extent mechanical, using this word in its widest sense. This seems to be anomalous in view of the fact that the Reality which is the object of realization is the essence of consciousness and it is hard to see how this can be brought about by the manipulation of forces working through established centres within the physical or super-physical bodies. The anomaly is, however, resolved if we remember that although the realization of our spiritual nature in varying degrees is not a mechanical process, the establishment of connections or communications between the different vehicles of consciousness is — almost as much so, in fact, as the connecting up of electric circuits. If, therefore, a soul which has already evolved spiritually and attained higher states of consciousness incarnates in a new body, the mechanical connection of the centres in the new physical body with those in the subtler bodies floods the lower physical consciousness with the higher knowledge or consciousness and makes it appear as if this realization had been brought about by purely mechanical means. As a matter of fact, spiritual unfoldment follows its normal course in the long life of the soul but in its advanced stages it may appear to be accomplished very rapidly and sometimes through the mere manipulation of different kinds of subtle forces, because when a soul incarnates in a new physical body it recapitulates very rapidly the progress it has already made in previous lives.

Tantric sadhana is really meant for such highly evolved souls as are mature and come into this world to continue intensively, or to complete, their inner unfoldment. They have already attained a high degree of moral and spiritual development and all that is necessary is to connect their subtle vehicles

with the physical body so as to put them in conscious touch with the subtle planes.

Knowledge of the structure and way of manipulating a machine is absolutely necessary if it is to be worked properly and safely; and the human machine consisting of the physical and subtle vehicles is far more complex and difficult to operate than any merely physical machine can be. Hence the need for a competent guru who knows it thoroughly and can manipulate it expertly. A sadhaka rash enough to dabble in practical occultism without the necessary know-how or under the guidance of an incompetent guru is inviting disaster. So long as he confines himself to doing asanas and the simpler forms of pranayama (breath control) there is no danger, but as soon as he begins to practise more technical pranayama involving kumbhaka with the object of arousing the kundalini without the necessary moral preparation and the guidance of a competent guru he is on dangerous ground.

One reason why a competent guru who can guide the aspirants on this path is not easily found is, of course, that the aspirant often lacks the necessary qualifications. For, as pointed out above, only mature and highly evolved souls can tread the Mountain Path and take this short cut to Self-realization. Less evolved souls have first to learn the elementary lessons by easier and safer methods. When they are ready for the methods of rapid development the needed guru will appear. For it is a law of spiritual life that when the disciple is ready the guru appears.

What has been said above also shows the futility of making a detailed study of the literature dealing with tantric practices. Since such literature deals with the hidden side of man's constitution and generally uses symbolical language, it can be understood only by those who possess the keys to the hidden mysteries or who are in conscious touch with the realities of the subtler planes. Those who try to acquire extensive and

detailed theoretical knowledge without having any practical contact with the inner planes are like a student trying to master some branch of physical science without ever entering a laboratory or coming into practical touch with the facts the science deals with. His knowledge may be encyclopaedic but it will be unrealistic and his mind is likely to be confused with undigested ideas and purely theoretical details. In the study of any practical science it is necessary for at least a part of the knowledge to be based on direct contact with the facts the science deals with. Without this it is impossible to make proper use of the theoretical knowledge we may have amassed. If this is true even of facts that can be observed through the sense organs and comprehended by the concrete mind it is easy to see how much more it applies to facts of the superphysical bodies with which tantra deals. And yet there are people who spend their lives amassing extensive and detailed information about these things without any relation to the facts of actual experience.

There are two other complicating factors in the study of tantric literature dealing with practical problems of self-culture. One is that blinds have been put up at every step to prevent people foolish enough to dabble in these things without proper guidance and know-how from injuring themselves and others. This explains why a person may follow the instructions laid down in a book for attaining a certain end in exact detail without getting any result. He simply does not possess the key to unlock the secret that is hidden behind the deceptive formula. Despite this safeguard, however, it is not safe to practise these things on the basis of purely theoretical knowledge, for even though one will not obtain the desired result there is no certainty that one will not obtain undesirable results of the most serious nature by unknowingly arousing forces and powers about which one knows nothing and which one cannot control.

The other complicating factor in the practical application of directions and instructions given in tantric literature is the inter-

polation of a considerable amount of spurious matter. It is natural that a system of self-culture which provides easy methods of developing higher states of consciousness and powers of various kinds should attract the attention of people who aim at exploiting the unwary and ambitious. This has led to the gradual production of considerable spurious literature which has diluted and debased the corpus of true knowledge originally provided by competent teachers. The spurious literature is of two kinds. One part consists of scraps of theoretical knowledge filched from various sources, compiled and presented in an attractive manner. Many Hindus are inclined to believe anything written in Sanskrit and regard it with reverence, even though they have not the slightest idea what it means. This blind faith is exploited by unscrupulous writers to foist spurious occult literature on the credulous as genuinely spiritual. The other type of spurious occult literature is of a still more dangerous kind. It embodies genuine knowledge concerning the manipulation of forces connected with the lowest levels of man's nature. This, in its crudest form, is used as a means of gratifying the baser human tendencies and animal propensities, and in its higher but more dangerous forms it may be veiled and camouflaged black magic. It is the admixture of true practical tantric literature with this kind of counterfeit which has given it a bad name and which makes the average man suspicious of it and of everything connected with it. Since it is not always easy to distinguish between the true and the counterfeit tantric literature, it is perhaps well, human nature being what it is, that this prejudice does exist and keeps people away from dangerous fields of exploration.

Nevertheless there can be no doubt that tantric literature does contain not only some of the highest concepts of religion and philosophy but also techniques of practical spiritual training which, in the hands of those who possess the necessary keys and knowledge can open up the inner realms of the mind in a very effective manner.



## A CHAKRA AT SRI RAMANASRAMAM

By KRISHNA BHIKSHU

In the sanctum sanctorum of the Matrubhuteswara Temple at Sri Ramanasramam, established by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, in a small niche in the western wall, stands an object of worship two feet square and proportionately high, cut out of a single piece of granite and resting on a base of gold plate on which is etched a particular symbolical geometric figure. This object has been worshipped ever since its installation by Sri Bhagavan in 1949, the year before he laid down the body. In technical terminology it is a Sri Chakra Meru standing on a *Sri Chakra Bhu-prasthara yantra*.

It may seem incongruous to some that Bhagavan who all his life taught the philosophy and path of Advaita or Identity should at the same time inaugurate this other mode of worship or sadhana which is to all appearance far removed from it. But since he did so it behoves us to try to understand why, and for that we must investigate the significance of the Sri Chakra Meru and Sri Chakra yantra and of the sadhana based on them. While doing so it is well to remember that they are a symbolism and a sadhana that go right back to Vedic times and are said to have been originally instituted by the Lord Himself.

The object of all sadhana taught and practised at Sri Ramanasramam is only to realize the ever-existing identity between the worshipper or individual self and the Worshipped or Supreme Self. Advaita itself is based on the Vedic text: *Sarvam khaluidam Brahma*, "All this is Brahman". To realize this is the purpose of any type of Advaitic *upāsana* or teaching. The teaching is succinctly set forth in another verse: *Isāvāsyam idam sarvam, yatkincha jagatyām jagat*, "Whatever lives and moves in this phenomenal world is to be clad in the luminosity of the Lord." To put it more simply, we have to realize as a result of sadhana (and not merely know theoretically) that

everything, visible and invisible, is a manifestation of the Supreme Brahman. This is technically termed *Brahma-ātma-aikya-siddhi*: realization that the Brahman or Supreme Self is the same as the atma or individual self.

The Supreme Being is called the *Brahmānda* or 'egg of Brahma' and the composite personality of the individual, the *pindānda* or 'egg of flesh'. The embryonic form of the individual self or the basic form out of which it is evolved is called the *andānda* or 'egg of life'. From the *pindānda* the successful sadhaka rises to the *Brahmānda* or limitless Beyond. Successful sadhana results in a blissful (*ananda*) conscious (*chinmaya*) existence (*sat*). In that state there are neither 'I' nor 'others', neither self nor phenomena, but only the all-embracing *Satchitananda*, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. However, even this, the texts say, is only the mode of Brahman called Saguna or 'Conditioned'. Beyond it is Nirguna Brahman or 'Conditionless Brahman' to which no words or attributes can reach.

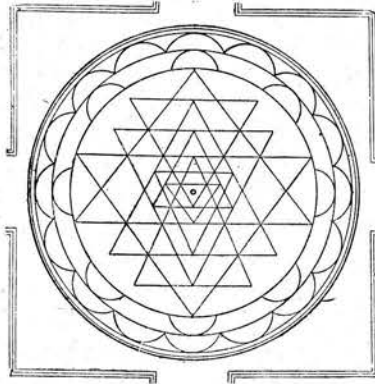
The Sri Chakra Meru type of sadhana instituted by Bhagavan at his Ashram aims at this same ultimate objective through concentration on a symbol called the Meru. The method is known as tantra or tantrism, being based on the ancient tantric texts. These are coeval with the Vedas. The sadhana based on them is worship of the power aspect of Brahman which is called Tripurasundari, the same as the Saguna Brahman we referred to above. Of course, it must not be supposed that Saguna Brahman is anything different from the ultimate Nirguna Brahman; it is only another aspect of it.

Tantric sadhana proceeds by worship of a form, or perhaps concentration on a form might be a more apt description. This is usually a geometrical figure called a *yantra* although, as will be explained later, it may also be an icon. The sadhana involves the utterance of *mantras* and the use of the

requisite *dravyas* or supports at the right moment and in the right manner. It can only be validly performed by one who has been initiated into it by a guru. The tantras declare that the *devata* or god worshipped, the *yantra* or symbol used, the *mantra* or words uttered and the *mantri* or worshipper are all one and the same; and therefore the purpose of this worship is to rise from the state of creature to the state of Creator.

Probing into the meaning of this mode of sadhana, we find that it is a method of concretising concepts in a material form and, by working through the material form, rising above it to the level of concept and then above even that to the finer and more subtle level of its Source. The material form through which one works may be a *prathika* or icon or a *prathima* or geometrical symbol. This last is known as a *yantra*. Tantrikas use both types. Both are described in detail in the agamas or tantric texts; and it is important that they should be exactly as laid down, because there is no fancy or imagination in the prescription but precise symbolism. The object of this article is not to describe this symbolism at length but to explain the basic concept underlying tantric worship.

How do we represent the entire cosmos with its phenomenal manifestations in a geometrical figure? Its causal or embryonic state, the *andānda* referred to above, is represented by a minute circle called the *bindhu*, round which the *yantra* is built. This point or minute circle represents the unevolved essence or germ of being, the virtual *Satchitananda* known in the individual as the *antaryāmi*. To counterbalance it the fully evolved and perfected manifestation or actualised perfection is represented by an infinitely large circle. This is the *Brahmānda*, and since it has no limitation the limits of manifestation are represented by squares within it.



Out of the bindhu or causal state of the individual, which is the causal body or *kārana sarira* of the cosmos, are manifested *kala* and *nāda*, light and sound, which appear on a formal plane as form and name. That is on the level of formal manifestation, but prior to that, on the causal plane, first arise desire and action, *ichcha* and *kriya*. These are the first two expressions of the Prime Power or Shakti. Thus the whole process of manifestation is dependent on and governed by the Shakti who is (1) *Chit* or Consciousness, (2) *Ichcha*, wish or desire, (3) *Kriya* or action. *Kriya* is the combined result of the first two and is represented as the apex of the triangle of which they form the base. Although one says 'base' and 'apex' the triangle is actually inverted, with its apex pointing downwards, since it represents the descent of the Divine into the manifested world. The sadhana is represented by another triangle with its apex pointing upwards. The two triangles interpenetrate and in the heart of them is the *bindhu*. The *ichcha* of the individual leads him to action and from the two of them combined arises consciousness, aspiring upwards. The descent of the Divine and the ascent of the aspirant are thus interlocked, and this is the simplest form of the *yantra* or symbol. Between the *bindhu* and the Beyond the power of the Maha Tripurasundari or Supreme Shakti has now built for herself a *pindānda* represented by the six-pointed star, and out of this emerge the microcosm or individual and the macrocosm or cosmos. This is also called the first *puru*, body or abode in which the Mulashakti or Original Shakti abides.

All the geometrical figures used in the chakra are variants of circles and triangles. A *bindhu* surrounded by a triangle in a circle can represent the entire creation; but all the manifestations of power have to figure in the completed *yantra*.

According to tantric teaching the Mula-shakti or Original Shakti manifests as three different shaktis at each node of the triangle. These are Sri Maha Saraswati, Sri Maha Shakti and Sri Maha Kali, the three primary forms of the Mother. They are the first deities to be worshipped by every manifestation of form and name in the universe. Each of them has various aspects which are manifested in the larger triangles. The powers of the Shakti are legion. Cosmically, each larger triangle represents a wider and grosser manifestation. The tantric texts give the names of the presiding deities at each of the nodes of each of these triangles. This diagram of manifestation is surrounded by two concentric circles, of which the inner represents the centrifugal forces and the outer the centripetal. The various types of force are represented by the petals of a lotus. Outside the circles there is still grosser manifestation represented by squares which surround the *pura* or abode of the Devi. Every type of matter, metal, tree and living creature, is given a place in these ramparts. The deities which preside over each rampart are mentioned and have to be worshipped by the aspirant. It is said that the Sri Puri or place in which the Mother manifests herself is surrounded by twenty-five ramparts of different materials and that beyond these is the unmanifest power of the Shakti.

For the individual the order is reversed. What is in seed form in the first upright triangle has to be expanded by sadhana into the larger triangles which represent wider powers latent in him. Ultimately he has to overleap the ramparts and merge in the all-pervading Unmanifest. I have purposely not given the details of the chakras mentioned in the texts, since Tantrism is a secret tradition not to be revealed in its operative details except to those who are initiated into it. It is enough to say that each figure represents some *tattwa* in the cosmic creation which is the second *pura* or abode of the Mother. And the Beyond, i.e. the *Brahmānda* of the cosmos, is the third *pura*.

Tantrism teaches that in worshipping the

deities at each point of the diagram one acquires their Grace and develops the power they represent. Thus, what begins as the mere worship of an outer form becomes a *samskāra* on the mental plane, and these *samskāras* can actualise powers in the individual which were hitherto merely virtual or potential. Finally they lead the individual back to the amplitude of power, consciousness and bliss which is the essential nature of the Divine Mother.

Tantriks believe in the manifestation of the Mother in form and name, which means that for them creation is a fact and not just an illusion, as it is for the pure Advaitin. The Advaitin works for the elimination of ignorance or illusion, whereas the tantrik works for the development of cosmic power and consciousness. The ultimate goal of both is the same, that is identity with Saguna Brahma and further eventual transition into the Nirguna beyond.<sup>1</sup>

Tantrism teaches that there are a number of worlds on different planes, controlled by different powers of the Divine Mother. The ultimate result of sadhana is identification with the formless and nameless Power above them all that is Maha Tripurasundari, the Supreme Shakti.

Now to return to the specific case of Sri Ramanasramam. The *yantra* called *Sri Chakra Bhuprastāra* is etched on a gold plate and forms the base of the Meru worshipped there. To the normal Sri Chakra form thus etched Bṛhagavan added some *bija aksharās* of the mantra of Kumara or Subramanya.

The *Meru prasthara* is the Sri Chakra in conical form, its apex representing the highest point of realization attainable to the aspirant as a result of his sadhana. The mind becomes one-pointed and merges into the indescribable Beyond that is the Mother. Through this chakra the deities or *devās* are

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that these two viewpoints are not mere theories, after the style of Western philosophy, of which one must be false if the other is true. Rather each is the theoretical basis for a practical discipline or sadhana. They are in ultimate agreement not on the theoretical plane but because the sadhanas based on them lead ultimately to the same goal.—(EDITOR)



to be worshipped. It is taught that the universe is in three stages, the causal, subtle and gross. For the Tantrik all this has to be symbolised, whereas for the Advaitin it is not necessary. The ultimate result aimed at is the same for both.

That is why Sri Bhagavan, who prescribed Self-enquiry for those who could follow it, also instituted this type of temple worship for those who are helped by it. Thus the beneficent power which he brought on earth is induced into the Sri Chakra sanctified by his touch. Some of his devotees believe that when he felt that the time was approaching for him to give up the body he instituted this as a means of canalising and continuing the Grace he had brought to them. He inducted his Divine Power into the Sri Chakra and Meru Chakra so that those drawn to the more elaborate path might continue to receive his Grace even after the disappearance of his body as well as those who

practised Self-enquiry. He was present at the installation and took a great interest in the *pratishtāpana*, personally adding some details to the forms of the Chakra and supervising the entire construction of the temple. He inspected every stone of the temple carefully during its construction and told the workmen to eliminate every defect, and at every stage he was the final authority both on form and on the ritual to be adopted and the deities to be worshipped. It is through his Grace that the Matrubhuteswara Temple is now *Rishi-pratishtāpita*, radiating his Light, which is the Light of the Mother. Its very name signifies that it is Ishwara (God) who has become the Mother, pointing to the identity between Ishwara and Mother or between Siva and Shakti. Thus the Advaitic doctrine of identity is not negated by this act of Bhagavan's but on the contrary reinforced so as to be available for those who require a more ritualistic path.

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*As a fitting conclusion to this article we add a note on the installation of the Sri Chakra left by Alan Chadwick (for whom see the 'Ashram Bulletin' of our issue of January 1964). (Editor)*

Bhagavan took a personal interest in the cutting of the Sri Chakra Meru of granite which was installed in the temple and is regularly worshipped. At the time of the *Kumbābishekam* or consecration, on the penultimate night before the holy water was poured over the images, he personally supervised the installation in the inner shrine. It was an extremely hot night, with the charcoal retorts melting the cement inside to further add to the heat and it must have been intolerable inside but he sat there for about an hour and a half telling them what to do.

On the last night before the final day he went in procession, opening the doors of the new hall and temple, and passed through into the inner shrine where he stood for some five or ten minutes with both hands placed on the Sri Chakra in blessing. I happened that night to be at his side the whole time. This was unusual as I usually avoided taking a prominent part in such things but liked to watch them from a distance. How-

ever something made me stay by him and on account of that I am able to testify to his deep interest in the temple and especially in the Sri Chakra. It was because of this knowledge that I was instrumental after Bhagavan's passing in persuading the Ashram authorities to start the Sri Chakra Pujas six times a month. The explanation of this unusual show of interest by Bhagavan is probably to be found in the necessity for the Shakti always to accompany Siva. It is not enough to have Siva alone. On the only occasion when such a puja was performed in Bhagavan's life-time he refused to go to his evening meal at the usual time but insisted on staying to watch it to the very end. When some one<sup>2</sup> remarked how magnificent it had been and what a good thing it would be if such pujas could be performed regularly, Bhagavan replied: "Yes, but who will see to this?" As I have already said, it is now being done and undoubtedly has the blessings of Bhagavan.

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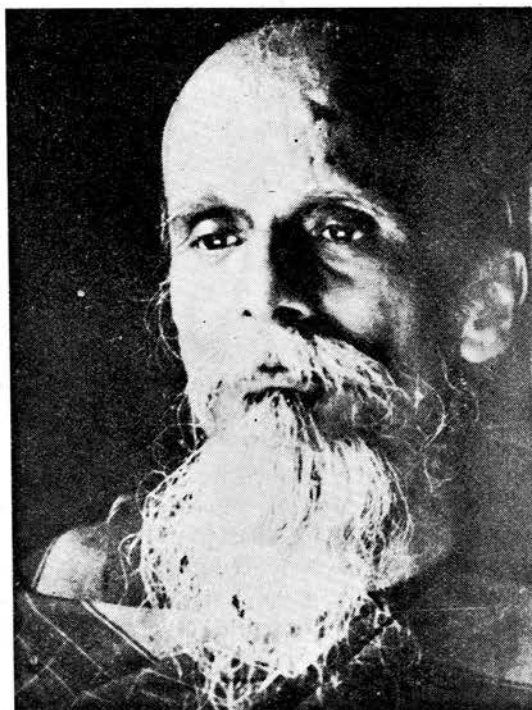
<sup>2</sup> Actually it was Alan Chadwick himself who said this and who undertook to see to it.—(EDITOR)

## KAVYAKANTA GANAPATHI MUNI

### A Tantric Devotee of Bhagavan

By VISVANATHAN

I had my first darshan of Bhagavan Sri Ramana in January 1921 at Skandashram, his cave-ashram on the eastern slope of Arunchala, before the present Ashram was built. He was then forty-one and I seventeen. Apart from five or six inmates of the Ashram, including Bhagavan's mother and younger brother<sup>1</sup>, there were Sivaprakasam Pillai<sup>2</sup> and a few other earnest devotees who had come for a short stay. The moment I set eyes on Bhagavan I immediately, through his Grace, sensed his freedom from the apparent individuality. Overwhelmed by his subtle Grace, I stayed on in that rare atmosphere of purity and peace for five or six days. As instructed by him, I made a copy of Sri Ramana Gita<sup>3</sup> from an Ashram note-book. This was significant, as it was by a deep study of this little book in his immediate presence that I, two years later, grasped the essence of his teaching and method. I felt the tenderness of a mother in him. As I took leave of him he gave me that look of Grace that bound me to his feet for ever.



Two years later, on the evening of January 2nd., I returned to Bhagavan, this time with the intention of staying with him for good. I did not need to say so ; he gave me an indication that he knew it. Since my first visit his mother had attained Mahasamadhi, and in December 1922, about a fortnight before my second visit, Bhagavan had come to stay beside her shrine at what

was to become Sri Ramanasramam. It so happened that I arrived on the eve of his birthday, which then used to be celebrated on a small scale. He accepted my surrender and gave me some directions to follow.

Next morning there was a gathering of devotees in his presence, one of whom attracted me and held my attention like a magnet. On enquiry I found that he was Kavyakanta Ganapathi Sastri, known to many as 'Ganapathi Muni', that is 'Ganapathi the Sage', the famous Sanskrit poet and scholar-disciple of Bhagavan. It was a thrilling experience, as he impressed me as a man of dynamic energy, with the air of a Rishi and at the same time great gentleness. His broad forehead, aquiline nose, shining

<sup>1</sup>The future Sarvadhikari, for whom see our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964.

<sup>2</sup>For whom see *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* by Arthur Osborne, pp. 85-90, Rider & Co., London.

<sup>3</sup>A redaction in Sanskrit verse by Ganapathi Muni of questions put by himself and other devotees and of Bhagavan's answers. It consists of 300 verses arranged in 18 chapters. An English translation also is available from the Ashram.

eyes, melodious voice and gently rippling laughter spoke of a spontaneously benevolent, powerful and highly intelligent personality. The audience listened with rapt attention as he read out a Sanskrit poem he had composed in praise of Bhagavan and explained its import. The poem praised Bhagavan as the embodiment of the Mother of the Universe, the Tapas of Brahman, manifesting Herself as the three Shaktis, Uma, Lakshmi and Sarasvati. Ganapathi Muni returned that afternoon to his abode in the Mango-tree Cave on Arunachala, half-way down from Skandashram.

A few days later I expressed to Bhagavan my wish to go through the main Upanishads, a study of which I had begun even before going to him. He directed me to Nayana<sup>4</sup>, saying that I could find no better teacher to help me. Next day I went to Nayana's cave on the hill in the afternoon. He came out to greet me. There was a spiritual atmosphere about him and his abode. He welcomed me with a cordial smile. As he sat down I had the impression of inner poise. After some preliminary talk I asked him to explain a passage in the Taittiriya Upanishad about the experience of the Sage Trisanku. He gave me such a lucid interpretation of the text that I began to revere him as a sage and resolved just to sit at his feet in future and listen to whatever he himself chose to say.

This great poet, who reminded me of an ancient Rishi, was born in 1878 in a village of Andhra, in the Vizagapatnam district and commanded the respect of elders even from his boyhood. He was a remarkable and versatile genius who devoted his whole life to tapas with the object of awakening India from her long slumber so that she might recapture her inherent glory. Though married early, he wandered all over India, engaging in austerities in various sacred places. In his twenty-second year the title 'Kavyakanta'<sup>5</sup> was bestowed on him by an assembly of veteran scholars of the Sanskrit

University of Navadwipa in Bengal in appreciation of his talent for poetical extemporisation.

In 1907 he heard of the youthful Sage on Arunachala, known then as 'Brahmana Swami'. "In the heat of the afternoon sun he climbed the hill to Virupaksha Cave. The Swami was sitting alone on the veranda of the cave. Sastri fell on his face before him and clasped his feet with outstretched hands. In a voice quivering with emotion, he said : "All that has to be read I have read ; even Vedanta Sastra I have fully understood ; I have performed japa (invocation) to my heart's content ; yet have I not up to this time understood what tapas is. Therefore I have sought refuge at your feet. Pray enlighten me as to the nature of tapas."

"The Swami turned his silent gaze on him for some fifteen minutes and then replied : 'If one watches whence the notion 'I' arises the mind is absorbed into That ; that is tapas. When a mantra is repeated, if one watches the Source from which the mantra sound is produced the mind is absorbed in That ; that is tapas.'

"It was not so much the words spoken that filled him with joy as the Grace radiating from the Swami. With the exuberant vitality that he put into everything, he wrote to friends of the upadesa he had received and began composing praises of the Swami in Sanskrit verse. He learned from Palani-swami<sup>6</sup> that the Swami's name had been Venkataramana and declared that henceforth he must be known as Bhagavan Sri Ramana and as the Maharshi."<sup>7</sup>

He continued his sadhana under Bhagavan's guidance, composing the while hymns to the Divine Mother, whom he now saw manifest in his Guru. His Kundalini was awakened and he had a remarkable experience which helped him in his effort to attain inherence in the Self. He was convinced that even for fulfilment of his original aim of national regeneration inherence in the Self

<sup>4</sup> A Telugu word meaning literally 'Father'. Ganapathi Muni's followers addressed him so and Bhagavan also did.

<sup>5</sup> Meaning 'whose speech is poetry'.

<sup>6</sup> Bhagavan's attendant.

<sup>7</sup> *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, p. 97. Rider & Co., London.



was necessary, in order to be able to function as an instrument of the Divine, uncontaminated by the ego:

Having been with Bhagavan and Nayana for many years, I can testify to the great regard and affection shown by Bhagavan for this esteemed disciple. It was at his request that Bhagavan wrote his wonderful Sanskrit hymn of 'Five Verses to Arunachala', elucidating the significance of Arunachala and the paths of karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana.<sup>8</sup> Nayana wrote a brief Sanskrit commentary on Bhagavan's *Upadesa Sara* ('Essence of Instruction') and rendered his 'Forty Verses on Reality' into Sanskrit verse. Whenever any one asked Bhagavan about *mantra* and *upāsana* he would send them to Nayana, and Nayana used to direct those interested in Self-enquiry and Vedanta to Bhagavan.

The significance of Nayana's place in the scheme of Bhagavan will be clear if we understand that the ancient tradition of India recognized as valid the Tantric path of the awakening of Kundalini, culminating in true experience of the Self. Sri Rāmakrishna and many others reached the goal by this path. Sri Shankara, the supreme Advaitin, dealt with it in his Tantric works.

The emphasis of Nayana as well as Bhagavan was on direct experience of Reality. He used to say that one should catch fire and blaze and that to do so was real spirituality. This is just what Bhagavan says at the end of his *Upadesa Sara*: "The spontaneous effulgence of the Self, devoid of the ego, is the greatest tapas." Nayana also insisted on

<sup>8</sup> See *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, published by Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

the eradication of the ego, as may be seen from his prayer to the Mother: "May the omnipotent Mother hovering over this insignificant mortal, annihilate my base ego, and shine forth, pervading and transcending my whole being." Apart from three magnificent poems in praise of the Mother, comprising two thousand brilliant verses, he composed many other Sanskrit works clarifying all the phases of traditional teaching from the Rig-Veda downwards.

Ganapathi Muni passed away at Karaghpur in July 1936, at the age of fifty-eight. Bhagavan held the telegram bringing the sad news in his hand until the evening chanting of the Vedas was finished. Only then did he say with evident emotion: "This is a shock: Nayana has passed away!" After a short pause he added: "Has he?" indicating that he had not. With tears in his eyes he exclaimed: "Where can we find the like of him?"

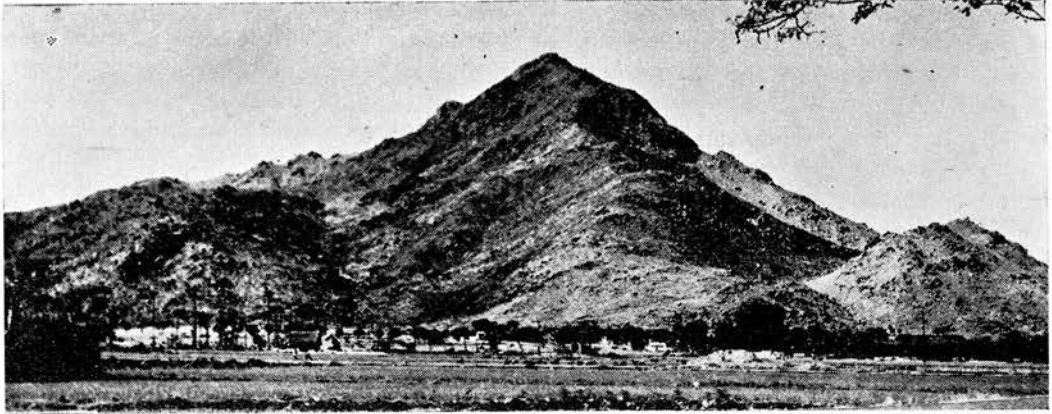
Bhagavan kept with him in the meditation hall the Sanskrit letters written to him by Nayana. Soon afterwards he arranged the occasional stray verses to the Master composed by Nayana, giving them the title 'Forty Verses in Praise of Ramana'; and they were regularly chanted in his presence together with the Vedas every morning.

Many of the devotees of Bhagavan remember with love and reverence this outstanding disciple who was a rare poet, who spent his whole life in tapas and who gladly helped all who approached him, radiating joy and cheerfulness and uplifting all who came in contact with him. May we emulate his self-surrender and devotion, praised by Bhagavan himself on several occasions.

## RECIPE FOR TRANQUILLITY

By L. P. YANDELL

Once one is able to leave oneself out of consideration there results in one's life a kind of glad willingness to do what needs doing and to help where help is needed and a cheerful enduringness and patience which are of themselves a great reward. For with oneself no longer considered central it's remarkable how little there is left to fret about.



## LOVED ARUNACHALA

Translated by 'SEIN'  
from the Tamil of Om Sadhu\*

Loved Arunachala, serene You stand!  
Unmoved as You, grant me to merge in You.  
Majestic Hill, You draw me close and bid  
Stand with stilled mind, as without thought You stand.

Yearning, my gaze is fixed on You alone,  
As magnet-like You draw the heart of me,  
You who enthrall, who give Your vassals peace,  
Rousing desire to be without desire.

As the moth circles the flame,  
Persistent to its doom,  
Let me go round, go round Arunachala,  
Till Your Grace my mind consume.

Let me be a prey to You, Arunachala!  
So shall my griefs dissolve with my desires:  
Arunachala, the final Home of all,  
Enslaved by You, what more remains to seek?

Loved Arunachala, serene You stand!  
Unmoved as You, grant me to merge in You.

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\*For a note on whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of July, 1964, p. 189.

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## ARUNACHALA AS MANDALA

By MADGUNI SHAMBHU BHAT

“Go round the mountain ; that is what the Maharshi used to recommend,” said an Ashram friend to whom I mentioned my intention of climbing to the summit. I felt a thrill as he said it and immediately knew that he was right. The whole day I had a feeling of a presence watching over me. I kept falling into prayer, and whenever I closed my eyes in meditation I beheld the face and gracious eyes of Maharshi Ramana.

I was overjoyed at having come to Sri Ramanasramam again, even though I had waited so long. It was 28 May, 1964, and my initial visit had taken place sixteen years earlier, almost to the day, on 31 May, 1948. I had been blessed by the Sage in a dream at Dhari in Saurashtra, Gujerat, in 1943, and that had determined me to come. How can I describe my feelings when I at last met him face to face ? I stepped back with a gasp of wonder and respect and then prostrated before him. I was only able to stay at the Ashram for a day, but the potent spiritual impulse I received from him continued to grow in me and still does.

So on the morning of 29 May, 1964, I set out on *pradakshina*, walking barefoot round the hill. It was a pleasant morning with a cool wind and cloudy sky. The road was in a good state, part of the way tarred, but with a sandy strip to walk on at the side, part of the way metalled. As I set out from the Ashram I started chanting a Sanskrit mantra which had been revealed to me the night before, running :

**I constantly bow down to that Queen of the Red Mountain who always bestows happiness.**

I was walking alone, enjoying the loneliness of the prospect, when a villager overtook me and accompanied me for about a mile, talking about personal matters from

time to time. He left, after directing me to take the branch of the road that curved round the hill, not the broader bus road that ran straight on. When I returned to my chanting the *mantra* had changed. It now ran :

**I bow down to that Queen of the universe, the Spouse of Lord Siva and Empress of the Red Mountain.**

I was elated and my effort to return to the original *mantra* was unsuccessful. I felt myself borne along like a wave on the ocean.

I reached the village of Adiannamalai<sup>1</sup>. I had known nothing about the large temple that stands there with its back to the road. I felt drawn to it and had darshan all by myself of Lord Annamalai<sup>2</sup> and His Spouse Ambika.<sup>3</sup> As I was leaving the priest in charge invited me back in and I stayed while he made puja.

After resuming my *pradakshina* I became aware with a shock of surprise that the *mantra* had again changed, and this time from the feminine to the masculine. It now ran :

**I bow down to that Lord of the universe, who liberates from re-birth and as the Lord of the Red Mountain.**

Enfolded in bliss, I continued to chant this new version the whole of the rest of the way until I arrived at the great temple of Tiruvannamalai, where I prostrated before the Lord and His Spouse. Puja was just being performed when I arrived. I took *prasadam* and walked back the remaining mile or so wrapped in devotion, arriving

<sup>1</sup> Meaning ‘ancient Annamalai’.

<sup>2</sup> Another name for ‘Arunachala’ and therefore for ‘Siva’.

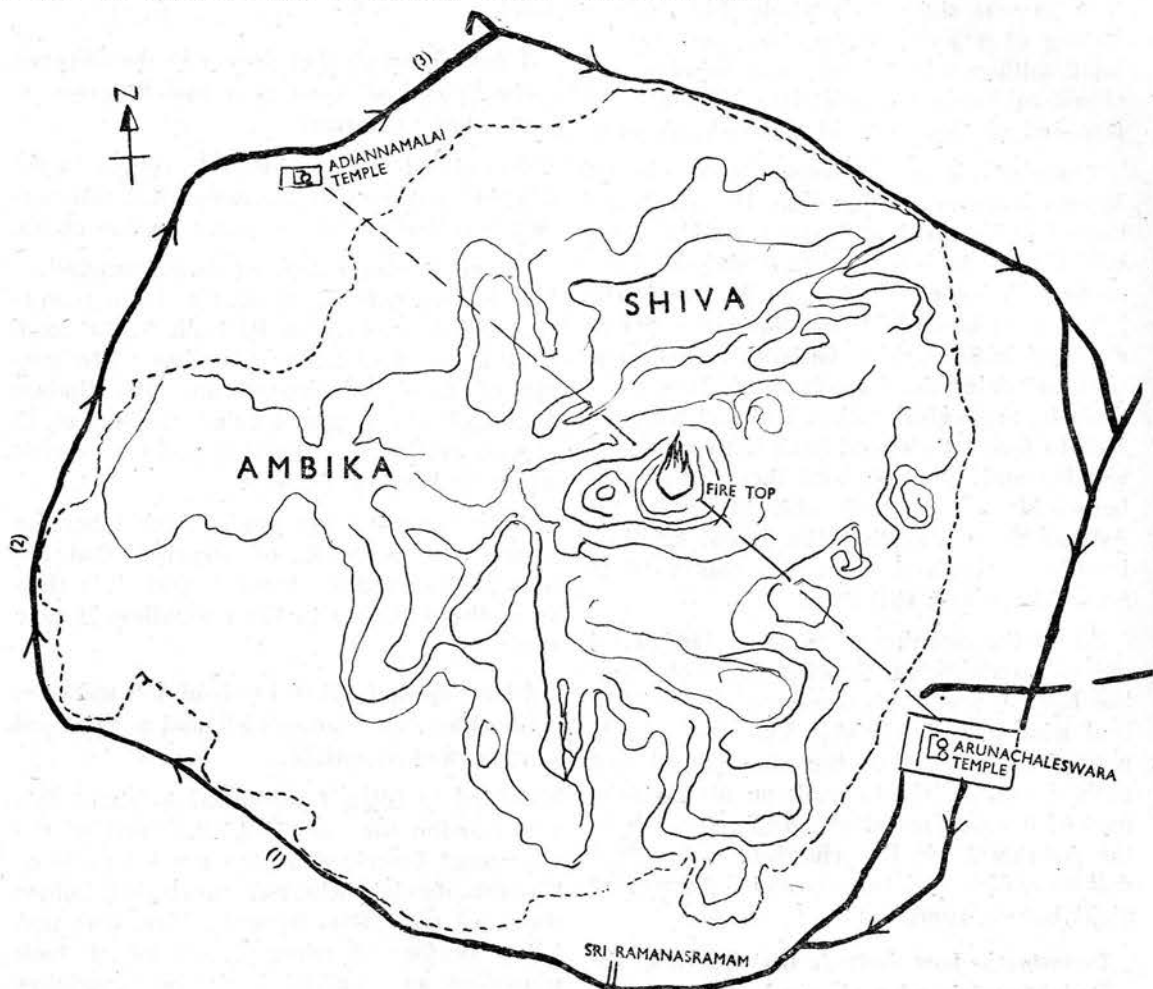
<sup>3</sup> The spouse of Siva, known also as Uma, Parvati, Unnamulai and Durga.



back at 11 o'clock to the kindly hospitality of the Ashram.

After resting and taking lunch I began to reflect on my *pradakshina*. I had heard that Arunachala is the Ardhanareshwara Lingam itself. Was that why I had been unwittingly led to chant the feminine form of the mantra on the western side of the hill and the masculine form on the eastern side, that is from Adiannamalai back to Tiruvannamalai? In order to check on this I sought for a ground map of the hill, which

I found at the temple, and it was a real revelation to me to find that the two temples of Tiruvannamalai and Adiannamalai lie at either end of an axis running through the peak of the hill on which the beacon is lit every year at Kārtikai, as the accompanying sketch will show. To the east of the line joining them the hill is Siva and to the west Ambika. I cannot express the love and blessings with which they both embraced me during my *pradakshina*. I bow down to them again and again.



- (1) I constantly bow down to that Queen of the Red Mountain who always bestows happiness.
- (2) I bow down to that Queen of the universe, the Spouse of Lord Siva and Empress of the Red Mountain.

- (3) I bow down to that Lord of the universe, who liberates from re-birth and as the Lord of the Red Mountain.

..... Arunachala Hill.

— Giripradakshina Road.

## SIVA-LINGAM

By T. K. S.<sup>1</sup>

Siva-Lingam must not be taken to mean Siva's lingam, for Siva is Himself the Lingam. Lingam means 'indicator', as smoke is an indicator of fire. By Siva everything is brought to consciousness and thus indicated, but nothing can indicate Siva. By His Self-revealing Consciousness He animates all manifestation. Matter needs to be animated by Spirit, but Spirit only by Itself.

If Siva were not pure Consciousness how could He be Siva? And if He were non-existent the whole universe which manifests Him would be non-existent. There would be mere nescience.

The existence of nescience cannot be established by nescience. It is Siva, as pure Consciousness and Witness of manifestation who reminds us of manifestation; but the Siva who reminds us is not Himself reminded.

This Maheswara<sup>2</sup> is Pure Light. So declare the scriptures. Through His Light the universe is perceived. Therefore Siva is Himself the Lingam, the indicator. For enlightened souls this Siva-Lingam is indeed worthy of worship.

It is He who gives life and light to all, though when seen as Arunachala Hill He appears to be dull and inert through the power of His Maya. The indiscriminating do not perceive the Light of Siva in Siva-Lingam.

Some say that the *Mahāvākya* (the supreme scriptural texts such as 'That thou art') are the lingam or indicator of Siva; others that Maya, the property of Siva, is; others again that intellect or ego-sense is; others say the life-force or sound or existence. But the great sages declare with absolute knowledge that since Siva is Self-effulgent there is nothing to indicate Him.

Knowledge alone is the indicator. Mahes-

<sup>1</sup>The author unfortunately died shortly after writing this article. See the obituary published in this issue.—(Editor)

<sup>2</sup>*Maha-Ishvara*, the Almighty, a name of Siva.

wara, abiding in all bodily vehicles, is witnessing or recollecting Himself.

Some say that *ālaya*, the substratum and support of all, is the indicator, but Siva Himself is the support of all. He alone is Truth or Reality. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Consciousness is Being; unconsciousness can never be Being. For Him who is the support of all there can be no support. He is unsupported like the ether (*ākāsha*).

For beings in *samsāra* (which is the same as *ajnāna*, ignorance) a support is provided commensurate with the ripeness of their intellect, for worship of the Unsupported Supreme.

Some knowers of the Vedas say that everything is absorbed in the Lingam (from *ligi*, 'to be absorbed'), but even so Maheswara, the Almighty, is that Self-evident Lingam and is not absorbed. This whole universe, whose nature it is to be absorbed, is absorbed in Brahman, but Brahman is never absorbed.

Just as the illusion of silver in mother-of-pearl loses its apparant reality through knowledge (that it is not silver), so through knowledge all that appears to be extraneous to the Supreme Lord Siva, who is Brahman, is absorbed in Him.

Those who practise kundalini-yoga find the lingams in the *nādis* or yogic centres in the body and make these the seats for the worship of Siva.

The submergence of the thought-current in the unruffled calm of Paramatma is said to be the essential worship. Mere worship through mantras is not enough to destroy once and for all the tree of *samsara*, whose root is nescience. Knowledge (Jnana) alone is the true invocation of Siva. Formal puja (worship) is of the gross state; the Vedas are the means to Realization; but Jnana is the Supreme State. It is inner worship and must be carried on unremittingly to terminate the cycle of births and deaths.

## BINDU IN SAIVAGAMA

### A Philosophical Concept

By DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

The Āgamas are a class of scriptures which are primarily sadhana-sastras, that is manuals of spiritual technique, and only secondarily treatises on philosophy. These sastras attach great importance to the Divine power or Shakti of a Saguna Ishwara or Personal God. Just as physical science speaks of energy as the stuff of the world, in the same manner the āgamas speak of Shakti or Divine Power as the ultimate material cause of the world. It is the object of the āgamic sadhana to unite the individual self with the universal self by awakening in the individual's psycho-physical organism the various latent forces of Divine Power. The Divine or Mother element resides in the mind-body system of the jiva or individual in the form of kundalini-shakti (power in a sleeping or coiled state) and in and through āgamic sadhana, this kundalini power is awakened by piercing the six chakras.

The Āgamas are divided into three main groups :

1. Shākta Āgama or Shākta Tantra
2. Saiva Āgama
3. Vaishnava Āgama or Pancharātra.

In this article I would like to give a general idea about Bindu in Saiva-āgama and also to show how this concept can be treated as a philosophical concept having a close relation with the path of knowledge.

There are certain fundamental categories which are admitted in the Saiva-āgama. These are: Siva, Shakti, Pasu, Pāsa, Bindu etc.

Siva is pure Consciousness which is immutable, eternal and absolute. He is the Highest Reality and the final goal of the jiva. He is also the sole support of Shakti and Bindu. Siva and Shakti, being of the form of Chit, (Consciousness) inhere in

one another. Siva is inclusive of Shakti. The connection between them is inseparable. Siva, devoid of Shakti, is as good as a non-entity.

This Siva-Shakti or Divine Power manifests itself sometimes in the form of will, sometimes in the form of knowledge and sometimes in the form of action. Bindu seems to be that aspect of Chit-Shakti in which the Divine Power actually particularises (*krya*) and also manifests itself as knowledge (*jnana*) of particular objects: because it is from bindu that words which are the basis of vikalpa-jnana (particularised knowledge) arise in a graduated order.

In the sphere of activity there is no direct contact between Siva and Bindu. There is an indirect relation between the two through the mediation of Shakti. When Shakti assumes the form of the creative will, its conative aspect is roused and causes a disturbance in Bindu which results in creation. Siva has been described as *vispasta chinmātra* (unmanifest Consciousness) because He never actively participates in creation. He vitalises Bindu through His Shakti, and so Siva remains immutable and unchanging in nature.

When Shakti seeks to manifest the *aisvarya* (glories) of her Lord through the diversities of different worlds, she assumes the form of Divine Resolution and causes disturbance in Bindu. Since Siva remains in *avinābhāva* (inseparable) relation with Shakti, He too has been regarded as the cause of disturbance in Bindu. Just as the sun makes flowers bloom by means of its rays and does not undergo any change in its nature on that account, so Siva also causes disturbance in Bindu through His Will alone without performing any actual creative act.



When *Paramesvara* (the Almighty) Himself causes disturbance in Bindu through His *samkalpa-shakti* (power of will), *panchatattvas* (the five categories) of Siva, Shakti, Sadāsiva, Ishwara and Suddhavidya come into being. Māyā is not directly disturbed by the Almighty. According to the agamic view Māyā is not illusory. It is substantive in nature and is the *upādāna kāraṇa* (material cause) of the world. Bindu is also known as kundalini. Kundalini manifests the soul's natural power of all-embracing knowledge and action. In the bound condition when the soul remains associated with *mala* (impurity) its natural capacity of infinite knowledge and action remains in a dormant or sleeping state. If this power can be awakened in the *mulādhāra*, the lowest of the chakras and can be made to rise up to sahasrara or the lotus in the crown of the head by piercing the other four chakras, then the soul becomes pure and is in a position to enter into the highest luminous world. Yogic discipline or knowledge may destroy karma and maya. *Mala*, which is the most powerful enveloping force, can be destroyed only by the awakening of this power of jnana and kṛya. Kundalini sadhana is, therefore, the most important sadhana for the tantric worshipper and, for this reason, initiation into it is absolutely necessary.

It is true that the concept of kundalini is specially associated with *guhya vidya* (secret doctrines) like tantra, hatha yoga etc. : yet on the basis of rational consideration, we can accord a suitable philosophical status to it. In fact, āgamika sadhana is intimately related with the processes of yōga-sadhana : both believe that mind, like body, requires continuous exercise and training so as to develop all its powers and potencies. Man is a vast storehouse of poten-

tial and expressed power. The object of sadhana is to develop all powers of the human body and mind. The hatha yogi aims at making his body strong, healthy and free from suffering : for this purpose he makes a sincere attempt to arouse the kundalini in him. According to hatha yoga, kundalini is *amrtavarshini* (nectar-showering) and the nectar that drips from kundalini makes the body strong as steel and immortal. Here we may say that, according to this school of yoga, kundalini seems to be an organ of the mind-body system. Since psychic powers, being pure in nature, are more illuminating and pleasure-giving than physical powers, kundalini, which increases knowledge and showers blissful nectar, may be a special state of *antahkarāna* or the psychical apparatus. It may be a state in which sattva becomes wholly purified and rajas and tamas become fully subdued.

Ramanuja has stated that the lotus of the heart is the seat of the atomic soul. If this be so, then the purpose of sadhana is to make the lotus bloom, as otherwise the true nature of the soul will not be realised. The lotus of the heart is here regarded as kundalini and thus kundalini sadhana is harmonised with the philosophical position of the Ramanuja school. Hence the concept of kundalini is not to be found only in the mystic religion of Tantra or esoteric doctrine of yoga, but is also accepted in other philosophical systems. Dhyana Yoga in the Vaishnavite system and kundalini yoga in tantra, hatha yoga etc. are not therefore two entirely different lines of sadhana, since both combine intellectual processes with the process of rousing kundalini shakti. This is not to deny, of course, that there are variations in the interpretations of kundalini according to whether the systems concerned are advaitic or dualistic.

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“The world has been trying to solve its problem with a mind that is the problem”. What says that? The self-same mind!

—“WEI WU WEI”.

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## THE SUFI SCIENCE OF LATAIF

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

Being the spiritual aspect of Islam, Sufism is the science of man's spiritual development. Like every science, whether spiritual or physical, it has a theoretical and a practical side, its theory being the basis for practical experiment and the success of its experiments being the proof of its theory. It offers various modes of spiritual training, one of which bears a striking resemblance to the Tantric path of Kundalini. This is not really surprising; indeed it is almost inevitable since the subtle centres that are activated by these methods are neither invented nor imagined but simply recognized, being realities. They are not physical organs and none of their exponents suppose that they are; they are centres of the subtle potentialities latent in man but undeveloped in most men.

In Tantrism they are called 'chakras' or wheels. The Sufi term for them, 'lataif' (singular *latifa*) is much harder to define. Al-Latif is one of the 99 Divine Names and bears the implication 'The Subtle' or 'The Discriminating'. It is also the Name most commonly invoked when praying for something, which indicates that it bears the implication 'The Discriminating Giver'. The *lataif*, therefore, might be termed 'subtle centres' or centres of subtle perception or of discriminate fruition.

According to Sufi teaching there are seven *lataif*. One of them is in the region of the solar plexus. One, known as *qalb* or heart, is in the place of the physical heart. Opposite it, at the right side of the chest, is the one known as *Ruh* or Spirit. A third is between these two. As with the *chakras*, there is one in the forehead and one (corresponding to the Hindu *sahasrara*) in the crown of the head. Activation of this last may seem to be the supreme achievement, but there are Sufis who hold that it is really

dependent on the *Ruh* at the right side of the chest. It is noteworthy that the Maharshi taught the same from the Hindu context and that Lama Govinda also asserts it from the Buddhist context in his 'Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism'. That in the crown of the head is more concerned with ecstatic experience, but the *Ruh* is the pure spiritual Being on which this is based.

The activation of a *latifa* is known as its *tajalli*, that is its illumination or irradiation. This is accomplished by a precise technique under the guidance of one who has himself achieved it and is qualified to guide others. The method will involve concentration on the *latifa* to be irradiated together with other exercises such as a specific type of breath-control and certain specified incantations. It is a precise science, unguided or misguided experimentation in which may achieve nothing or even have destructive results, just as in a physical science. In fact there is real danger of the mind being overbalanced or the character ruined. Not only is right guidance essential but right motives as well. If such experimentation is practised out of curiosity or the desire for powers it may injure the practiser despite sound guidance and will certainly not bring him to the goal — or at any rate not unless his motives change in the course of the quest.

Higher powers are in fact attained, for the activation of each *latifa* brings about a certain more or less specific heightening of understanding and perceptions. These may include ecstatic visions and experiences, telepathic powers, ability to foresee the future and so forth; all these, however, are regarded by the true Sufi as by-products. The *salik* or traveller who values them for themselves is likely to get stuck in them and proceed no further. Many occultists or magi-

cians, people who have supernatural powers but no real spirituality, are experimenters who have failed in this way, clinging to the partial results attained and therefore unable to co-ordinate and transcend them. Nor is the danger to be ignored that such failures may fail still further by falling into the grip of dark forces and becoming black magicians. The true goal to be aimed at is the state of 'Perfect Man', *Insanul Kamil*, and for this purity, patience and persistence are necessary as well as right guidance.

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## AN EXPERIENCE OF KUNDALINI

By UNNAMULAI

I was in the midst of packing to return to Tiruvannamalai after spending the hottest months in the hills. My children couldn't stand the heat of the plains. The house which had been found for me was right out of town, facing a magnificent mountain and had not been inhabited for some years, so it was barely furnished. I had had to bring even kitchen utensils, so it can be imagined what packing there was. It was a terrific rush and with very little help.

It was in the thick of this that it happened. A sort of lassitude came over me, but a most pleasant lassitude. From the base of my spine a tingling feeling arose as if a thousand ants were climbing up. I must have fever, I thought; but a most delightful fever, so let it be. All thought of packing or going or any urgent work just vanished. I simply rested, whether sitting or lying down I don't remember. The ascent continued, stopping at various points along my spine. I particularly remember at the base of my neck. Then it burst through the crown of my head with the blaze of a million suns — the splendour of it! Ecstasy which no words could describe! There was nothing to be perceived — nothing now to describe. Only this unimaginable feeling of indescribably blissful well being. There was nobody else. There was nothing else. So that's it!

How long it lasted — a second, an eternity — I cannot tell. Then I returned to nor-

mal body-consciousness and the world emerged again — but how drab! It was like being thrust back into a cage, in spite of the after-glow of the experience.

At that time I knew nothing of Kundalini and I have never practised it.

On my return to Tiruvannamalai I came across Sir John Woodroffe's 'The Serpent Power' and there read about the chakras and verified my experience. I did not mention it to Sri Maharshi until some time later when I was asked to go through Heinrich Zimmer's German work *Der Weg Zum Selbst* in which he speaks about Kundalini from a theoretical standpoint. In this connection I told Sri Maharshi that my experience was different and wrote out an account of it. He perused this very attentively and did not return it to me but gave it to the attendant to file.

Some years later I heard a certain Swami tell his disciples that when Kundalini bursts through the sahasrara in the crown of the head the person is realized. I did not want to raise this question in front of everybody, so I spoke with him privately about it later, when I begged to differ. I told him about my experience and said that it was only sporadic and not a permanent change of state. He asked me about it in great detail and was surprised but obviously convinced because he said: "You are moving in Grace; just persevere."

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## TAOIST ALCHEMY

By LU K'UAN YU (CHARLES LUK)

The Elixir of Life can be sublimated in the human body by the Taoist method of self-purification. In my book *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*,<sup>1</sup> I devoted a whole chapter to Taoist meditation for beginners without mentioning the method of preparing the Elixir of Life in order to avoid unnecessary controversy, for my aim was to present the Buddha-Dharma for students in the West.

Taoist meditation as described in my book is good for those who wish to get rid of ailments or to enjoy good health in their old age, and for those who want to prolong the span of life so that they have sufficient time to practise the Dharma which was well-nigh impossible when they were young and married with children to look after. For married and family men can devote all their time to practising the Supreme Vehicle only after their children have grown up and become independent. For instance, upasaka P'ang Yun, who was a family man, only realized Bodhi when he was old and after he had forsaken worldly attachments by dumping all his gold and silver into the Hsiang river<sup>2</sup>

The practice of Taoism is also not easy for it has its rules of morality and discipline, and all Taoists abstain from meat, sexual intercourse, killing, stealing and lying, if by Taoists one understands serious practisers of the doctrine of the Tao, and not worldly men who call themselves Taoists but do not keep its rules.

Their method of meditation consists in sitting cross-legged to regulate the body and concentrating their minds on the spot in the lower abdomen called *Lower Tan T'ien* or *Field of Elixir* which is about one and a half

inches below the navel, and is regarded as the center of gravity in the body. There are three places in the body called Tan T'ien: the *Upper Tan T'ien* between the eyebrows; the *Middle Tan T'ien* between the pit of the stomach and the navel; and the *Lower Tan T'ien* in the lower abdomen. All three play important roles in self-purification: the lower to energize the inner heat; the middle to set in motion the process of sublimating this heat; and the upper to transmute it into Divinity. Constant mental concentration on the Lower Tan T'ien will, in time, enable the breath to reach the lower abdomen and to energize the inner heat like blowing a fire with a pair of bellows. When the inner heat becomes intense and enough has accumulated in the center of gravity, it vibrates and seeks an outlet. At this moment pulmonary breathing ceases and is replaced by abdominal breathing which restores the foetal breath as described by Yin Shih Tsu in my book 'The Secrets of Chinese Meditation', p. 167.

The human body is a microcosm which should integrate into the macrocosm for the realization of Tao. In lay language, the Tao is only attained when body and mind merge with and integrate into the universe. To achieve this it is important to sublimate both body and mind for the purpose of obtaining the Elixir of Life which alone can transform mortals into immortals and so ensure this integration.

In my book on Chinese meditation, I have mentioned the Microcosmic Orbit technique used by the ancients in China, which consists in circulating the inner heat which has been energized, through the main orbit which begins at the Lower Field of Elixir below the navel, descends to the base of the spine, then rises along the spine to the top of the head, and thence descends along the face, throat,

<sup>1</sup> *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*. Rider & Co., London, 1964.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, first series, pp. 74-78. Rider & Co., London.

chest and pit of the stomach to end up where it started, thus completing a full orbit.

In practice, when the energized heat which has accumulated in the lower abdomen seeks an outlet, the practiser should direct it gently down to the base of the spine to pierce the coccyx which is the first of the three gates of the main channel, the second between the kidneys and the third in the occiput. The feeling of intense heat in the coccyx shows that the latter is being pierced. However, if the heat remains there without going up the spine, this shows that the first gate is still obstructed. The practiser should rub with his hands the kidneys and spine *down* to its base to warm the spine above the coccyx in order to draw the heat up. Rubbing should always be *downward*, but never upward; this is the most important point which beginners should keep constantly in mind. After the inner heat has passed through the first gate, it will easily rise through the second to reach the occiput, which is very difficult to pierce. The practiser should persevere and will in time be able to circulate the inner heat through the last gate to complete a full orbit.

During each meditation the practiser will be able to circulate the inner heat in the main channel as many times as he likes. After the main channel has been cleared of all obstructions, the inner heat will enter other psychic channels and centers to sweep away all impurities therein in order to reach and purify all parts of the body including the marrow, bones, flesh, skin, nails and hair. This is purification of the body by means of the pre-natal foetal breath which is pure and cleanses all impurities created by the post-natal breath.

We present below a translation of extracts from Taoist texts so that readers have an idea of how the Elixir of Life is prepared.

"The generative fluid is produced by the digestion of food; if it is not purified it will remain in the body and arouse sexual desire which will disturb the mind. Concentration of mind is necessary to regulate the breath

for the purpose of energizing the inner fire which will sublimate the *generative fluid* and transform it into *pure breath* for the preparation of the Elixir of Life and attainment of *Immortality*."

"When the microcosmic orbiting succeeds, it will after a hundred days of continuous practice, stop involuntary emission when the generative fluid is about to be transmuted into pure breath. At the same time the inner fire should be extinguished. In the course of this transmutation, a flash of *positive* (yang) light will suddenly appear between the eyebrows to illumine the mind. However, the genital organ can still be aroused by sex appeal. After this manifestation of the positive principle, the microcosmic orbiting should be continued for three hundred orbits, after which the practiser should maintain the state of mental stillness in order to preserve the positive principle so far achieved until another flash of light appears.

"In this state of mental stillness, a second flash of positive light will suddenly appear between the eyebrows, illuminating the mind again. This shows that the inner fire is completely extinguished, coinciding with the end of three hundred orbitings. After this the genital organ cannot be aroused again.

"In this state of mental stillness, the body will no longer vibrate or move as the inner fire has been extinguished. The practiser should maintain this stillness to preserve the positive principle until a third flash of positive light appears between the eyebrows, which shows that the breath is wholly positive and is being accumulated in the three Tan T'iens.

"Now is the time to prepare the Elixir of Life which can be obtained in about a week. The method consists in turning back the organ of seeing to look into the Middle Tan T'ien in order to dwell in this stillness by day and night without interruption until the sovereign remedy is made.

"When the Elixir of Life is made, all sense organs vibrate; the positive heat in the Lower Tan T'ien is intense; the kidneys are hot; the eyes emit a golden light; the

ears (seem to be) fanned from behind; the back of the head rattles; and the body (seems to) rise with spasms in the nose. These six signs show that the Elixir of Life has been successfully prepared.

"Now the practiser should close his anus by sitting on a round piece of wood of the size and shape of a man t'ou<sup>3</sup> and covered with cotton and his nostrils with a pair of small wooden pincers (used by laundry men) in anticipation of the rise of a fiery pearl to the heart which (however) does not hold it. To find an outlet, this fiery pearl will descend to the genital organ which has already shrunk and so is blocked; then to the coccyx which is not open; and then to the anus which is not only shut by the piece of wood but should also be contracted to bar its passage. Since the fiery pearl is now stationary at the base of the spine, the practiser should make a pointed concentration to move it and thrust it through the first gate so that it will rise along the spine through the second gate (between the kidneys) and the third gate (in the occiput) before ascending to the top of the head and thence descending to the forehead where it stops in the Upper Tan T'ien, the abode of the Spirit. When the latter illuminates the Middle and Lower Tan T'iens, all the three Fields of Elixir will mingle to expand and become a great emptiness.

"This is the moment when the mind enters the great emptiness wherein the positive fire ceases to work and is no more perceptible. Three months later, only feeble vibrations are still felt below the navel. In the fourth and fifth months, all breathing and the desire to eat cease completely, leaving behind only the still and radiant Spirit. In the sixth and seventh months, there is no desire to sleep. In the eighth and ninth months, all pulses in the body cease to beat. In the tenth month, there remains

only the positive principle while the Spirit returns to its state of utter stillness which causes wisdom to manifest.

"The time is now ripe to draw the Spirit out of the body; first return it to the body as soon as it is out of it, and then send it further and further away until it can reach distant places returning to its body without hindrance. Three years later, the Spirit which is still and shining will be no more Spirit when it sinks into the state of *Wu Chi* or Eternity."

This article is written at the request of Mr. Arthur Osborne, the editor of *The Mountain Path*. As a Buddhist, I would advise readers to adjust the Taoist method of self-purification with the Buddha's Teaching in the *Surangama Sutra*<sup>4</sup> and other sutras in order not to stray from the Buddha-nature which is inherent in each of us. For Taoist Yoga only enables us to return to the all-embracing state of Alaya which still pertains to Samsara. However, experienced Taoists have no difficulty in practising the Buddha-Dharma and in China many enlightened Buddhist masters practised Taoism before joining the Sangha.

There is a non-Taoist method which consists in drawing up semen to the solar plexus to sublimate it and transform it into the divine. I have tried it and found it very harmful for it contributes to the arousal of sexual desire which beginners are unable to overcome. We should always remember that the rules of morality and discipline should be strictly observed in the practice of meditation, and that in the quest of Truth, we should on no account allow the monkey-mind to jump about aimlessly and so destroy all our efforts to get out of Samsara. We should never forget this sentence in the *Diamond Sutra*: "Subhuti, you should develop a mind that does not abide anywhere."

<sup>3</sup> A round steamed dumpling of the size of the palm of the hand.

<sup>4</sup> *The Surangama Sutra*. Rider & Co., London, 1965.



## PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHIST TANTRISM

By LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA\*

The word tantra is related to the concept of weaving and its derivatives (thread, web, fabric, etc.), hinting at the interwovenness of things and actions, the interdependence of all that exists, the continuity in the interaction of cause and effect as well as in spiritual and traditional development, which like a thread weaves its way through the fabric of history and of individual lives. The term tantra (Tib. *rgyud*), therefore, can also stand for tradition, spiritual continuity or succession. Those scriptures, however, which in Buddhism go by the title of 'Tantra', are invariably of a mystic nature and try to establish the inner relationship of things: the parallelism of microcosm and macrocosm, mind and universe, individuality and universality, ritual and reality, the world of matter and the world of the spirit. This is achieved through practices, in which yantra, mantra and mudra — the parallelism of the visible, the audible and the bodily expressible feeling-content in form of gestures — unite the powers of mind (*chitta*), speech (*vak*) and body (*kaya*), in order to realize the final state of completeness and enlightenment.

Thus, applying the words of Guru Gampopa, it may be said that the Buddhist Tantras represent "a philosophy comprehensible enough to embrace the whole of knowledge, a system of meditation which will produce the power of concentrating the mind upon anything whatsoever, and an art of living which will enable one to utilize each activity (of body, speech and mind) as an aid on the Path of Liberation."

Among all the aspects of Buddhism, its Tantric teachings have until now been the most neglected and misunderstood. The reason for this is the fact that these scriptures

cannot be understood merely philologically, but only from the point of view of yogic experience, which cannot be learned from books. Moreover, those books from which information was sought, were written in a peculiar idiom, a language of symbols and secret conventions, which in Sanskrit was called *Sandhyabhasha* (literally "twilight language") because of the double meaning which underlay its words.

This symbolic language was not only a protection against intellectual curiosity and misuse of yogic practices by the ignorant or the uninitiated, but had its origin mainly in the fact that the ordinary language is not able to express the highest experiences of the mind. The indescribable, which is experienced by the sadhaka, the true devotee, can only be hinted at by symbols, similes and paradoxes.

Already Nagarjuna (2nd century. A.D.) made use of the paradox as an expression of the inexpressible nature of ultimate reality, when he declared that "Form is emptiness, and emptiness is not different from form — in fact, emptiness is form. — since all things possess the nature of emptiness, they have neither beginning nor end, they are neither perfect nor imperfect (i.e., they are neither self-sufficient nor yet entirely without individual significance in themselves)." — (*Prajnaparamita-Sutra*)

This ultimate reality, which is both 'form' and 'no-form' and which has been called *sunyata*, the Plenum-Void, in Nagarjuna's philosophy (*sunyavada*) is symbolized by the vajra, the indestructible diamond-sceptre, in the language of the Buddhist Tantras, which form the third "vehicle" (*yana*) of Buddhism: the Vajrayana. Each experience points beyond itself and can therefore not be confined or limited as something that exists in itself, but only

\* For a note on whom see page 215 of our issue of October 1964.

in relationship to other experiences ; and this infinite relationship contains at the same time the unifying element of a living universe, because infinite relationship becomes all-relationship and therewith a metaphysical magnitude, in which samsara and nirvana are the two sides or aspects of the same reality.

While thus Nagarjuna created the theoretical or philosophical foundations of Tantrism, the *Yogacharins* provided the practical and psychological means for the realisation of this profound conception of a spiritual universe. In the application of yogic practices they united the most ancient sources of Indian wisdom and religious inspiration with the meditative experiences which had been developed under the Buddha's guidance and under the influence of his teachings. Thus the Tantras were born, and their impact upon the general religious life of India was so overwhelming that between the 6th and the 8th century Tantrism was introduced into the major schools of Hinduism. The most important Tantras of Shaivism originated in Kashmir, which had been a stronghold of Buddhism and of Buddhist Tantrism in particular. This explains the many similarities between Shaivite and Buddhist Tantras and also the fact that Buddhists accepted Shiva in their pantheon as a Protector of the Dharma.<sup>1</sup>

Western scholars, whose first knowledge of Tantrism came through Hindu literature (and that of a very late date, like the scriptures translated by Sir John Woodroffe), therefore looked upon Buddhist Tantrism as an off-shoot of Shaivism, which was taken over later by more or less decadent Buddhist schools.

Against this view speaks the great antiquity and consistent development of Tantric tendencies in Buddhism. Already the early Mahasangikas had a special collection of mantric formulas in their *Dharani-Pitaka* ; and the *Manjusri-mulakalpa*, which according to some authorities goes back to the first

century A.D., contains not only mantras and *dharanis*, but numerous mandalas and mudras as well. By the end of the third century the Buddhist Tantric System had crystallized into definite form, as we see from the well-known *Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Tib. : *dPal-gsang-hdus-pa*).

Thus, Benoytosh Bhattacharya is fully justified when he declares in his *Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism* that "it is possible to declare, without fear of contradiction, that the Buddhists were the first to introduce the Tantras into their religion, and that the Hindus borrowed them from the Buddhists in later times, and that it is idle to say that later Buddhism was an outcome of Shaivism." (p. 147)

It is, therefore, thoroughly misleading to judge Buddhist Tantric teachings and symbols from the standpoint of Hindu Tantras. The main difference is that Buddhist Tantrism is not Shaktism. The concept of Shakti, of divine power, or the creative female aspect of the supreme God (Shiva) or his emanations, does not play any role in Buddhism ; in fact, the term Shakti never occurs in Buddhist Tantras. In the Hindu Tantras the concept of power (Shakti) forms the focus of interest. The central idea of Tantric Buddhism, however, is *prajna* (transcendental knowledge or wisdom).

To the Buddhist Shakti is maya, the very power that creates illusion, from which only *prajna* can liberate us. It is not the aim of the Buddhist to acquire power or to join himself to the powers of the universe, either to become their instrument or to become their master, but on the contrary, he tries to free himself from those powers, which for aeons kept him a prisoner of samsara. He strives to *perceive* those powers, which have kept him going in the rounds of birth and death, in order to liberate himself from their dominion. At the same time he does not try to negate them or to destroy them, but to transform them in the fire of knowledge, so that they may become forces of enlightenment which, instead of creating further differentiation, flow in the opposite direc-

<sup>1</sup>Just as the Buddha had accepted Brahma, Indra and Shakka.

tion: towards union, towards wholeness, towards completeness.

The attitude of the Hindu Tantras is quite different, if not contrary: "United with Shakti, be full of power", says the *Kula-chudamani Tantra*. "From the union of Siva and Shakti the world is created." The Buddhist, on the other hand, does not strive after the creation and unfoldment of the world, but after the realization of the "un-created, unformed" state of *sunyata*, from which all creation proceeds, or which is prior to and beyond all creation (if one may put the inexpressible into human language).

The becoming conscious of this *sunyata* (Tib.: *stong-pa-nyid*) is *prajna* (Tib.: *shes-rab*) or highest knowledge. The realization of this highest knowledge in life is Enlightenment (*bodhi*; Tib.: *byang-chub*), i.e., if *prajna* (or *sunyata*), the passive, all-embracing female principle, from which everything proceeds and into which everything recedes, is united with the dynamic male principle of active universal love and compassion, which represents the means (*upaya*; Tib.: *thabs*) for the realization of *prajna* and *sunyata*, then perfect Buddhahood is attained. Intellect without feeling, knowledge without love, and reason without compassion lead to pure negation, to rigidity, to spiritual death, to mere vacuity, — while feeling without reason, love without knowledge (blind love), compassion without understanding, lead to confusion and dissolution. But where both are united, where the great synthesis of heart and head, feeling and intellect, highest love and deepest knowledge has taken place, completeness is re-established and perfect enlightenment is attained.

The process of enlightenment is therefore represented by the most obvious, the most human and at the same time the most universal symbol imaginable: the union of male and female in the ecstasy of love, in which the active element (*upaya*) is represented as a male, the passive (*prajna*) as a female figure, in contrast to the Hindu Tantras, in which the female aspect is repre-

sented as *Shakti*, i.e., the active principle, and the male aspect as *Siva*, the state of divine consciousness or 'being', i.e., the passive principle, or 'the resting in its own nature'

In Buddhist symbolism the Knower (Buddha) becomes one with his knowledge (*prajna*), just as man and wife become one in the embrace of love, and this becoming one is the highest indescribable happiness, *mahasukha* (Tib.: *bDe-mchog*). The Dhyani-Buddhas (i.e., the ideal Buddhas visualized in meditation) and the corresponding Dhyani-Bodhisattvas, as embodiments of the active urge of enlightenment, which finds its expression in *upaya*, the all-embracing love and compassion, are therefore represented in the embrace of their *prajna*, symbolized by a female deity, the embodiment of transcendental knowledge.

This is not the arbitrary reversal of Hindu symbology (as some scholars imagined), but the logical application of a principle which is of fundamental importance for the entire Buddhist Tantric system.

By confusing Buddhist Tantrism with the Shaktism of the Hindu Tantras, a basic misconception has been created, which up to the present day has prevented a clear understanding of the *Vajrayana* and its symbolism in iconography as well as in literature, especially that of the Siddhas. These last used a particular form of symbology, in which very often the highest was clothed in the form of the lowest, the most sacred in form of the the most profane, the transcendent in the form of the most earthly, and deepest knowledge in the form of the most grotesque paradoxes. It was not only a language for initiates, but a kind of shock-therapy, which had become necessary on account of the over-intellectualization of the religious and philosophical life of those times.

Though the polarity of male and female principles is recognized in the Tantras of the *Vajrayana* and is an important feature of its symbolism, it is raised to a plane which is as far away from the sphere of mere sexuality as the mathematical juxtaposition of positive

and negative signs, which is as valid in the realm of irrational values as in that of rational or concrete concepts.

In Tibet the male and female Dhyani-Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are regarded as little as 'sexual beings' as in certain schools of Japan; and to the Tibetan even their aspect of union (*yuganaddha*; Tib.: *yab-yum*) is indissolubly associated with the highest spiritual reality in the process of enlightenment, so that associations with the realm of physical sexuality are completely ignored.

We must not forget that the figural representations of these symbols are not looked upon as portraying human beings, but as embodying the experiences and visions of meditation. In such a state, however, there exists nothing that could any longer be called 'sexual'; there is only the super-individual polarity of all life, which rules all mental and physical activities, and which is transcended only in the ultimate state of integration, in the realization of *sunyata*. This is the state which is called *mahamudra* (Tib.: *phyag-rgya-chen-po*), "the Great Symbol", which has given its name to one of the most important systems of meditation in Tibet.

In the earlier forms of Indian Buddhist Tantrism, *Mahamudra* was represented as the 'eternal female' principle, as may be seen from *Advayavajra's* definition: "The words 'great' and 'mudra' form together the term '*mahamudra*'. She is not something (*nihsvabhava*); she is free from the veils which cover the cognizable object and so on; she shines forth like the serene sky at noon during autumn; she is the support of all success; she is the identity of *samsara* and *nirvana*; her body is compassion (*karuna*) which is not restricted to a single object; she is the uniqueness of Great Bliss (*maha-sukhaikarupa*)." <sup>2</sup>

If in one of the most controversial passages of *Anangavajra's* "*Prajnopaya-vinish-*

*caya-siddhi*" <sup>3</sup> it is said that all women should be enjoyed by the *sadhaka* in order to experience the *mahamudra*, it is clear that this cannot be understood in the physical sense, but that it can only be applied to that higher form of love which is *not restricted to a single object* and which is able to see all 'female' qualities, whether in ourselves or in others, as those of the Divine Mother (*prajna-paramita* or transcendental wisdom).

Another passage, which by its very grotesqueness proves that it is meant to be a paradox, and is not to be taken literally, states that "the *sadhaka* who has sexual intercourse with his mother, his sister, his daughter, and his sister's daughter, will easily succeed in his striving for the ultimate goal (*tattva-yoga*)." <sup>4</sup>

To take expressions like 'mother', 'sister', 'daughter' or 'sister's daughter' literally in this connection is as senseless as taking literally the well-known *Dhammapada* verse (No. 294), which says that, after having killed father and mother and two Kshatriya kings, and having destroyed a kingdom with all its inhabitants, the *Brahmana* remains free from sin. Here 'father' and 'mother' stand for 'egoism' and 'craving' (Pali: *asmimana* and *tanha*), the 'two kings' for the erroneous views of annihilation or eternal existence (*uccheda va sassata-ditthi*), the 'kingdom and its inhabitants' for 'the twelve spheres of consciousness' (*dvadasa-yatanani*) and the *Brahmana* for the liberated monk (*bhikkhu*).

To maintain that Tantric Buddhists actually encouraged incest and licentiousness is as ridiculous as accusing the *Theravadins* of condoning matricide and patricide and similar heinous crimes. If we only take the trouble to investigate the living tradition of the Tantras in their genuine, unadulterated forms, as they existed still in our days in thousands

<sup>3</sup> *Prajnopaya-viniscaya-siddhi* in "Two Vajrayana Works", Gaikwad Oriental Series, No. XLIV, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Anangavajra, Prajnopaya-vinishcaya-siddhi* V, 25, quoted in "Yuganaddha" p. 106. A similar statement is found in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*.

<sup>2</sup> *Advayavajra, "Chaturmudra"*, p. 34, quoted in "Yuganaddha" by H. V. Guenther (Chowhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras, 1952).



of monasteries and hermitages of Tibet, where the ideals of sense-control and renunciation were held in the highest esteem, then only can we realize how ill-founded and worthless are the current theories which try to drag the Tantras into the realm of sensuality.

From the point of view of the Tibetan Tantric tradition, the above-mentioned passages can only be meaningful in the context of yoga terminology.

'All women in the world' signifies all the elements which make up the female principles of our psycho-physical personality which, as the Buddha says, represents what is called 'the world'. To these principles correspond on the opposite side an equal number of male principles. Four of the female principles form a special group, representing the vital forces (*prana*) of the Great Elements (*mahabhuta*), Earth, Water, Fire, Air and their corresponding psychic centres (*chakra*) or planes of consciousness within the human body. In each of them the union of male and female principles must take place, before the fifth and highest stage is reached. If the expressions 'mother', 'sister', 'daughter', etc., are applied to the forces of these fundamental qualities of the *mahabhutas*, the meaning of the symbolism becomes clear.

In other words, instead of seeking union with a woman outside ourselves, we have to seek it within ourselves ("in our own family") by the union of our male and female qualities in the process of meditation. This is clearly stated in Naropa's famous Six Doctrines (Tib.: *chos drug bsdu-pahi zin-bris*), upon which the most important yoga-

practice of the *bKah-rgyud-pa* School is based, a *yoga* that was practised by Milarepa (*Mi-la-ras-pa*), the most saintly and austere of all great masters of meditation (whom certainly nobody could accuse of 'sexual practices'). Though we cannot go here into the details of this *yoga*, a short quotation may suffice to prove our point. "The vital force of the Five Aggregates (*skandha*: Tib.: *phung-po*) in its real nature, pertaineth to the masculine aspect of the Buddha-principle manifesting through the left psychic nerve (*ida-nadi*; Tib.: *rkyang-ma rtsa*). The vital force of the Five Elements (*dhatu*; Tib.: *hbyung-ba*), in its real nature, pertaineth to the feminine aspect of the Buddha-principle manifesting through the right psychic nerve (*pingala-nadi*; Tib.: *roma-rtsa*). As the vital force with these two aspects of it in union, descendeth into the median nerve (*sushumna*-Tib.: *dbu-ma rtsa*) gradually there cometh the realization..." and one attains the transcendental boon of the Great Symbol (*mahamudra*; Tib.: *phyag-rgya-chen-po*),<sup>5</sup> the union of the male and female principles (as *upaya* and *prajna*) in the highest state of Buddhahood.

Thus, only if we are able to see the relationship of body and mind, of physical and spiritual interaction in a universal perspective, and if in this way we overcome the "I" and "mine" and the whole structure of egocentric feelings, opinions and prejudices, which produce the illusion of our separate individuality, then only can we rise into the sphere of Buddhahood.

<sup>5</sup> W. Y. Evans-Wentz and Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup: "Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines", p. 220 ff.

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Meditation is the gateway to Knowledge. Though the servant were to serve God for a thousand years and then another thousand but were ignorant of the practice of meditation, all his service would but increase his distance from God.

— AL MUHASIBI.

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## THE PRACTICE OF SHEE NEY (Concentration)

By HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

In the article that he contributed to our issue of April 1964, His Holiness spoke of Buddhism as followed by people in general. Only in the last paragraph did he indicate that a more potent (but also more dangerous) path is available for those who aspire. In the present article he gives some idea of the perseverance and technical know-how that is necessary in order to follow such a path — enough at any rate to show that it cannot be followed from books but requires direct personal guidance.

Essentially SHEE NEY (Concentration) means fixing the stilled mind, the mind while experiencing a state of euphoria on any chosen object. If the concentration is on the Buddhist Refuges it is Buddhist concentration. If it is on Bodichitta, it becomes Mahayanic Buddhist concentration.

When one fully acquires the power of concentration, one not only achieves physical and mental happiness but also acquires supernatural perception and can perform miracles and other wonderful feats. The main purpose is through SHEE NEY to attain the transcendental meditation, (Lhakthong) which realises Sunyata and cuts off samsara at its very root. Almost all the knowledge of Tri-Yana (the three doctrinal expositions made by Buddha) can thus be understood. Therefore this concentration has many advantages. The preliminary requirements for it are as follows :

1. Sound disturbs concentration. So the place to practise concentration should be secluded, solitary and climatically congenial.
2. The practiser should be a person with few needs and easily contented. He should have severed himself from worldly affairs and should abstain from immoral action or speech.
3. He should be well versed in instructions on concentration. He should be fully aware of the ill-effects of desire and the ephemeral nature of the phenomenal world.

To accomplish this type of concentration, Maitreya Buddha (the one who is yet to



come) has taught that one must get free from the five defects by putting into practice the eight kinds of contemplation. The five defects to be given up are :

- (a) An indolent attitude towards concentration.
- (b) Forgetfulness of the object of concentration.
- (c) Interference such as the mind becoming too sluggish or over active.
- (d) Failure in adopting counter measures against such interference.

(e) Adoption of counter measures after the disappearance of the interference.

The eight attitudes of mind that are adopted to avoid these five defects are :

1. Faith in the virtues of concentration.
2. Earnest desire to attain it.
3. Perseverance in following it happily.
4. Ecstatic happiness of mind and body.
5. Remembering to give absolute concentration to the object of concentration.
6. Though the mind is fully concentrating on a particular object a part of it must also be watchful of any inclination to distraction.
7. When danger of distraction is perceived immediate mental preparation must be made to counteract it ; and
8. If and when counter-measures have been taken and their purpose achieved, the thought of such action must then be relaxed.

The implementation of these 8 forms of thought is indispensable.

There are nine rules or stages of concentration. These are :

1. Complete absorption of the mind in the one object of concentration.
2. Constant endeavour to prolong the concentration.
3. Perceiving immediately when one's mind is diverted from the object of concentration and redirecting it to its proper place.
4. Gradually conceiving certain details of the object of concentration.
5. Conceiving the attainment of concentration one should strengthen one's efforts.
6. At this stage one's feeling of aversion to concentration is dispelled and one is in a better position to concentrate without much disturbance.
7. To be immediately aware of and dispel even the slightest distracting thought while in concentration.
8. Having reached the stage when one is capable of dispelling any distraction one must now endeavour to prolong the period of concentration to the furthest ; and

9. Owing to constant practice one can now concentrate without much effort and contemplation comes more or less automatically.

The above nine stages of concentration can be accomplished by means of six forces as follows :

- (1) The force of hearing can accomplish stage one ;
- (2) The force of reflection can accomplish stage two ;
- (3) The force of memory can accomplish stages three and four ;
- (4) The force of wisdom can accomplish stages five and six ;
- (5) The force of energy can accomplish stages seven and eight ; and
- (6) The force of complete acquaintance can accomplish stage nine.

The first and second stages of concentration require the most strenuous absorption of the mind. In the next five stages (3, 4, 5, 6, and 7) one has attained a certain amount of practice and concentration is possible with some breaks from time to time. In the eighth stage the mind can now concentrate fully as may be required. In the ninth or last stage one is able to practise perfect concentration without having to make any effort.

When one has understood the purpose, the order of stages in concentration and the distinction between each stage and implemented them, it will not be difficult to acquire profound meditation. This is a general type of concentration, but when one applies concentration to one's own mind it has other purposes.

To concentrate on mind one must first be able to identify what is mind. Mind is not visible, it has no shape, colour or size, and yet it can provide thought and imagination and identify anything that can be felt or is visible. Once you are able to recognise the mind you can take it as the object of concentration and proceed with the same process of abandoning the five defects and

implementing the eight forms of thought in the nine stages of concentration by means of the six forces.

What we have said above is a very brief extract of the instruction given by Maitreya Buddha and Ayasanga on meditation.

As mentioned above, if concentration is performed in accordance with the nine stages then at the ninth stage it becomes

possible without effort or distraction and can be prolonged at will, thus achieving mental and physical happiness. After attaining effective mental and physical happiness, if further absolute concentration is applied then profound meditation has been achieved. This achievement is classified as the preparatory stage of the bodily meditation which is one of the three forms of meditation.

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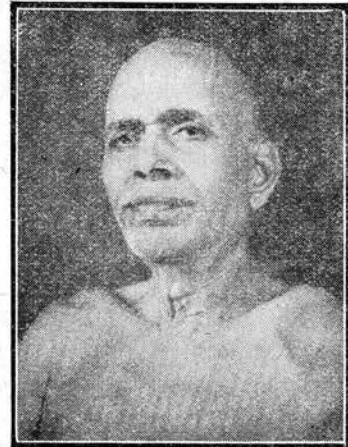
## ARUNACHALA RAMANA

By G. L. N.

To think of Arunachala is Salvation! Let our mind be ever absorbed in the thought of Arunachala.

Sri Arunachala and Sage Ramana were both aspects of the One. They were manifestations and visible symbols of Transcendental Reality the realisation of which liberates man from the thralldom of Maya. The Holy Hill was the *Mula Vighraha* and Bhagavan Ramana was the *Utsava Murthi*. Ramana Maharshi dramatised and vivified the Eternal Truth for which the Sacred Arunachala stands. It was necessary in order to re-enthroned in the hearts of people an abiding faith in the glory of Arunachala. The sacredness of Arunachala is not a myth, but very real — this was emphasized by Bhagavan Ramana by his own example, and by precept.

The lofty peak that was reached by people through the several paths leading to it; the pinnacle of Light that shone gloriously and invitingly above, far above, the din and bustle, the noise and turmoil, the misery and suffering, of worldly life; the Holy Hill on which dwelt Yogis, Bhaktas, Jnanis, aspirants pursuing the various paths to the Supreme Godhead — represents the Absolute Brahman, the Goal of all, the Transcendental Reality that beckons you to merge yourself in its limitless bliss.



Calm, self-absorbed, silent, blissful and serene, Sage Ramana conveyed the very same message; only that message was illuminated by his own illustrious life. It became a living message and therefore more convincing to the modern mind.

The pinnacle of glory and Self-illumination that Bhagavan Ramana reached every one can reach, if only one is prepared to ascend the hill of Sadhana. People should have faith in the Scriptures, in the words of a Siddha-Purusha and in themselves. They should ceaselessly strive to attain the Eternal. That is the Message of Arunachala and Ramana.

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## HERMETIC SYMBOLISM

By SAGITTARIUS

With due apologies, our editor is too much of a theoretician.<sup>1</sup> In India Tantrism may still be a living path that people can follow; but in the West Hermetism, its Western equivalent, is not. Therefore its study can have no more than an academic interest. It is certainly not one of the "paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world" which *The Mountain Path*, by its own announcement, professes to clarify.

Once a tradition dies it cannot be revived. Understanding its symbolism does not enable one to follow it as a path. For that there would have to be an unbroken transmission of its technique through a chain of gurus, and this is just what is lacking; in fact that is why it died. Alchemy as a spiritual science has long ceased to exist. Masonry is no longer an operative technique of building cathedrals and characters simultaneously. Some few astrologers delve into the symbolism of their science but the skill has long vanished that could use it as a technique of the quest. This is a time when more simple and direct techniques are needed. Therefore they are available; because Divine Providence always makes available what is needed.

Having said this, it may be interesting (though no more than interesting) to see how Hermetic symbolism was used in former times. There are a number of great Renaissance writers—Cervantes, Shakespeare and Rabelais among them—whose work contains symbolism of the Quest in one or another of its many forms. Malory's *Morte d' Arthur* is a veritable treasure-house of symbolism. It was natural that writers who had a precious lore which they knew to be vanishing should wish to leave a record of it; and just because it was vanishing few people would care to read a direct exposi-

tion of it. So it was wrapped up in symbols in works whose sheer literary excellence carried it through the ages until the time should come when men were again interested to seek and to recover records of past search. That time has now come. Granted that the masses, both of the ignorant and the learned, are more unenlightened spiritually than ever before, nevertheless a new impetus is driving small groups and isolated rebels to reject modern ignorance and seek the perennial philosophy that has been lost.

Moreover Hermetism is by its very nature symbolical and lends itself to symbolical treatment. With its roots in alchemy, astrology and masonry, it is or was an intricate science for the rectification and harmonisation of the experimenter, leading stage by stage through the lesser mysteries to the greater. It is interesting to note that, like Tantrism in India, it was not a science for the recluse or the celibate but was open to the laity, just as Tantrism was to non-Brahmins.

Another Christian development with a basic resemblance to Tantrism was the cult of the Madonna, the 'Mother of God'. Closely allied to this was the troubadour's adoration of his lady who, according to the rules of the art, was supposed to be humanly inaccessible to him. In fact the wife of some person of higher rank was often cast for the part. However that does not concern us here.

The masonry may have used much the same symbolism that Free Masonry does to-day, but it was also an operative science by which the building of the highly symbolical Gothic cathedrals was at the same time a technique of training for the builder. Not only the general form but all the proportions were rigidly determined by the laws of symbolism.

<sup>1</sup> Rebuke merited.—EDITOR.

Spiritual alchemy was a science by which the baser elements in oneself were transmuted into pure gold. This was no poetic fancy. Nor was it mere theory or philosophical speculation. It normally did involve actual experimentation with physical substances but, strange though that may appear, these symbolised microcosmic and macrocosmic forces and aimed at developing the stunted faculties and rectifying the warped impulses of the experimenter and conversion of his lower tendencies into higher. It was only the bogus alchemist and the quack who was impelled by greed of gain and whose object really was to make gold and grow rich quick. From this point of view, what comes nearest to alchemy in modern times is psycho-analysis; but alchemy was more complete and more scientific.

The central and most important difference is that the aspirant was guided towards higher states of spiritual equilibrium and even realization by guides who had themselves attained these states, whereas psycho-analysis knows nothing of any such attainment and has no guides to it. A psychologist may disbelieve in religion, like Freud, or believe in it, like Jung, but this is not a question of belief but of knowledge and attainment. The state of 'individuation' to which Jung's treatment is supposed to lead is merely the state of the ordinary mundane man bounded by sense experience and rational understanding, who may (or may not) be competent to begin the course of training for higher development which was the sole purpose of Hermetism. At least one modern psychologist, Dr. Hans Jacobs, has been percipient enough to see that Hindu sadhana (and one could say the same of Western Hermetism) begins where Western psycho-therapy ends.<sup>2</sup>

A second important difference, resulting from the first, is that Hermetism insisted on moral purity. It is difficult to generalise about modern psychologists, since they are divided into so many schools, but it can be

said on the whole that they reject the idea of sin and teach their victims not to feel guilt for wrong things done but to explain them away, while there are some who, in certain cases, advise the exorcising of harmful impulses by indulging them. In contrast to this, Hermetism insisted on purity and dedication before even beginning the Great Work. It had to be undertaken in a spirit of reverence and devotion. So far was it from being motivated by greed for gold that the experimenter was pledged to desirelessness and poverty. He was warned that without perfect purity his experiments could not succeed. This attitude was not merely an unthinking echo of a pious age but was rigorously scientific. It is egoism that warps a man's impulses and stunts his faculties, giving rise to anger, fear and desire and destroying his peace of mind. A valid training will, therefore, insist on the abandonment of all conscious egoism while hunting for the hidden roots of unconscious egoism. It is only when these are torn out that serenity and equilibrium will be attained. Any course of treatment which connives at egoism can at best change the nature of the disequilibrium but cannot cure it.

The love and purity that were demanded were not mere emotionalism, such as one finds too often in a modern religious revival, but were combined with knowledge, without which no solid achievement is likely to be made. Together with the symbolism of alchemy, that of astrology also was used. The use of astrology for prediction was a practical adaptation analogous to physical experimentation in alchemy. It might be very effective when properly handled, nevertheless the element of self-seeking in it brought it into contempt and was ultimately largely responsible for the condemnation of astrology as a whole. Its higher and purer use was as a Hermetic technique for the training of aspirants. Lest this seem a vague statement, a brief outline follows of some of its main features.

From the aspirant's horoscope were seen the various harmonising or conflicting quali-

<sup>2</sup> See *Western Psycho-Therapy and Hindu Sadhana*, Allen and Unwin,

ties in him, indicating what particular course his training should take. Jacob Boehme, the great mystic philosopher of the Renaissance period who left an explicit record of the vanishing science, declares quaintly that if a certain planet becomes too obstreperous it should be whipped and stood in a corner. In other words, if the tendency symbolised by a planet dominates too much, distorting the equilibrium of one's nature and finding expression in inadmissible ways, it must be disciplined and held in check.

The symbolism was both real and intricate. The sun in a person's horoscope is his deepest and most genuine nature (how he reveals himself in moments of sudden crisis or bare sincerity) and may be quite different from the impression he makes on others and on himself in day-to-day living. The moon, on the other hand, is his emotional, temperamental nature. So, for instance, one who has the sun in Aries and the moon in Taurus will be easy-going, conservative, restful, in his daily life but when necessary will show a capability for enterprise and initiative which will surprise those who think they know him. On the other hand, one who has the sun in Taurus and the moon in Aries will be lively, alert and original in manner and speech, but one will gradually come to see that his initiative is in defence of security and established order, not in defiance of them. Furthermore, the sun and moon may be in harmonious or inharmonious relationship with one another; the solar nature may reinforce the lunar or clash with it. The Hermetist whose training was based on a study of his horoscope would be taught to make his solar nature dominate over his lunar when there was need for a decision. If the two clashed he would have to temper one with the other, see which impulses stemmed from one and which from the other and decide which were appropriate in the given circumstances.

We say that 'he' must undertake this adjustment, but who is this 'he'? Obviously the mind; and the mind is Mercury, that is Hermes, the presiding spirit of Hermetism,

the intermediary, the messenger of the gods, the hermaphrodite, neither male nor female, neither aggressive nor receptive, whose function is to inform and understand, even to manipulate, the planetary forces. His nature too is indicated by his position in the horoscope: it may show, for instance, the sympathetic understanding of water, the intellectual understanding of air, the passionate, ardent understanding of fire, or the sober, practical understanding of earth. Insofar as he is the manipulator he may be regarded as the most important planet in the horoscope, and yet he too can be dangerous and require discipline. Being a ruler of dual signs, he can be undecided; being neither male nor female, he can be sterile; governing air and earth, he can lack the sympathy of water and the ardour of fire. If not watched he can degenerate into the dry scholar or timid critic, afraid to act.

Next come Mars and Venus, male and female, aggression and conciliation, the only real opposites in the horoscope (for although Jupiter and Saturn are in some ways opposite, as will be shown below, it must be remembered that zodiacally they are not, Jupiter being opposite to Mercury, while Saturn is to the sun and moon). But the opposition can be harmonized into a wedding; and it is significant that in Graeco-Latin mythology they are indeed husband and wife.<sup>3</sup> An element of aggression, assertion, enterprise, is necessary in every one who takes the path; without it he would never venture and therefore never attain. But an element of harmony and conciliation is also necessary or he would rush headlong to ruin. A study of the horoscope will show of what nature each of these is and in what relation they stand to each other as well as to the other planetary forces, indicating how they need to be developed, co-related, disciplined which needs to be strengthened and which toned down, and in what direction to watch out for dangers.

<sup>3</sup>I am speaking here only of the symbolical basis of Western Hermetism. In Hindu astrology Venus is male.



And finally the mighty couple of Jupiter and Saturn. The entire quest is a two-fold process of expansion and contraction, symbolised by these two planets, expanding a man's faculties while at the same time crushing him to the point of 'self-naughting', as the mediaeval mystics put it. Christ said that a man must be poor enough to pass through the eye of a needle. He also said that when a man attains the kingdom of heaven all else shall be added to him. This represents two successive stages: first contraction of the ego to nothingness, then infinite expansion. But in actual practice the two stages are seldom clearly divided. The adding and subtraction or expansion and squeezing go on side by side, and that is the trouble. An aspirant may go through alternate phases of expansion, when grace floods his heart and the quest is a lilt of joy, and contraction when he seems to have lost everything he had gained on the path and to be squeezed to the bones, when all is dryness and he is tempted to despond and can do nothing but grit his teeth and hold on with grim perseverance. In this sense, Jupiter is the benefic and Saturn the malefic; but there is also another sense in which Jupiter represents a grave danger to the aspirant from which only the stern discipline of Saturn can save him. That is when the process of expansion takes the form of new powers and perceptions on the subtle plane which may seduce him from his path, as Circe did the companions of Odysseus. Like Circe, they may also turn their victims into swine. A true guru will encourage no such things. Let them come after the kingdom of heaven has been attained, as Christ said. The Maharshi said that even when powers come unsought they should not be accepted. They are like a rope to tether a horse.

This outline may serve to show how vital and at the same time how intricate the symbolism was. However a concrete example carries more weight than generalisations, so let us trace Shakespeare's use of astrological symbolism in 'Twelfth Night'.

The Duke and Olivia are the sun and moon. The Duke is lovesick for Olivia, but

a sickly, romantic love for a beauty he has never seen. This represents the man who pines nostalgically for the ideal state of a lost childhood or imagined perfection. No such state can be recaptured. A person who retains the mind of a child when he grows up, thereby avoiding the 'fall' into adult sophistication, becomes a monstrosity. What was lovable in the child becomes offensive in one who should have outgrown it. The virtual or ideal perfection of childhood cannot be recovered; it must be actualised as the virtual perfection of the Earthly Paradise is to be actualised in the realized perfection of the Heavenly Jerusalem. This, to bring in another item of Mediaeval symbolism, was the 'squaring of the circle'. The circle represents the virtual perfection where no point strays further from the centre than any other. But a man is dragged out on one side by desire and pushed in on another by fear until all symmetry of form is lost. Then, when he takes up the Great Work, he sets himself not to recover the lost circle, which would be impossible, but to hammer the form foursquare.

Attainment of actualised perfection is brought about by the 'Hermetic marriage', that is by the interposition of Mercury (Hermes in Greek, whence the name 'Hermetism') between sun and moon. Mercury is the Messenger of the gods. He is equated with intellectual intuition and therefore more or less equivalent to the Hindu 'buddhi'. The ancient Greeks symbolised him also by the phallus, another instrument of union. It was a saying of the alchemists that Mercury is the true Christ, the Mediator between God and man. He is represented in mythology as hermaphrodite, as having both sexes or none. Astrologically he is the ruler of Virgo, the virgin sign, and Gemini, the heavenly twins. And this brings us back to 'Twelfth Night', where Mercury appears as the twin sister and brother, Viola and Sebastian, who intervene between sun and moon, Duke and Olivia.

Olivia, the 'moon', the human nature or temperament according to astrology, is the



person needing treatment. Her household (horoscope) is in a terrible state of disarray. Sir Toby Belch is the very picture of a degenerate Jupiter — his expansiveness degenerated into gluttony, his magnanimity into boastfulness, his grandeur into riotousness. He is in conjunction with Mars, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in Taurus (as he himself says). Taurus, it will be remembered, is the 'detriment' of Mars, where he is apt to be quarrelsome but cowardly, which is just what Sir Andrew was. Malvolio, a hypocritical Puritan, scheming and coldly ambitious, is just as much a caricature of Saturn as Sir Toby is of Jupiter or Sir Andrew of Mars in detriment. Olivia's pert, pretty, flirtatious maid is Venus. Although Mercury as a Divine Agent is represented as

the twins, Viola and Sebastian, Mercury in a human sense, as an ingredient in Olivia's household or horoscope is the Fool: clever, pert and flippant.

With brilliant wit and technique the twins are introduced into this menage and restore order in it by accomplishing the 'Hermetic Marriage', the male twin wedding Olivia and the female the Duke, while the disordered 'planets' are disciplined and brought to order. Here is evidence enough that, humanist as he was, Shakespeare was more also. He had knowledge of the hidden Hermetic science which, even in his day, was being forgotten and abandoned. To some extent it is still possible to study it but not to relive it. To think otherwise would only be fooling oneself. And others.

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## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

By A. RAO

A pretty children's tale is found  
Of how a lady slept spell-bound  
Through time's long night, till for her sake  
A daring rescuer should break  
Through many perils and with a kiss  
Wake her to endless bliss.

In each man's heart she sleeps, her dower  
The lost domain of man's true power.  
The same she is  
As that coiled serpent of the East  
Who, when released,  
Strikes up from stage to higher stage  
Till, breaking through the mental cage,  
Blaze the white-shining ecstasies.

First the wise man gave the knight  
The sword of concentration, bright,  
Invulnerable; for defence  
A cloak, invisible to sense,  
Of pure detachment. Yet alone  
The hero fought and won

Where many fell along the way  
To visions, learning, pride, display,  
To harlots claiming to be her  
Whose waking wakes her rescuer,  
Or taverns where the weaklings rest,  
Called but not chosen for the quest.

Blest now the land!  
Humbled the tyrant mind!  
Freedom erect to stand  
For all mankind!

Now, ever after —  
Joy, serene laughter!  
Fallen the prison wall  
Roof-tree and rafter!  
Never to be built again  
Life's house of pain,  
Never hereafter!

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## SWAMI NITYANANDA, SIDDHA AND AVADHUTA

By PRATIBHA TRIVEDI

Swami Nityananda of Ganeshpuri, who died as recently as August 1961, was one of the great spiritual masters of our times. He was a Siddha, that is a man of powers, of whom many miracles are recorded, an Avadhūta or wandering solitary one outside the regular paths and schools. What sort of path or sadhana he followed in his early life and whether he had a guru or not is not known.

He became famous as the Lord of Ganeshpuri, a township that sprang up around him outside Bombay. Its very existence was a wonder. It was a desolate jungle spot in which a sadhu wearing only a loincloth and with no possessions took up his abode some twenty years back. Feeling the power and grace that emanated from him, devotees flocked around and built houses there so as to be near to him. Donations poured in and although he kept and wanted nothing for himself, his advice was practical in worldly as well as in spiritual matters and a complete township grew up around him with electricity and water supply, hotels, shops, schools, dispensary, rest-houses for sadhus, etc. As his fame spread ever wider such crowds thronged there that queues had to be formed to have darshan of him.

His own life remained as simple and bare of possessions as ever. He sat on a stone platform covered with an old blanket, clad only in a loincloth, accessible to all who came, until towards the end the crowds grew too large and had to be regulated. He wanted nothing, valued nothing. He would often say, "All is dust". And yet he was supremely compassionate, moved by the slightest suffering. Thousands came to him for help and protection. Some of them were spiritual aspirants seeking his Grace; others sought his blessings for worldly success—business or profession, employment, health, family,



all manner of human pre-occupations; all he received with like compassion and all alike knew him as Baba or Father. But even while giving advice on worldly matters he never abandoned the standpoint of the One

Self, bidding the recipients of his Grace see all in the One and the One in all.

It was about half a century back that he first became known as a wandering Swami. Before going to Ganeshpuri he stayed for some years in the district of Māngalore, where he was known for his healing powers and the wide profusion of miracles he performed. At this time he had an ashram at Kanhangad which is now known as Sri Nityananda Ashram. About four miles away from it there is a deep cave in a wild part of the forest in the hills where he performed tapas, and this is known as Guruban.

During this period of his life Swami Ramdas has recounted the following meeting with him. "Swami Nityanand, a great yogi, was residing in Hosdrug. He made several improvements in the old, neglected Hosdrug fort. He was attracting people from all parts of the South Kanara District and even from far off places. His darshan was rightly considered by devotees to be of immense spiritual benefit. Ramdas had the opportunity of meeting him once when he was dwelling in the Panch-Pandava caves. He had no cloth on his body except a kaupin.<sup>1</sup> He was dark in complexion, but possessed a tall, fully-developed, well-proportioned body. One of his characteristic features was that his face was always suffused with most bewitching smiles. As he was seen always sunk in divine bliss his devotees gave him the name Nityanand, meaning 'everlasting bliss'. One day, towards the end of the second year of the ashram,<sup>2</sup> one of the ashramites, Krishnappa, brought him to us. We gave him due honour and made him drink the cool water of a tender coconut. He did not speak a word. After remaining with us for about ten minutes he went away."<sup>3</sup>

Similarly when at Ganeshpuri, he was established permanently in the Self-lumi-

nous and Self-existent state of Satchidananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, beyond the duality of good or bad, high or low, beyond even the apparent duality of knowledge or ignorance, liberation or bondage. And yet, although all passed as a two-dimensional shadow before his eyes, he did in fact see and hear and distinguish and could approve or disapprove of what people did on the plane of good and evil on which they were content to abide and bestow on them what were benefits on the level of values to which they clung.

He did not teach in words. He had little use for books or theory. "Books are for those who are not secure in knowledge. Stable, eternal and indivisible is Knowledge," he said.

He did not teach dependence on any power outside oneself. "By one's own thoughts one can be bad; by one's own thoughts one can be good also. God does neither good nor harm to any one."

He did not give initiation as usually understood and gave no mantra to repeat, laid down no technique of spiritual practice. The power of his presence was enough. His proximity would itself calm and purify the mind. One sat before him and doubts and anxieties were smoothed away; questions that had worried one did not seem worth asking. Parched souls felt coolness near him and those in distress found peace.

He did not instruct his devotees openly in words but sometimes threw out hints obliquely in a way that only the person for whom they were intended would understand. Indeed, this was perhaps necessary since he never gave a private interview to anyone but had to be approached and questioned openly in the presence of others. But his real teaching did not depend on verbal answers at all; it was an eloquent silent influence on the heart of the seeker.

Nevertheless, he did in fact guide seekers on the path. He was not merely a lamp to give light to others but to kindle their lamps also. He was a Siddha-Yogi, a man of strange powers. If he looked inactive it was

<sup>1</sup> loincloth.

<sup>2</sup> This means of Anandashram, the ashram of Swami Ramdas — EDITOR

<sup>3</sup> 'In the Vision of God' by Swami Ramdas, p. 450 of the 1962 edition. Published by Bhavan's Book University, Chaupatty, Bombay-7.

as a top does when spinning at high speed, seeming the more stationary the faster it rotates. Under the silent radiation of his power the dormant spirit of the aspirant who approached him in true sincerity awakened and came to life. This silent transmission of Divine Power from Master to disciple is known as Shaktipata, about which the Vayavya Samhita writes: "When by the mere sight, touch or word of a Guru divine consciousness is immediately opened in a person it is known as Shambhavi diksha." When asked by a disciple he would recommend some type of sadhana according to the needs of the particular person who asked. In general he stressed the importance of meditation and devotion to the Guru. However, his silent spiritual influence was the most potent factor. Sometimes also he canalised the flow of power by the laying on of hands. The effect of this could be tremendous. It often resulted in awakening the dormant Kundalini in the disciple.

There are many still living who had the good fortune of being blessed by his touch or presence and experienced the power and skill of his guidance. He was a dynamo of energy and a power-house of shakti. He was a Satguru who took full responsibility for the guidance of his disciples.

Although he taught mainly by silence, very little in words, the following pregnant sayings of his may well be pondered:

"There is no contentment without purification of mind and no Liberation without purification of consciousness by which one merges into Atman like a piece of ice placed in water."

"One must live in the world like a boat on the sea — on it but separate from it."

"It is not bhakti to give a man some money or a meal in charity. Bhakti is uni-

versal love. Seeing God in all beings without the least idea of duality is bhakti."

"Turn inwards. Without meditation the mind cannot be steadied."

"When the ego is completely destroyed the world is seen as a reflection."

"Detach yourself from the world if you would realize your true Self."

"Liberation means seeing the One in all and all in the One."

"Hate and anger are signs of ignorance."

"If you have a pure heart and true urging God is not far away."<sup>4</sup>

In greatness and glory he can be compared with Sai Baba of Shirdi,<sup>5</sup> and indeed, there is a certain similarity between them, since he also taught his disciples to seek through complete devotion and surrender to the Guru. The greater the devotion and more wholehearted the surrender the more powerful flow of Shaktipata does it evoke and the greater therefore is the disciple's progress. He was like Sai Baba also in giving no formal initiation and no mantra. And both alike discouraged theorising and excessive reading. Neither of them wrote anything.

Although this great Master passed away in 1961, the atmosphere of Ganeshpuri is still charged with his Presence. He is buried there and his shrine has become a centre of pilgrimage for thousands. They feel the force of Shaktipata and are silently strengthened and guided on the path as they were in his lifetime.

<sup>4</sup> From a collection of sayings noted down by a lady disciple and published in Kannada under the title 'Chidakashgita' translated into English by M. P. Pandit under the title 'Voice of the Self'.

<sup>5</sup> For whom see an article in our issue of July 1964. See also 'The Incredible Sai Baba' by Arthur Osborne, published by Orient Longmans, Calcutta, and Rider & Co., London.

Both at birth and death one is free. Maya comes in only in between.

— SWAMI NITYANANDA



## A YANTRA FOR SCORPION STINGS

By ETHEL MERSTON

To my dispensary in the U.P. would come scorpion stung patients in agony, but no medicine was efficacious in stopping the pain under hours. Left to itself it can continue for 24 hours or more.

The English engineer who was then building the Dufferin Bridge over-road, while visiting me one day was telling me stories of his career and, amongst them how, at a tiny local station on the line, the station-master, an Indian, had taught him a yantra for scorpion stings so prevalent amongst the coolies working on the lines, who are often stung when they disturb scorpions while raising old sleepers. The yantra, which my friend had used for years, rarely failed to relieve the pain at once. It was just what I needed and I begged him to teach me the drawing and its use. He did so and it has never failed to cure a patient within two or three minutes of application. Only in one case, where the patient had been stung some twenty hours before coming to the dispensary and the poison had travelled right up the arm and down the back did the cure take some 15 minutes perhaps. The procedure is as follows :

First, where possible, tourniquet the stung limb well above the extreme point of the pain.

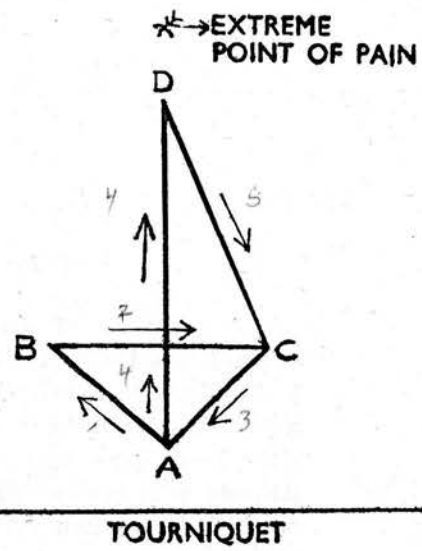
Next, take a pen (but not a gold-nibbed fountain pen) and on the skin of the patient, between the tourniquet and the extreme point of pain, draw the yantra in ink in one continuous movement, running A to B to C to A to D to C.

The line A D should, as it were, shoot at the point of pain and should be rather longer than AB or CA.

Having drawn the yantra, ask the patient where the pain is now. He will point to a

spot nearer to the sting, the poison having retracted. Draw the yantra again towards the point he mentions. Then again ask and again draw, and so on until the poison has retracted to the stung place. There one may have to do the yantra several times around the spot, always with AD pointed

⊙ → STING



inwards to the sting, before the pain goes entirely. If no very long time has elapsed between the sting and the time the patient has treatment, two or three drawings usually suffice on the limb and perhaps three or four at the sting before the pain vanishes completely. In the case of the poor man who had delayed so long before coming and who could not be tourniqueted, he had yantras about every two inches up his back and down his arm to the sting in his hand; he was covered in pen and ink drawings before I had done with him!

Now, readers may ask, "How does this yantra work?" I don't know, no one has ever been able to explain it to me. Has it to do with the metal in the nib or chemical in the ink to which the poison is allergic and before which it retreats? Is it iron in the nib and the combination of it and the ink? Thinking it might be this, I tried one day with a rusty nail and ink, and it worked just as well — this is useful to know in a village where the stung patients are likely to be illiterate and have no pen or ink, or a city where steel nibs are obsolete.

I should much like some chemist to tell me what there is in scorpion poison that

could be allergic to and retreat before a constituent of the nib or ink, but then, of course, any squiggle would work as well as the yantra, which it does not.

I myself was once stung by a scorpion I had picked up from my pillow thinking it to be a dead leaf, and though I could draw the yantra only very shakily with my left hand, it worked immediately, the pain left entirely and there were no after effects, not even soreness from the sting.

The yantra is indeed a useful remedy in this scorpion-infested land.

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## DARSHAN

*By* DR. K. B. PISPATI

A sannyasin of about 30 or 35 came into the hall one day when I was there. He was an M.A. of Bombay University who had retired to a solitary place to lead a life of tapas. While sitting in his cave one day he saw a number of concentric circles; then there was a loud noise and a vision of Bhagavan Ramana who advised him to go to his Ashram and see him. He prostrated and then sat down and asked a few questions about yoga.

When we went out I spoke with him and asked him why he had taken sannyas. He said he was not interested in the life of the world but only in yoga. He said that he often had visions of Bhagavan and saw him as clearly as to-day. He said that the purpose of his visit to the Ashram was attained, and soon after he left.

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## HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

### VI

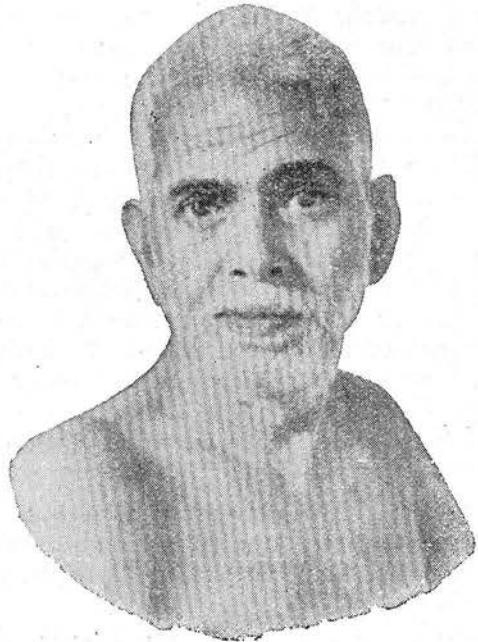
By FIROZA TALEYARKHAN

Many people ask me why I am living here in Tiruvannamalai, so I would like to write about my experiences and how my Lord Ramana brought me here and kept me here. I have been very fortunate from childhood up in coming in contact with high souls and saints, amongst them the renowned woman saint Babajan whose life was a mystery, no one knowing where she came from or how old she was. It happened one day that I took her for a drive in Poona when we were there and as we passed the Fort she pointed to it and said, "King Shivaji and I used to play here." I was stunned because that would make her several centuries old. She was a great saint. Thousands of people benefited from her blessings. Poor people became rich and others became sadhus or saints. Even now prayers made at her shrine are answered. She showered her Grace on me and played a great part in my life, but here I have no space to write about all that.

Then there was Harilal Baba who stood in the Ganges at Benares looking at the sun from sunrise to sunset. He never stirred even when there were storms and floods and the water passed over him. He became blind from staring at the sun, but his inner light was powerful. I had the wonderful experience of his Grace and blessings.

I became attached to dear Gandhiji and Ba, his wonderful wife, who was a little saint. Gandhiji invited me to stay with him. I could have chosen that kind of life. His love and kindness were overwhelming. But I felt that politics were not my line; I was in search of something real which I did not know.

I was in Budh Gaya for ten years making sadhana. Of course, there was great benefit



and I had wonderful experiences; still my heart was aching to meet some one who could really show me God. One day of Grace I met some one who told me about Ramana Maharshi. I had never heard of him before. The moment I opened the book about him I was struck by the beauty of his face. I immediately wrote to Ramanashram but did not receive an encouraging reply, so I dropped the idea of going there.

Swami Yogendra and I planned to open an ashram for ladies together called 'The Home of Devotion'. (The Swami now has an Ashram at Khar.) We started trying to organize it but then I thought that before embarking on our new venture I would go to Tiruvannamalai to ask the Maharshi for his blessings. I stayed there for four days and showed him the prospectus of our

scheme and asked for his blessings on it. I left thinking that I had them, as it was not his way to say definitely 'yes' or 'no' when people told him their schemes. But to my great surprise we shortly received a refusal from the government to rent us the land and buildings on Kadevly Hill which they had promised us. You can imagine my disappointment. I really lost my temper with Sri Bhagavan. I was wondering why they called him 'Bhagavan', for what sort of blessings were these? It was only much later that I understood that I had had his Grace all along. I went back to Tiruvannamalai longing to say: "How can I believe in you after what has happened to my cherished scheme?" Meanwhile a lady came to the Ashram and told Bhagavan that she was working hard to collect money to help people in distress and asked him whether that was not a good thing to do. Bhagavan took a book and showed her a passage to read. As I was sitting beside her I could read it too and it made me smile. Bhagavan looked at me and said: "It's for you too."

It said: "A frail woman who has the peace of God can do more to help a country or mankind than all the intellectuals put together."

That very moment something within me told me that he was right. He knew that I was not yet ripe for the responsible work of helping others. I needed to cure myself before trying to cure others. For the first time I got up and prostrated before him and from that moment my life, mind and heart changed and I felt his unbounded Grace flowing over me. I will tell one or two things that happened later.

I was sitting on the Hill talking to Visvanathan, an old devotee<sup>1</sup> one afternoon and asked him what had happened to the house where Bhagavan was born. He said that he had no idea. I was shocked to hear this and told him that in Western countries the birthplaces of great men were preserved just as

they were left, and even more so that of Bhagavan should belong to us and be kept as a place of pilgrimage. I ran straight away to the office of the Sarvadhikari, Niranjanananda Swami<sup>2</sup> and asked him about it. He said that there was a school in the house. I asked him to write that very evening and say that I wanted to buy it. Now it is Ashram property and regular puja is performed there.

After this the Sarvadhikari asked me to go to Madras and see the Minister Sri Bhaktavatsalam about the possibility of getting railway connection to Tiruchuzi, Bhagavan's birthplace. I went but was shocked when I heard how much it would cost. I decided to leave it to Bhagavan and thought no more about it, but imagine my joy some years later when Sri Bhaktavatsalam became Chief Minister of Madras and the line was actually constructed. Tiruchuzi has now become a much more important town. Bhagavan's Grace is sufficient to accomplish anything, big or small, if one's entire life and soul are laid at his feet. He has brought about many seemingly impossible things for me.

I also had the grace of Bhagavan when Mr. Tarapore, a Parsi friend, took up my plan for renovating the Patala Linga, an underground cavern where Bhagavan had sat performing austerities as a youth when he first came to Tiruvannamalai. He did this beautifully at his own expense and Sri Rajagopalachari, the then Governor-General of India, came over to perform the opening ceremony. This also has now become a place of pilgrimage.

Before I close I must mention also the loving devotion of the Sarvadhikari and the strong faith and selfless service with which he worked. It is due to him that we have these whole magnificent Ashram buildings where formerly was nothing but bare ground.

<sup>1</sup> Author of the article on Sri Ganapathi Muni in this issue.—(EDITOR)

<sup>2</sup> For an account of whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of Jan. 1964.—(EDITOR)



# “THIS”—AND ALL THAT

By WEI WU WEI

In dualistic language “I” just stands for the Latin “ego” which is a concept without any factual existence, i.e. a complex which must be resolved because its psychological presence constitutes bondage. But, used as a metaphysical term, it implies This-which-we-are as opposed to That-which-we-think-we-are but are not.

That, which is sensorially perceptible is demonstrably only an image in mind and, as such, can have no nature of its own. But the sentience of every sentient being must have a centre via which its functioning is directed, this “centre” of each sentient object being as purely phenomenal as the sentient appearance. Such centre is devoid of volition, as of autonomy of any kind; it is, not, therefore, an “ego”, and it cannot think self-consciously as “I”.

Identification of This-which-we-are with each phenomenal object, in the process of objectifying this ‘functional’ centre, translates it as an individual “ego-self”, and so produces a suppositional “entity”.

A phenomenon is a manifestation, and therefore an aspect, of noumenon. Spontaneous phenomenal action is noumenal, and so-living is noumenal living. Such, then, is non-identified living. It is identification with a spurious (imagined) autonomous *entity* that is supposed to be born, to suffer, and to die, that incurs the process of Causality called *karma*, and causes the notion of being in bondage to arise.

Phenomena as such, having no entity to be bound, cannot be bound, but neither have they an entity to be free. Always it is the “entity” that is spurious, the phenomenon being what its name states — and appearance in mind, neither bound nor free.

The apparent problem, therefore, only concerns identification: it is identification

that produces the notion of bondage. Identification with a phenomenal object results in the suppositional concept of an autonomous entity, and that concept is taken to be a factual “self”, whereas nothing of the kind exists, has ever existed, or ever could exist as a thing-in-itself, or as other than a concept in what is called “mind”.

But identification with a phenomenal object as such is not *ipso facto* bondage, for such phenomenon has no “ens” and need not have any — as may be observed in the case of a disidentified Sage who appears to live as any other man “lives”, at any rate to a casual observer.

It is only the superimposition of the elaborated concept of an autonomous self that is responsible for the notions of “karma” and “bondage”, which are the effects of an apparent “volition”.

## II

Let us develop this understanding in greater detail. Noumenality has no need to identify itself with phenomenality, any more than an egg need be identified with an egg, nor need This-which-we-are identify itself with That-which-we-are, since their differentiation is one of objective appreciation only. But an identification of noumenality, not with phenomenality but with discriminated, or separated phenomena, entails the splitting into subject and object of phenomenality and the attribution of subjectivity to what is purely objective. That pseudo-subjectivity is attributed to the “functional” centre of each separate phenomenal object, and this produces the idea of an autonomous individual with an ego-self.

Otherwise expressed, phenomenality being integral in noumenality, it must be the dis-

crimination of phenomenality into separate phenomena possessed of both subjective and objective character that produces identification. Such identification, then, is the attribution of subjective function to the objectivisation of a phenomenal or "functional" centre in each such phenomenon, thereby creating an individual with a suppositious ego-self. In short, the functional focal point of a phenomenal objectivisation has been endowed with a suppositious personal subjectivity whereas its only subjectivity is its noumenality. This suppositional subjectivity is then objectified as an entity possessing full autonomy.

Identification of This-which-we-are with separate phenomenal objects which, without such identification, are simply our phenomenality as such, involves the objectivisation of each. In this process the "functional" centre comes to be seen as the centre of a suppositional individual with an ego-self, developing thereby a supposed entity where there is merely phenomenality functioning impersonally as subject and

object. That is to say, it functions subjectively and objectively in split-mind, accompanied by "space" and "time", as "mechanically" as the ticking of a clock.

Absolute-noumenality, manifesting via every sentient being, recognises no entity in the phenomenal cosmos, has no need of such, nor any function that such could fulfil. The existence of an autonomous, volitional entity would be incompatible with the functioning of *prajñā*, and the notion of such seems to be an aberration for which there is no place. An entity, therefore, is "a dream, an illusion, a bubble and a shadow", as the Buddha said in the Diamond Sutra, a breeze of phantasy that troubles the calm waters of mind without any possibility of effecting anything whatever of a factual character in the dream of phenomenal living.

NOTE: Yes, yes, quite so. What the Buddha so lucidly and I so obscurely have just been describing is — as you suspect — that which you *think* that you are.

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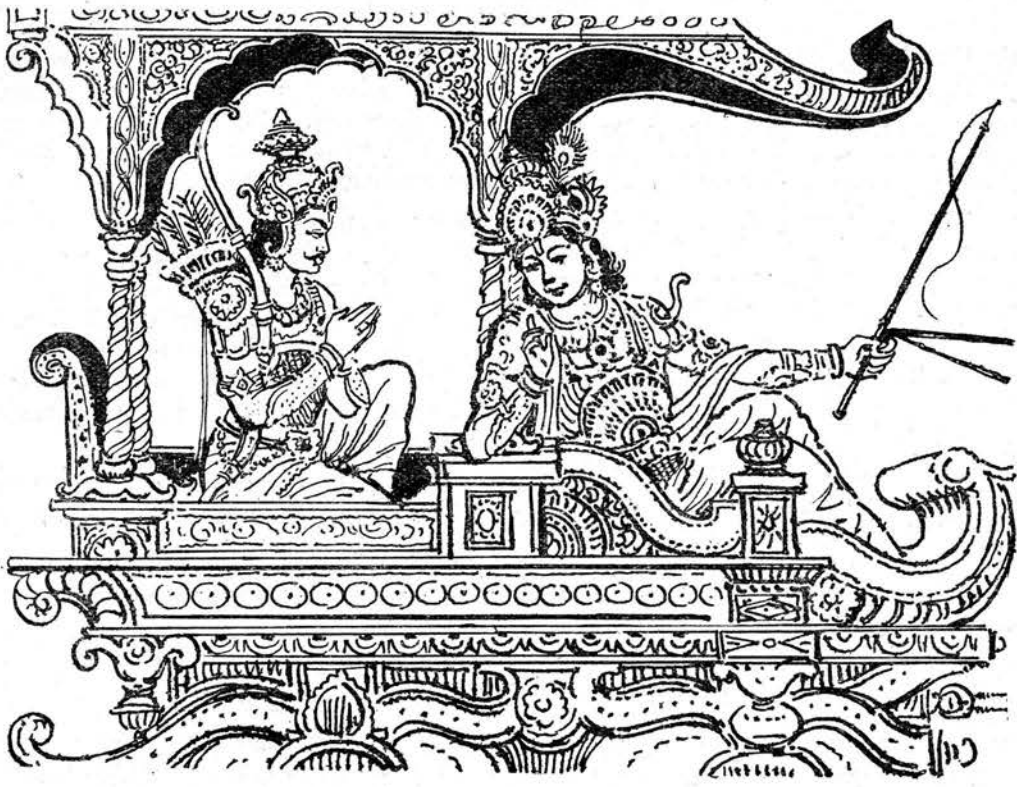
## TOGETHER AND APART

Translated by PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN  
from the Tamil of Muruganar\*

Both male and female, far yet near,  
Mountain-huge and atom-small  
Pure Spirit He, whose sidelong glance  
Has made me see  
The Truth invisible  
And hear  
The dancing music of His feet.  
For He has caught within His heart  
And carries in His cosmic dance  
This midget. What extravagance  
Of grace, to hold me in this bliss,  
Both mine and His,  
Together and apart!

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\*For an introduction to whom see our issue of October, 1964.



# The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by PROF. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

## INTRODUCTION

The Vedic Hymns, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita are regarded as the *Prasthānatrayi* or 'threefold scriptures' of Hinduism. Of these the Gita is the most widely read and loved and has been most often translated. There is, however, to our knowledge, no very satisfactory rendering of it in English. To translate poetry is always a formidable task, and when the poetry is also scripture it becomes far more so, since every word has significance and should be adequately rendered. There are a number of 'literary' translations, from Edwin Arnold downwards, but all of them blur the clear lines of doctrine and give too vague

an indication of the meaning. In India a number of more literal translations have been made, but these are mostly in ungainly English, and even so the rendering is seldom precise and adequate. It is hoped in this translation, which is to be serialised in *The Mountain Path*, to combine fidelity with good English, but the first emphasis will be on fidelity, since no one is authorised to tamper with scripture.

The Gita is an episode in one of India's two great epic poems, the Mahabharata. This is a vast work, many times longer than the Homeric poems. It contains a wealth of mythology and much religious and ethical teaching but is mainly centred around the quarrel between the Pāndavās and Kauravās

culminating in the Battle of Kurukshetra.<sup>1</sup> Briefly the story is this.

King Pandu had five sons who were accordingly known as the Pāndavās. After his death his brother Dhritarashtra became king and brought up Pandu's five together with his own hundred sons. He was blind and weak and could not restrain his sons, especially the eldest of whom, Duryodana, was violent and treacherous. They plotted against the Pāndavās, tricked them out of their heritage and drove them into exile. The final result of this was the great Battle of Kurukshetra in which most of the Aryan kings were aligned with one side or the other and the flower of Indian chivalry was destroyed.

This human cycle or manvantara is said to be divided into four ages or yugas of progressively diminishing excellence, equivalent to the ancient Western conception of the four ages of gold, silver, copper and iron. The Battle of Kurukshetra is held by some to mark the transition from the third age to the fourth, the kali-yuga or 'dark age' in which we now live.

Krishna, the Avatar or Divine Incarnation, was living at this time as Prince of Mathura. Both sides sought his alliance. He was bound by affection to the Pāndavās and recognized their noble qualities, but he felt some obligation to the Kauravās also. Therefore, when both sides came to claim his alliance, he said that one could have his army while he himself would go with the other, but unarmed. The Kauravās chose his army, while Arjuna, the most famous of the Pāndavās, chose Krishna himself to go with him as his charioteer. Those who placed material aid above spiritual thereby sealed their doom.

Just as the battle was beginning, Arjuna told Krishna to drive his chariot between the two armies. Seeing this mighty concourse gathered for mutual destruction, seeing moreover friends, relatives and revered elders on the side of the enemy as well as his own,

his heart failed him. He did not desire victory or dominion, he declared, if won by such slaughter. "Better for me were the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapon in hand, to slay me unarmed and unresisting."

Krishna, however, will have none of this non-violence. He explains to Arjuna that it is his duty as a kshatriya, a member of the warrior caste, to destroy evil and uphold righteousness. In this dramatic setting develops a complete exposition of the meaning and purpose of life and the paths men can tread to its fulfilment.

The story is supposed to be told to Dhritarashtra by Sanjaya who witnessed and overheard it all.

## CHAPTER ONE

In this first chapter the stage is set. The two opposing armies are reviewed and then the despondency of Arjuna is described.

Why was the battlefield chosen as the stage for Arjuna's instruction? The choice has tremendous literary effect, but the explanation goes deeper than that. It shows vividly that the inner warfare is to be waged on the battlefield of life, not through withdrawal from life. Krishna might have instructed Arjuna in a cave far from distractions, but no: instead is chosen a setting where the teaching is immediately to be put into effect by combining the most strenuous outer activity with the right attitude of mind.

### 1

Said Dhritarashtra: "When Pandu's sons met mine for battle on the Field of Dharma, the Field of Kuru, tell me what happened, Sanjaya."

The word 'dharma' is left in Sanskrit as no single word translates it adequately. It implies uprightness or harmony, with its opposite 'adharma' as unrighteousness or disharmony. It is natural or divine law and thence comes to mean the action that is true to a man's nature and the religiously inspired social order of a community. Speaking of the individual, the Gita says (XVIII, 47): "Better one's own dharma though faultily performed than that of another though well performed. Doing the duty ordained by one's own nature one incurs no sin." That is

<sup>1</sup> 'The Field of Kuru', *kshetra* meaning 'field' and Kuru being the ancestor of both Pandavas and Kauravas.



to say that a man should act according to his own nature and the circumstances in which he is placed and not try to imitate another or play the role of another. Speaking of society it says (IV, 7): "Whenever dharma declines and adharma triumphs I manifest myself."

Dharma is, perhaps, the central concept of Hinduism. It is significant that it is the opening word of the Bhagavad Gita. The expression "Dharmakshetra, Kurukshetra" indicates that the battle of Kurukshetra was also a battle of righteousness against wrong-doing. In a deeper sense it implies that the battle is also the inner warfare of dharma against adharma that each man has to fight.

2

Said Sanjaya : "When Prince Duryodhana beheld the army of the Pandavas drawn up in battle order he approached his teacher and spoke thus :

Duryodhana was the eldest of the Kauravas, that is of the sons of Dhritarashtra. It was he who was mainly responsible for the war. His teacher was Drona, renowned instructor of both Kauravas and Pandavas in the art of war.

3

"Behold, Master, this grand army of the Pandavas marshalled by your able pupil Drupada.

4

"Here are archers mighty in battle, like Bhima and Arjuna, warriors such as Yuyudhama and Virata, here Drupada the Maharatha.

Bhima, one of the Pandava brothers and leader of their forces, was famous for his strength and prowess.

5

"Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana and the valiant King of Kasi, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Shaihya mighty among men.

Kasi is the modern Benares.

6

"The heroic Yudhamanyu and Uttamauja the brave ; the son of Subhadra and those of Draupadi, all mighty charioteers.

Draupadi was the daughter of Drupada and joint wife of the five Pandavas. Her five sons took part in the battle.

7

"Know also, O best of the twice-born, who are foremost on our side and leaders of my army. Let me recite their names for you.

The twice-born are those of the upper castes, that is to say those who are eligible for initiation and spiritual guidance.

8

"Yourself and Bhishma, Karna and Kripa the vanquisher, Ashvatthama and Vikarna, and also Somadatta's son.

9

"And many other heroes that have pledged their lives for me, armed with diverse weapons, all well skilled in war.

10

"Unlimited this army of ours marshalled by Bhishma, while that of theirs, marshalled by Bhima, is limited.

11

"Therefore stand firm, all in your ranks and places, and all support Bhishma."

12

To rejoice him then Bhishma the Mighty, eldest of the Kauravas, Bhishma the Grand-sire, let forth a roar like a lion and sounded his conch.

13

Suddenly conches and kettle-drums, tabors, drums and horns blared forth and stupendous was the noise.

14

Then Krishna and Arjuna also, seated in their great chariot drawn by white horses, blew their heavenly conches.

The names actually used are 'Madhava' for Krishna and 'Pandava' for Arjuna.

15

Krishna sounded Panchajanya and Arjuna Devadatta ; Bhima of the mighty deeds sounded his great conch Poundra.

The name used for Krishna here is 'Hrishikesha', meaning 'He of the splendid hair' and for Arjuna 'Dhananjaya' meaning 'Conqueror of wealth'.

Panchajanya, Krishna's conch, is so called because it was made from the bones of Pancha, a demon he had slain. 'Devadatta', the name of Arjuna's, means 'God-given'.

The name used for Bhima is 'Vrikodara' meaning 'Wolf-Belly', on account of his huge appetite.

16

Prince Yudhisthira son of Kunti sounded Anantavijaya ; Nakula and Sahadeva sounded Sughosha and Manipushpaka.

Yudhisthira was the eldest of the Pandavas. He and the next two brothers, Arjuna and Bhima were the sons of Kunti, Pandu's senior wife. The twins Nakula and Sahadeva were the sons of his junior wife, Madri.

17, 18

The King of Kasi, great archer, Shikhandi the Maharatha, Dhrishtadumnya, Virata and Satyaki the invincible, Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, O Lord of the earth, and the stout armed son of Subhadra, these from all sides sounded their conches.

19

That tumultuous uproar, resounding through heaven and earth, rent the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons.

20, 21

Then Arjuna, son of Pandu, he of the Hanuman banner, seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra marshalled for battle, took up his bow just as the fighting began and spoke thus, great king, to Krishna of the Splendid Hair : "Drive my chariot between the two armies, Achyuta,

'Achyuta', a name for Krishna, means 'firm or 'immovable'.

22

"So that I can see those gathered here for war, with whom I must fight now that the battle begins.

23

"Let me gaze upon those who have assembled here to serve in battle the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra."

24, 25

Sanjaya continued : Hearing Arjuna speak thus, O Bharata, Krishna drove his splendid chariot between the two hosts, facing Bhishma and Drona and all the kings, and said : "Behold these Kurus assembled here, O Son of Pritha."

The name used for Arjuna here is 'Gudakesha and for Krishna 'Hrishikesha'.

26, 27

Then Arjuna son of Pritha saw fathers and grandfathers, teachers, uncles and brothers, sons and grandsons, fathers-in-law, friends and companions drawn up for battle in the two armies. When Arjuna son of Kunti saw all these kinsmen standing thus arrayed.

28, 29

Great compassion came over him and sorrowfully he said : "Seeing these kinsfolk of mine drawn up for battle, Krishna, my limbs droop, my mouth is parched, my body trembles and my hair stands on end ;

30

"The bow Gandiva slips from my hand, my skin is burning, my mind reels and I cannot stand.

31

"I see ill omens, Keshava, nor do I foresee any good from slaying my kinsfolk in battle.

32

"I desire not victory, Krishna, nor dominion nor pleasures. Of what use to us is dominion, Govinda, or pleasure or even life ?

33

"Those for whose sake I desired dominion, pleasure and enjoyment are gathered here for battle, staking their wealth and life,

34

"Those teachers, fathers and sons, grandfathers and uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other kinsfolk.

35

"These I do not wish to kill, O Slayer of Madhu, even though killed myself, not for lordship of the three worlds, much less for the sake of this earth.

The three worlds of heaven and earth and the intermediate zone.

36

"What joy would remain to us, Janardana, after slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra? Only sin would accrue to us from the slaying of these evil-doers.

37

"Therefore it does not behove us to slay our kinsfolk, the sons of Dhritarashtra, O Madhava. How can we be happy after killing our own people?

38, 39

"Even though these, their minds clouded by greed, see no evil in destruction of family and no sin in treachery to friends, should not we have the wisdom to turn away from this sin, Janardana, and to see evil in the destruction of the family?

40

"On the destruction of a family its ancient dharma perishes, and when its dharma perishes adharma overtakes the whole family.

41

"When adharma prevails, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupt; with corruption of the women comes intermingling of the castes, O Descendent of the Vrishnis.

42

"This intermingling brings the family and its destroyers down to hell; their ancestors also fall, deprived of their offerings of rice and water.

Arjuna here maintains that destroying the moral standards and traditional practices of a family causes the downfall not only of future generations but past also, since those ancestors who have not attained final Liberation are still in need of ritual prayers for the dead, of which they will now be deprived.

43

"Thus the evil deeds of those who destroy families lead through the intermingling of castes to subversion of the dharma both of race and family.

44

"We have heard it said, Janardana, that hell is the abode of those whose family dharma is subverted.

45

"Alas, what a great sin we are resolved upon, to slay our kinsfolk through desire for the pleasure of dominion!

46

"Better indeed for me were the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapon in hand, to slay me unarmed and unresisting."

47

Sanjaya continued: "Having spoken thus on the battlefield, Arjuna cast aside his bow and arrow and sank down on the chariot seat, overwhelmed with grief."

*Here ends the first chapter, the 'YOGA OF ARJUNA'S GRIEF',  
in the Blessed Bhagavad Gita, an Upanishad of the  
wisdom of the Absolute, a dialogue between  
Sri Krishna and Arjuna.*

## THE SAGE OF ARUNACHALA

*By* SWAMI ANANTA of Mauritius .

It is true he taught thro' silence,  
But never was silence more eloquent,  
From his luminous eyes flowed  
Cascades of soothing words  
To guide us, clear our doubts,  
Affirm us in our sadhana.

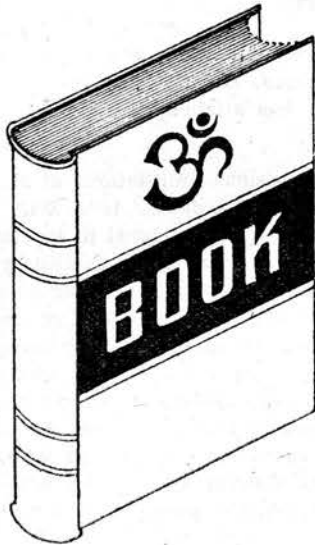
It is true they dubbed him a gyani.  
No matter. The unfeeling can never sense.  
Was there ever a greater lover,  
A bhakta so madly immersed  
In the object of his adoration ?  
Bhagwan's eyes are Radha's own.

Eyes overflowing with such love,  
Divine love which sustains,  
Not for a matter of an hour but  
Consistently thro' the years,  
Those eyes brimming with His Light  
Thrilled all who came for his darshan.

Eyes which still mould us as they gaze  
From paintings, the immortal Lover's eyes,  
Eyes which love, and never question,  
Help but never chastise,  
Mildly encouraging all the time,  
E'en my heavenly Father's eyes.

His message sounds simple,  
Yet his tapasya was Herculean.  
Like some mighty giant of old  
This village youth walked with maturity  
The narrow way. From the first the approach  
Was masterly, the calm, and noble countenance,  
The lofty gave, the complete immersion in Self,  
All proclaimed him Avatar,  
The Lord Himself come to bless us with His Presence,  
Sri Krishna fulfilling His promise.





# REVIEWS

**SHAMANISM, ARCHAIC TECHNIQUE OF ECSTASY.** By Mircea Eliade. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, Pp. 610, Price 45s.)

Shamanism is an initiation and technique for attaining at will states of ecstasy which involve experiences of higher and lower worlds. It also confers powers of defence against sickness and psychic and spirit attacks, so that the shaman is the spiritual defender of his community. It is not a religion, being only a mode of training for an elite, like yogic or tantric paths in India. It can therefore co-exist with a religion for the whole community. It must be considered less far-reaching than the type of path that aims at Moksha, since it stops short at increasing the powers of the individual and does not in general envisage the Supreme Identity. On the other hand, it goes farther than those modern versions of religion which consist of mere belief, for its adepts go beyond belief to experience.

Shamanism has been mainly observed in Siberia and North Central Asia, but in his compendious and fascinating study of it Mircea Eliade shows unmistakable signs of its present or former prevalence over most parts of the world—the Arctic, North and South America, Australia, Germanic Europe, with considerable vestiges in India, Tibet and China. Moreover he shows it to go back to remote prehistoric antiquity, at least to the people who made the paleolithic rock paintings of some 25,000 years ago and possibly much farther. "It is indubitable that the celestial ascent of the shaman . . . is a survival, profoundly modified and sometimes degenerated, of the archaic religious ideology centred on faith in a celestial

Supreme Being and belief in concrete communications between heaven and earth." (p. 505)

The words "sometimes degenerated" are significant, and indeed the "sometimes" could well be discarded. Historians of religion have long abandoned the idea, based on a blind belief in progress and evolution, that monotheism was a late growth from an earlier animism and polytheism and found the opposite to be true: that an original belief in a single Supreme Being later gets overgrown by the cult of gods or spirits who seem more accessible for the answering of prayers. While showing this to have occurred in shamanistic doctrine also, Mircea Eliade goes farther and tells us that in practice as well as theory all shamanistic traditions admit degeneracy and recognize the greater potency of the ancients. For instance, the use of intoxicants for producing a trance-like state is everywhere admitted to be a late degeneracy.

Altogether this scholarly and attractive work builds up a very different and far more authentic picture of ancient man than the savage whom an earlier generation of materialistic theorists had imagined in their own likeness.

**DOCTRINE AND ARGUMENT IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY:** By Ninian Smart. (Allen and Unwin, Pp. 255, Price 37s. 6d.)

Indian philosophical systems are theoretical bases for spiritual training. To study them, apart from this, as mere academic theory, would be like trying to portray a man by describing the clothes he is wearing. Ninian Smart sees this more

clearly than most Western commentators. He explains the traditional philosophical systems, both orthodox and heterodox, in association with the systems of training they sponsor. This makes his presentation more living than most such attempts by Western scholars. Added to that, he obviously has immense erudition without ever displaying it or becoming clogged by it. Instead he sets forth his subject with remarkable lucidity.

This lucidity, however, is greatly impaired by his abstention from the use of Sanskrit words. Technical terms in any language have overtones of meaning which are lost in translation. For instance, the implications of the word 'Purusha' meaning literally 'man', 'person' or 'Spirit' (as contrasted with 'nature' or 'substance') are quite different from those of the word 'soul', by which he renders it. And the implication of exile and hardship in the word 'samsara' is completely lost in 'cycle'. And as for 'guna', the translation 'strand-substance' is downright misleading, even more so than 'stress' or 'tendency' would be, though neither of these would be adequate. Indeed the reader is put to greater effort in remembering what each such word is supposed to imply than he would be in recognizing the Sanskrit words they misrepresent.

The greatest weakness of the work, however, is that although it links up the philosophical systems with the spiritual disciplines, it shows no understanding or appreciation of the states or experiences to which these disciplines lead. It, therefore fails really to come to life. While providing a useful guide for the academic student (except for the faulty terminology it employs), it is of no use to the spiritual aspirant.

**THE TIGER'S CAVE:** By Trevor Leggett. (Rider & Co., London, Pp. 191, Price 25s.)

"If you want a tiger's cub you must go into a tiger's cave" goes a Zen saying. Most of this book is a commentary on the 'Heart Sutra' by a Japanese Zen abbot who has clearly not acquired the tiger's cub. It is sound and sensible nevertheless, but without the sparkle and paradox so many Zen writers indulge in.

Next follows an autobiographical study by Hakuin, the 18th Century Zen Master whose 'Song of Meditation', as translated by Gary Snyder, we published in our issue of April 1964. It is concerned with Taoist technicalities which are almost meaningless in any other tradition. Pure Zen, like pure Advaita, is an open secret for those who can understand, but the technical paths, Her-

metic, Tantric and other, are in code and have to be deciphered. Hakuin is by no means the only Master who has attained the simple by way of the intricate.

A few other short translations at the end are more accessible. Obviously true Zen. The best item is the story of a samurai in the time of the civil war who occupied a Zen monastery that was thought to be favouring the other side. Finding the abbot sitting calmly in meditation, he flourished his sword and proclaimed: "Do you realize that you have to do with a man who could run you through without batting an eyelid?" To which the abbot quietly replied: "And do you realize that you have to do with a man who could be run through without batting an eyelid?" The samurai put up his sword and departed crest-fallen.

**KUMBHA, INDIA'S AGELESS FESTIVAL:** By Dilip Kumar Roy and Indira Devi. (Bhavan's Book University, Chowpatty, Bombay-7, Pp. 204, Price Rs. 2.50.)

India's Kumbha Mela is a festival that occurs only once in twelve years, drawing a vast concourse of pilgrims to Prayag to bathe on the auspicious days at the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the third river, now subterranean or invisible, the Saraswati. Apart from lay pilgrims, crowds of sadhus gather there—to meet one another and exchange views and experiences, to worship and to be worshipped. Many of them are failures who have derailed on the path, many frauds who have never set foot on it, but who is to say that some few among them are not genuine and capable of disseminating light and grace? That is what Dilip Kumar Roy, the renowned singer and mystic, and his disciple Indira Devi set out to investigate at the last Kumbha Mela, which took place in 1954; and among the enormous but regulated crowds of some six millions they did indeed find some such.

Their book about it was written earlier than *The Flute Calls Still*, reviewed in an earlier issue, but has reached us later. Writing separate chapters, they give a vivid impression of this tremendous gathering, the sea of heads wading out into the river, the varied types, the important visitors, the babel of tongues, the sadhus' colony, the many craving to worship or be worshipped. There are also convincing account of their meetings and discussions with a sadhu of regal simplicity in whom they detected true achievement.

Dilip Kumar Roy is perhaps overly concerned with meeting the objections of the rationalistic cynic. Indeed a large part of the book is taken up with such a dialogue, in which one feels that one tendency of his mind is perhaps confronting another. What convinces him is not argument but experience — direct experience of the transcendental and human experience of those radiant souls who are in touch with the transcendental.

**THE SAINTS OF INDIA:** By Swami Tattwananda. (Oxford Book Co., Park St., Calcutta-16, Pp. 288, Price Rs. 10.50.)

Swami Tattwananda gives brief biographies of 40 Indian saints, all Hindus and mostly Vaishnavites, that is bhaktas, although the book opens with the founder of Jainism and closes with Sri Ramana Maharshi, both of whom could rather be called Jnanis and Advaitins. Incidentally, in writing of Sri Ramana Maharshi he makes the grave mistake of saying that he left home at the age of 16 in quest of Realization. Actually, young as he was, he had already attained Realization.

From Tirthankar, about the 5th Century B.C. the book jumps to Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, in the 15th Century A.D. From here on the Vaishnava saints are described in geographical rather than chronological order. The omissions are remarkable. For instance, neither Sri Chaitanya nor Sri Ramakrishna is included, although they are two of the most famous Bengali bhaktas.

This is the sort of book that many will like to dip into. To read it through as a whole is to see with what powerful continuity the current of Hindu spirituality flowed on beneath the surface turmoil of Muslim and British conquest and internal strife.

**VEDANTA DICTIONARY:** By Ernest Wood. (Peter Owen, Pp. 225, Price 25s.)

Ernest Wood follows up his dictionaries of Zen and Yoga with another efficient one on Vedanta. Certain philosophical questions are inevitably raised and not all will agree with his handling of some of them. For instance, his definition of 'samadhi' does not cover all possibilities. Nevertheless it is a painstaking and useful work. The basic standpoint of Vedanta is excellently defined under the heading 'ambition'. "No one could be more ambitious, probably, than the Vedantist, who aims at union with Brahman or God, the one and only, one and absolute being. Yet it is not per-

sonal ambition, for John Smith or Kamala Devi will never attain that union. It is the consciousness that they are and really know themselves to be — did they but give proper attention to the matter — who will attain. The erroneous temporary conception of oneself will then be seen to be only a temporary tool or instrument for worldly (vyavaharika) living."

**A SOUL'S BLOSSOMS:** By Pranav. (The Book World, Beach, Trivandrum-7, Pp. 27, Price Rs. 4.)

Nearly all poems written in English by Indian writers are far too facile both in metre and rhyme. Some of those in the present little volume are quite exceptional in their restraint and their mastery of genuine English rhythms. Many of them are songs of praise and homage to Bhagavan, as is the following:

#### I KNEW OF THEE

Not in the crowd  
I saw Thee,  
But in the hush  
Of my heart.  
Not from men  
Of great learning  
I heard of Thee,  
But from the whisper  
Of the voice from  
A profound  
Depth in me.  
I got a glimpse of Thee  
On a solitary hill-top  
Crowned by the gold  
Of the setting sun.  
Whenever I sat mute  
And my thoughts  
Made their adieu,  
My Lord, I knew  
Thou wert within me.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

**FOUNDATIONS OF TIBETAN MYSTICISM:** By Lama Anagarika Govinda. (Rider & Co., London, Pp. 310, Price 30s.)

"While my eyes were immersed in the golden depths of the Maharshi's eyes, something happened which I dare describe only with the greatest reticence and humility, in the shortest and simplest words, according to truth. The dark complexion of his body transformed itself slowly into white. This white body became more and more

luminous, as if lit up from within, and began to radiate. This experience was so astonishing that, while trying to grasp it consciously and with clear thought, I immediately thought of suggestion, hypnosis, etc. I therefore made certain 'controls', like looking at my watch, taking out my diary and reading in it, for which purpose I had first to put on my spectacles etc. Then I looked at the Maharshi, who had not diverted his glance from me; and with the same eyes, which a moment ago were able to read some notes in my diary, I saw him sitting on the tiger-skin as a luminous form.

It is not easy to explain this state, because it was so simple, so natural, so unproblematic. How I would wish to remember it with full clarity in the hour of my death!"

Quoting this entry from the *Asian Diaries* of Baron Dr. von Veltheim-Ostrau, the author of this notable book describes the radiation that emanates from a body that has undergone spiritual transformation, a feature that is characteristic of the Tibetan Yoga on which this work is an exhaustive exposition.

Lama Anagarika Govinda has had first-hand experience of the practical side of this Yoga and his extensive studies in the original works on the subject have combined to place his writings in a class apart from the others that have been appearing during the last five decades and more. The present work, particularly, is a classic and his treatment of some of the essentials of this tradition, viz., Mantra, Mandala, Chakras, Inner Fire etc. is not only brilliant but unique inasmuch as he brings out certain practical truths that are lost sight of in most expositions of this type.

Discussing the question whether the Buddhist Tantras derive from the Indian or the Indian Tantras have been influenced by the Buddhist, the writer expresses his view that, by and large, the two pursued their independent lines, the Indian Tantra emphasising the Shakti (Power) aspect and the Buddhist (in Tibet) concentrating upon the Prajna (Knowledge) aspect of the Divine. He is inclined to agree with the scholars who hold that the Buddhist Tantras are older and their practices did influence the developments in Indian Tantrism.

He makes it a point to underline a commonly neglected feature of the practical teaching of the Buddha: that Yoga as it has developed from the original Teaching does not turn its face away from life, from form, into some Nothingness but includes in its scheme of Illumination the physical body and seeks to embrace all Life in its vision.

His chapters on the Five Dhyani Buddhas and their rôle in the spiritual transformation of every man on earth are breath-taking.

Half of the book is devoted to an exposition of the key Mantra of this Yoga-discipline, *Om Mani Padme Hum*, and in the process, the fundamentals of the science of Mantra are expounded most rationally. Incidentally, he warns against a materialistic interpretation of the principle of mantric vibrations and points out how it is the spiritual attitude and tapas-shakti (instinct in the initiation) that are really decisive in the matter. The precise manner of projecting oneself into the universal consciousness through the syllables of this Mantra is sketched out in profound terms; so too the graded visualisation of the Deities while dwelling upon the Mantra.

This is a work of basic importance in the study of the Tantras—of whatever religion—and deserves to be more widely known and studied than it has been so far. The writing here proceeds from living and hence its peculiar power and spell.

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE MANDALA: By Prof. Giuseppe Tucci. (Rider & Co., London, Pp. 147, Price 25s.)

If the *Foundations* gives the Tibetan approach to the Reality through Sound, the present book by Dr. Tucci traces the Way through Form. The problem is the same; how is the individual to win back his lost identity with the Divine? Or as the author puts it, how best to arrive at *reintegration*?

Dr. Tucci is well conversant with both branches of the Tantra, the Indian and the Buddhist, and draws parallels between the two at every stage in his study. He describes how from the Absolute issued this Creation through the Five intermediary self-formulations—whether we call them the Five Buddhas or the Five Great Tattvas, Shiva, Shakti, Sadasiva, etc., the truth is the same—and organised itself in groups of Five, five elements, five airs, five directions, etc., etc. but around One centre existing in each creature. Having arrived at the nadir of fragmentation, the *disintegration*, the individual seeks its way back to its Source, to re-integrate itself. And towards this end the Tibetan adepts have perfected the institution of the Mandala. What exactly is a Mandala?

A Mandala is a diagrammatic representation of the configuration of the subtle forces in Creation which keep the Universe going. Each detail of it stands for a nodal point in the constitution of the Cosmos and by appropriate steps of concen-



tration, meditation and evocation on it, it is possible for man to project himself in the determinative scheme of the creative Forces and register a transition from his ordinary human state to a divine status and, if he would, gain complete identity with the Absolute that overtops the Creation figuratively rendered in the Mandala.

The learned writer has had personal experience of this tradition and leaves no point untouched in the course of his terse exposition of the subject. His analysis of the symbolism of the Mandala, its various parts, the method of forming one and the very interesting means adopted by the teachers in Tibet to determine the nature of the Mandala suited to the aspirant, are highly instructive. The last chapter describing how the Mandala can be visualised in one's own body, to the last detail, and how it can be used to train and convert one's consciousness into its divine counterpart is very valuable.

The processes of ascent and descent, the importance of personal effort in sadhana, the futility of suppression of tendencies in one's nature, the necessity of transfiguration, the indispensability of a sound physical base in the body, the limitations of the intellect *vis a vis* the soul—these are some of the topics touched upon in a manner that could be helpful to any sadhaka of whatever persuasion. For after all is said, the Quest is the same for every one. And rightly understood, the *Mandala* has a universal significance. As the writer concludes:

"When, then, the Indian or Tibetan artist designs a *mandala*, he is not obeying the arbitrary command of caprice. He is following a definite tradition which teaches him how to represent, in a particular manner, the very drama of his soul. He does not depict on a *mandala* the cold images of an iconographical text. . . . He gives form to that world he feels surging within him and he sees it spread out before his eyes, no longer the invisible and unrestrainable master of his soul, but a serene symbolic representation which reveals to him the secret of things and of himself. This complicated juxtaposition of images, their symmetrical arrangement, this alternation of calm and of menacing figures, is the open book of the world and of Man's own spirit."

**THE SERPENT POWER:** By Sir John Woodroffe. Seventh edition. (Ganesh & Co., Madras-17, Price Rs. 30)

That *The Serpent Power* is again available will be glad tidings to many in India and abroad who

have been waiting for it, like a friend who bitterly complained that in the whole of Israel he could find only one old tattered copy of the book and asked why it could not be made available more freely. This demand for the book is not surprising for it is the most mature and finished work of Sir John Woodroffe who introduced the West—and even the intelligentsia of the India of today—to the ancient tradition and lore of the Tantra and brought to the fore the great Truths of God, Nature and Man it enshrines. Till the advent of this scholar-judge on the scene, all that was known of Indian spirituality to the modern mind was the Vedanta and a wrong perspective of the Vedas. No one admitted the Tantras into this field of study as they were held to be remnants of a superstitious and ignorant—if not perverted—past. It was given to Sir John to clear this mist of misunderstanding and neglect and to reclaim the treasure that lay concealed under the debris of overgrown ritualist practices and ill-understood formulae. With the collaboration of indigenous scholarship and help of genuine practitioners in the line, he unearthed and brought out a number of editions of old Sanskrit texts. He wrote introductions, translated the texts, annotated them, lectured on their contents and devoted his whole life to the resuscitation of this great Science. And if today it is widely recognised that the Tantra has a philosophy and a discipline which is more catholic and understanding of human nature and its possibilities than the Vedanta, that it is the one system which is free from dogma and offers itself for verification at every step, that it is unique inasmuch as it harmonises the claims of both father Heaven and mother Earth on man and therefore the most acceptable in the modern context, the credit for being the pioneer should go to Sir John Woodroffe.

And of all the large number of books he wrote and edited, *The Serpent Power* stands out as the most important, a worthy monument to the industry, perceptive intelligence, wisdom and maturity of the soul of Sir John. The work is built round two Sanskrit texts: (1) *shat-chakra-nirupana*, which forms the sixth chapter of the *Tattva-chintamani* of Purnanandaswami who lived four hundred years ago in Bengal; and (2) *paduka-panchaka* of unknown authorship. Both of them deal with the organisation of the Chakras or Lotuses which are the Centres of vital dynamism in the human system and which are activated and utilised in the path of Yoga that is the soul of the Tantra.

Apart from the Sanskrit text and the commentary thereon by another authority on the subject,

Kalicharana, the volume contains the full translation in English of both the text and the commentary, by Sir John Woodroffe, his elaborate notes based on other commentaries on the works, and—what is more important—a magnificent Introduction running into 300 pages giving a lucid and detailed account of the philosophy and practice of the Kundalini Yoga that is the subject-matter of the text.

The Supreme Consciousness as it is, the Consciousness in its embodiment in the universe and the individual, the centres of connection between the individual and the Universal Consciousness, the means to activate them, the process of developing the individual human consciousness into the cosmic and transcendent divine Consciousness—are the fundamental topics that are dwelt upon. There is much else of interest: differences between the location of the Chakras according to the old tradition of the Tantra and the visualisation of the Theosophists; the famous correspondence between Sir John and his Indian collaborator and friend Prof. Pramathanatha Mukherji (now Swami Pratyagatmananda) on the question whether when the Kundalini is awakened and rises up, she leaves the base entirely or only partially, etc., etc.

Enriched by the addition of eight colour-plates illustrating the different lotuses and nine half-tone blocks showing the *asanas* and *mudras* mentioned in the book, this Volume is a capital production.

M. P. PANDIT.

**KULARNAVA TANTRA:** Annotated translation by M. P. Pandit, with an introduction by Sir John Woodroffe. (Ganesh & Co., Madras, Pp. 357, Price Rs. 25.)

The *Kularnava Tantra* is one of the authoritative texts of the much traduced Kaula school of sadhana. It is said to have originally contained a hundred thousand verses, although only some two thousand verses arranged in seventeen chapters now survive. There have been other translations but the present one is preeminent for its free, clear translation and excellent selection from textual variants as well as for its admirable printing and get-up. It is further improved by a valuable introduction taken from the writings of Sir John Woodroffe. A valuable appendix gives a clear explanation of the many technical terms used in the book, thereby making the text more intelligible.

The Kaula sadhana has had many detractors through the ages. Even apart from modern Western-educated Hindus, many pandits from the

time of Shankara onwards have inveighed against this path without taking the trouble to make a careful study of it or of the texts on which it is based. However, its goal is unexceptionable: that is realization of one's identity with Being in its aspect of Becoming. The path also is in no way objectionable if rightly understood. The strict advaitin rejects the objective world as illusion, but the tantric accepts it as a means of sadhana, enjoying it not as an objective reality in itself but as a manifestation of the Divine and a path to the Divine. On the Kaula path the sakta approaches his goal like a *veera* or hero by enjoying creation in its three modes or *gunas* of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. But while enjoying it he remains aloof from it, as only a hero can. He holds fast to the understanding that everything seen is in truth a manifestation of the seer of it. But the adoption of this sadhana is only for the few, the real heroes who can use and enjoy the beauties of nature without becoming enslaved by them. Indeed a perusal of the qualifications required of the initiate and the restrictions imposed on the ritual of enjoyment will show that few are capable of the Kaula sadhana and remove any prejudice against those who are.

Unfortunately the spirit of the age is against this kind of sadhana. Still the publisher must be congratulated for the spirit of true culture which alone could induce him to bring out this account of a lost method of seeking realization.

KRISHNA BHIKSHU.

**STUDIES IN THE TANTRAS AND THE VEDA.**  
By M. P. Pandit. (Ganesh & Co., Madras, Pp. 146, Price Rs. 6.)

The book reviews by the learned writer M. P. Pandit collected together in this volume are worth preserving in their own right. One of them, for instance, brings out clearly the Vedic origin of the Tantras. It explains the theory of the Yoga of cosmic energy which Tantra is. Tantric yoga, indeed, comprises a wide range of techniques including *asanas*, *pranayama*, *bandha*, *mudra*, *meditation*, *japa*, *shakti upasana*, etc. Its distinctive feature is that it rejects the escapist asceticism of some forms of yoga, preferring to face Nature whole and master it. The author further brings out clearly the significance of Tantric rituals such as *pancha makara* and *shadchakra*.

Among varied and interesting chapters, it is very good that the author has one on Raurava Agama, for that is the very mainspring of Siva Jnana Bodham and Divya Tantra which leads to

a polarity of life in Siva-Shakti consciousness. We also have to thank the author for much valuable information on the Gayatri and Purusha Suktas and Nivida from the Rig Veda with the original text in Devanagari. Altogether this collection of studies is a very welcome addition to the growing body of literature on Tantrism.

YOGI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI.

**GURU PREMAMRIT:** By Swami Muktananda. (Shree Gurudev Ashram, P.O. Vajreswari, Dist. Thana, Maharashtra. Pp. 23. Price 60 Paise.)

Guru Bhakti is one of the recognized forms of bhakti marga. Swami Muktananda, successor to the late Swami Nityananda, gives an eloquent exposition of it in this little booklet.

Writing in simple language which obviously springs from his own deep experience, he shows how the devotee by first concentrating all his heart and mind on the beloved Guru, gradually comes to see him in all living beings and pervading the whole universe, until he is led through love and surrender to the experience of absolute non-duality.

Lest we should be tempted to regard this as an easy short cut for those who have little inclination to subject themselves to the rigorous discipline imposed by other paths, the author reminds us that whole-hearted concentration on the Guru automatically imposes its own discipline requiring constant effort and is not gained in a day. Guru Bhakti is not 'roses all the way' but the true devotee, accepting all as by the Grace of Gurudev, delights in the thorns no less than the fragrant petals. He may think that the stern practice of vairagya is not for him but he achieves it all the same.

Western readers who may be predisposed to consider this form of sadhana strange and perhaps even open to question are particularly recommended to read this simple, warm-hearted little exposition of it. It is well translated from the original Hindi by Dr. Kokila.

R. ROSE.

**FROM LITERATURE TO RELIGION:** An Autobiography. By D. S. Sarma (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, Pp. 232, Price Rs. 6.)

For many years a highly respected Professor in Presidency College, Madras, then at the height of its glory, Prof. D. S. Sarma counted among his friends and colleagues Mark Hunter, R. M. Statham, H. C. Papworth, S.E. Runganatham and

S. Radhakrishnan (all of whom became Knights later), not to mention two Mahamahopadhyayas. Later, as Principal of a Government College and of two private colleges, he set a much-needed example of rectitude in administration. On the teaching of English, especially through written work, on the responsibilities of Hostel Wardens, and on the relationship of principals to managements, he has much of value to say.

But our primary interest in this work relates to his persistent and, on the whole, successful efforts through lectures and books to spread among students and the general public a sound knowledge of Hinduism, its scriptures and philosophy, its saints and sages, its history and development. True to Indian tradition, he would base religion on reason as well as authority and experience and he would welcome and utilize modern knowledge and progress in science. He has no patience with J. Krishnamurti's summary dismissal of all institutions. In fact, he holds that religion is the continuation and fulfilment of our everyday life, of artistic experience, scientific discovery and social service. The result of the spiritual experiences of prophets and seers, who belong to the present as well as the past and who reveal the unity behind the multiplicity of phenomenal existence, religion is a social art and a spiritual science which can transform individuals and society by making them grow in a vertical dimension towards the infinite.

The interview with Bhagavan which gave rise to Prof. Sarma's well-known essay on "A Great Jnana-Yogin of Modern India" (*The Hindu Standpoint*, M.L.J. Press, Madras-4) is reported at pp. 148-50 of the book under review and it contains the declaration:

"Sadhana implies an object to be gained, and the means of gaining it. What is there to be gained which we do not already possess?.... The self is realized not by one's doing something, but by one's refraining from doing anything, by remaining still and being simply what one really is."

PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN.

**HIDDEN RICHES, TRADITIONAL SYMBOLISM FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO BLAKE.** By Desiree Hirst. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, Pp. 348, Price 42s.)

The neo-paganism of the Renaissance that has been so much written about is far from being the whole picture. Miss Hirst shows in this fascinating study that there was also a strong wave of mysticism based largely on neo-Platonic, Pythagorean



rean and Cabbalistic symbolism. Profuse illustrations of the complex symbolism used add still further to the value of the book. There was even a suspicion that behind the philosophy of Grace lay the deeper profundity of Egypt and India and a readiness to recognize the basic truth of all religions. "This movement was pursued as much by churchmen as by anyone else. Its whole impulse was Christian piety. Though the speculations of a Pico or a Giorgio, a Nicholas of Cusa or Egidio, were daring, they were put forward in a spirit of complete loyalty to the Church." (p. 41). In Catholic Europe the movement was smothered (although the author overlooks this fact) by the Counter-Reformation. It reached its greatest profundity in the German Protestant mystic Jacob Boehme; and in Protestant England it continued right through the 17th and 18th Centuries with Robert Fludd, the Cambridge Platonists, William Law and many others, to have a final flowering in the early 19th Century in the symbolical poems and art of William Blake. To any interested in the long struggle of mysticism against encroaching Western materialism this is a most informative book. It is marred unfortunately by a glib 'Conclusion' in which the author plays the schoolma'am, putting the neo-Platonists and mystics in their places, but in spite of that it is well worth its price.

#### SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE:

By Joel S. Goldsmith. (Allen and Unwin, Pp. 235. Price 15s.)

"Christ may be born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but if he be not born anew within your own heart, you remain eternally forlorn," said the German mystic Angelus Silesius. Similarly Joel Goldsmith, in this illumined work, expounds the symbolical meaning of Biblical stories and sayings from both Old and New Testament. This symbolism does not exclude their historical truth but, as he says, is of profounder importance. "The stories of Moses, Jesus, Paul and John are only of value to you when you discover their relationship to your life" (p. 18). In fact he goes still further to point out the symbolical value not only of scriptural stories but of the events and circumstances of your own life, as reflections of your inner state. "There is no external change without an internal development" (p. 52). And conversely: "Whatever we take into our consciousness and make a part of our consciousness

becomes externalised in some form of human experience." (p. 111-112).

Like all Joel Goldsmith's books, this one also proclaims the simple, universal truth of Advaita, that "I and my Father are One", in ordinary language, avoiding philosophical complexities. It is a profound and beautiful book with a scriptural quality about it.

SAGITTARIUS.

#### OBJECTIONS TO ROMAN CATHOLICISM:

Edited with an introduction by M de la Be-doyere. (Constable, London. Pp. 184, Price 18s.)

Most people are aware that important changes are taking place in the Roman Catholic Church, but few probably realise how profound and far-reaching they are. When Pope John summoned the Vatican Council he said that his purpose was 'to give back to the face of the Church of Jesus Christ the splendour and the pure and simple lines of its birth and to present it as the divine Founder made it'. It is this drama of the renewal of the inner life of the Church, of its interior spirit, which is being enacted in the Vatican Council to-day and if it still falls short of its objective, it cannot be denied that an astonishing transformation is taking place.

One way of expressing what is taking place is to say that the Vatican Council marks the end of the 'Constantinian era' in the Church. When the Emperor Constantine became a Christian and Christianity instead of being a persecuted sect became the established religion of the Roman Empire, it undoubtedly brought with it great advantages; the Church entered into an alliance with the world, and was largely responsible for moulding the civilisation of Europe which came into being in the next thousand years. But it also brought great disadvantages: it meant that every kind of credulity and superstition began to find a place in Christianity and what was perhaps more serious, the lust for power and wealth began to invade the Church. Movements of Reform which attempted to purify the Church have taken place constantly — the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century were but the culmination of many similar movements — but the need for reform is always present, and this is what the Vatican Council is now attempting.

One of the most significant signs of this new spirit in the Church is the spirit of self-criticism which is awakening everywhere. A good example of this is the book 'Objections to Roman



Catholicism by a group of English lay people, which has already had a sensational effect in England. The book is not outstandingly good, but it is valuable as a sign of the kind of criticism which is being leveled at the Church by loyal and devoted members of it and not, as so often in the past, by hostile critics. The charges against the Church are basically three; the encouragement of credulity and superstition — defined as 'any belief or practice inspired by an unworthy view of God' — which is the subject of the first chapter; Worldliness, the subject of the second chapter; and Authoritarianism, the subject of the third, which manifests itself in the practice of Censorship — perhaps the best study in the book — and in lack of respect for the freedom of the individual, which is studied in the fifth chapter.

The sixth chapter opens fresh ground in an attack on Scholasticism, especially the system of St. Thomas Aquinas, who holds a position as the criterion of Orthodoxy in the Catholic Church, akin to that of Sankara in Vedanta. This is rather a weak and unbalanced attack, but it is significant as showing the freedom of criticism which is now tolerated and also as showing some of the real weaknesses in the Scholastic system. Finally, Archbishop Roberts — the only non-layman in the group, of whom it should be noticed two are women — writes on Contraception and War, two subjects on which Catholic thought is seriously engaged in re-thinking its attitude at present.

This book is not only of interest to Roman Catholics; it marks rather the opening of the Catholic Church on the world, its honest attempt to re-assess its faith and practice in the face of the modern world. This is something which all religions have to face to-day. Baron von Hugel once said that in every religion there are four elements, a sacramental, a social, an intellectual and a mystical. Basically all religion is mystical; it is man's endeavour to relate himself to that ultimate reality, which alone gives meaning to life. But because we are not pure spirits, but embodied souls, this aspiration normally finds expression in bodily acts and gestures, and so gives rise to rites and sacraments. Again because we are not isolated individuals but 'members of one another', sharing a common destiny, religion normally takes a social form, involving some kind of organization. Finally because we are rational beings, our religious faith demands some kind of rational formulation and so finds expression in creeds and systems. These elements are present not only in Christianity but in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, and in each religion there

is the same tendency to corruption. An over-emphasis on sacramentalism gives rise to superstition, on religious organization to casteism and communalism, on theology to a barren dogmatism. It is the mystical life which is the core of religion and the inspiration of all these external forms. What we need to-day, and what to a large extent we are witnessing, is a renewal of this inner life of religion. This alone can recover the purity of true religion and at the same time bring the different religious traditions closer to one another. This is what may be ultimately hoped from the present reform in the Roman Church.

DON BEDE GRIFFITHS.

#### SUFISM

THE SUFIS: By Idries Shah. With an Introduction by Robert Graves. (W. H. Allen, Pp. XXVI and 404, Price 45s.)

DIVINE DWELLERS IN THE DESERT: By Gurdial Mallik. (Grambhawana Prakashan, Karnal, Pp. 113, Price Rs. 1.25.)

An authoritative account of the Sufis and their teachings is long overdue. Obviously writing from the inside, Syed Idries Shah is most informative about the tradition, even expounding Sufi methods of training so far as is possible in a book intended for the general public. He also has chapters on a number of the most famous Sufi poets, saints and philosophers, such as Al Ghazali, Jalaluddin Rumi and Ibn Arabi. Not the least interesting of these is that on the traditional Sufi humorist Mulla Nasruddin. It makes delightful reading because he really is very funny and, what is more important, it illustrates the use of humour, shock and surprise in Sufi training.

If the author had only stuck to his subject this would have been an altogether excellent book. Unfortunately, however, he is forever trying to prove the ascendancy of Sufism over other traditions and their dependence on it. While it is impossible to deny the great influence which Sufism has had on the theory, practice and literary expression of esoterism in the West, the author spoils his case by over-stating it and completely ignoring the very real indigenous spiritual heritage of Judaism and Christianity. Turning to the East, he is even more crude, and in fact downright absurd, in trying to assign an Islamic origin to Hindu and Buddhist spirituality. Rival claims for pre-eminence are to be expected from the exoteric exponents of the various religions, but one has a right to expect greater

understanding from an author who has penetrated to the spiritual essence of any one of them.

The introduction, echoed in the blurb, further increases the crudity, referring to the author as the Grand Sheikh of the Sufis and as being in the senior male line of descent from the Prophet Mohammed. Actually there is no Grand Sheikh of the Sufis, each order having its own sheikh or head, and there is no male line of descent from Mohammed, his only descendents being through his daughter Fatima.

Despite the narrow and quarrelsome tone in which this book is written, it remains a valuable and informative work on a subject about which few have written with comparable authority. However regrettable its approach, there is at present no replacement for it.

Gurdial Mallik's little book on the Sufis of Sindh also speaks of the universality of Sufism but in a gracious and tolerant manner, unlike the other. It is verbose rather than informative but makes pleasant reading. It is depressing, how-

ever, to read the author's conclusion that little if anything of this glorious heritage remains in Sindh to-day.

A. QUTBUDDIN.

**GOD:** By Mrs. Dinshaw S. Paowalla. (Published by Framroj Dhanbhoora, Bulsar, pp. 13, Price not stated.)

Mrs. Paowalla has sent us from Hong Kong a little booklet recommending love and service as a discipline for people in general and self-enquiry for those who seek spiritual life culminating in Divine Union.

**GLIMPSES OF GOD:** By M. D. Japheth. (The author, 24-B, Hamam St., Bombay-1, Pp. 72, Price Rs. 3.75, 6s., \$1.00.)

Fifteen selected sermons delivered by the author in a Bombay synagogue touch on various religious and sociological problems. They are idealistic and high-minded but completely exoteric, with no glimpse of the Knowledge that is Being.

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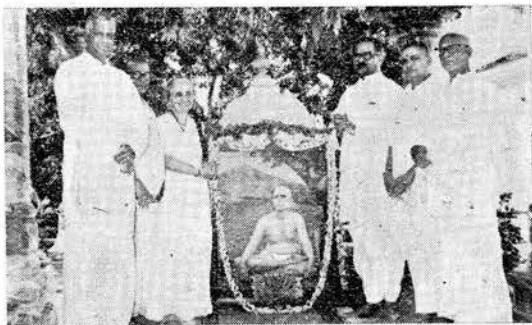


# Ashram Bulletin

## JAYANTI

The 85th birth anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated at his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai according to the Tamil calendar on Monday, December 21st., 1964. The celebration opened in the early morning with hymns to Sri Maharshi and to Arunachala. The elaborate morning pujas included *Ekadasa Rudra Mahanyasa Abhishekam*, chanting of the Taitiriya and Mahanarayana Upanishads and *Laksharchana* of Ramana Sahasranamam, the thousand names of Ramana. Then followed the arthi to Sri Bhagavan and to Sri Matrubuteswarar. The Presence of Sri Maharshi was powerfully felt. A large number of guests were invited to stay to lunch and thousands of the poor were fed.

The Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri Sayaji Lakshman Silam, came here specially to attend the celebration and was received by the President of the Ashram, Sri Venkataraman. He was



The Trustees of Sri Ramanasramam: (L to R) Sri S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy, Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan, Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri Sailam (Chief Guest), Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, and Sri K. Srinivasachariar.



introduced to members of the Board of Trustees and to distinguished members of the Ashram. He took part in the entire celebration and only left for Pondicherry in the evening.

In the afternoon there was singing of Sri Ramana Gitam by Sri Om Sadhu and his party.

The celebrations concluded with the singing of Tamil hymns to Sri Maharshi and Sri Arunachaleswarar.

Good wishes for the occasion were received from Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India; Sri Karan Singh, Governor of Kashmir; Sri Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, Governor of Madras; Sri K. Kamaraj, President of the All-India Congress Committee; Sri T. T. Krishnamachari, Finance Minister of India; Sri N. Sanjiva Reddy, Minister for Steel and Mines, and others.

Among the distinguished visitors were Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, head of the philosophy department of Madras University; Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, A. R. Narayana Rao, Sri Framji Dorabji, Sri Umesh Dutt, N. R. Viswanathan, Professor of Physics at Annamalai University, Mr. and Mrs. Martin, both internationally known artists, Dr. V. N. Sharma and the Swiss lady psychologist Dr. Kockel.



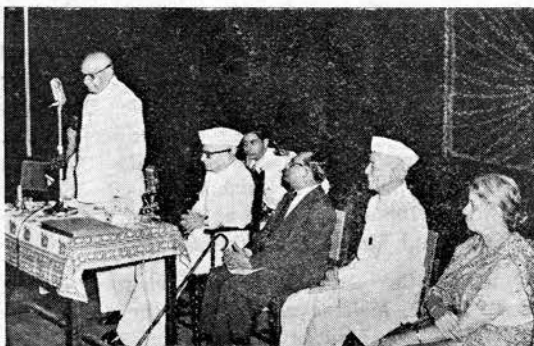


85th Sri Ramana Jayanthi Feast: The President personally attends on the Ramana Bhaktas. Mr. & Mrs. Osborne, Miss Merston and Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy are seen among the hundreds of devotees who were fed on that day.

#### BOMBAY

On the 23rd February, the 85th Jayanthi of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated in Bombay at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan by the Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee.

The Governor of Maharashtra, Dr. P. V. Cherian, presided over the function. Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, who was the chief speaker, could not be present on the occasion since he had to leave for Delhi on urgent matter; however, his written speech was read by the Committee's Vice Chairman, Sri P. V. Puranik. Dr. K. M. Munshi's presence and participation in the function added grace to its glory. There was a good number of Ramana Bhaktas and the function was a great success.



Ramana Jayanthi: Celebrated in Bombay on February 23rd by Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee: Governor of Maharashtra, Dr. P. V. Cherian, speaking; by his side are, Dr. K. M. Munshi, Sri P. B. Kotak, Sri G. V. Puranik and Mrs. Mani Sahukar.

A Sri Ramana Festival was celebrated for nine days in Bombay, from December 16th to 24th inclusive, at the Gita Govind Hall in Sion East. On the 16th evening it was inaugurated by the Hon. C. R. Pattabhiraman, Union Deputy Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

#### MADRAS

Sri Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Alwarpet, Madras, celebrated the Jayanti on December 27th. After Veda *parayana* Mr. Justice K. S. Venkataraman spoke, explaining the trials and triumphs of sadhana, whether one pursued the traditional Hindu or Buddhist methods or the less formal technique of Sri Ramana.

#### DELHI

Devotees in Delhi celebrated the Jayanti on December 25th at a public meeting organized by the Ramana Kendra at the Satsang Hall of the Vinayaka Temple, Sarojini Nagar. After Veda



Ramana Jayanthi at Sri Ramana Kendra in New Delhi.



parayana, Sri Tandaveswara of Sankara Vidya Kendra and Prof. K. Swaminathan spoke of the profound impact of Bhagavan's presence and the universal appeal of his teachings. Sri K. Ramakrishna Bhat recited his Sanskrit slokas on Bhagavan. Verses from Bhagavan's hymns to Arunachala and Muruganar's Tamil poems to Bhagavan were sung.

#### PALGHAT

The Vijnana Ramaneeya Mandiram, Palghat, Kerala, celebrated the Jayanti both on the 20th and 21st. This is quite legitimate, since Sri Ramana was born about midnight between the two dates. On both days there were pujas, archanas and nama-japas in the morning. Soon after the morning puja on the 20th the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita were recited by Sri Mani Iyer and his children and in the evening there was a discourse on Sri Ramana Darsana by Sri G. Balakrishnan Nair, lecturer at Victoria College. On the 21st evening Sri P. V. Rajagopal, Divisional Superintendent of the Southern Railway, gave a discourse on 'The Path of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi'.

#### RAJAHMUNDRY

A Ramana Jayanti meeting was held at the Hindu Samaj Buildings. There was chanting of passages from the Upanishads and a number of eminent persons spoke on the importance of Bhagavan's teaching.

#### CALICUT

There is no Sri Ramana organization at Calicut, but the Jayanti was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the Sri Sai Baba Mission Bhajan Mandir. There was bhajan and recitation of Bhagavan's Upadesa Saram and of Sanskrit slokas composed in praise of Bhagavan by Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni. After this several devotees who had had the inestimable privilege of sitting at the feet of Sri Bhagavan told personal reminiscences of him as well as speaking about his teaching. Dr. M. Anandan, Secretary of the Shri Sai Baba Mission, who is also an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan, spoke briefly but clearly on the central theme of Self-enquiry in Bhagavan's teaching.

#### A MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

On New Year's Day Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, leading vocal musician of Carnatic music in South India, whose voice and depth of devotion



Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi's concert: She thrilled the audience with her devotional songs.

were praised by no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi, gave a concert at the Ashram in willing response to our request. She was accompanied on the violin by Sri Subramaniam and on the *mridangam* by Sri Tanjavur Murthy. The concert consisted of devotional songs in Tamil, Sanskrit and Hindi chosen by the singer herself and lasted for three and a half hours. The large audience, consisting of both Hindus and foreigners, were held spell-bound and some of them moved to tears by her vibrant, melodious voice and the devotion and feeling in her singing.

Smt. Subbulakshmi's husband, Sri T. Sadasivan, editor and owner of the popular Tamil weekly 'Kalki', also honoured us with his presence on the occasion. They were presented with Ashram publications as well as a large portrait of Sri Bhagavan. Both of them seemed very pleased with their visit here, and after their return to Madras Sri Sadasivan wrote: "It would not be entirely correct to say that we enjoyed our short stay at the Ashram; it would be more correct to say that we felt blessed."

Devotees are the more grateful to them since this is the first of a series of benefit performances which this great musician has graciously consented to give in aid of the building fund needed to erect the large meditation hall that is planned in front of Sri Bhagavan's samadhi.

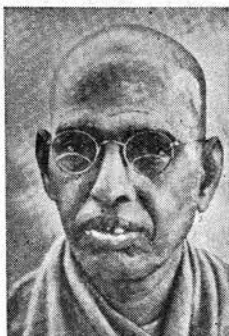
#### MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

The July issue of *The Mountain Path* will be largely on the theme of Realization and Guidance and the October issue largely on the theme of Orthodoxy.

Donations of books to *The Mountain Path* library will be gratefully received.

#### CHINNASWAMI'S ARADHANA

The 12th aradhana or death anniversary of Chinnaswami' or 'The Lesser Swami', that is Sri Niranjanananda Swami, who was the Ashram Sarvadhikari (as described in our issue of



Chinnaswami

Jan, 1964) was celebrated in the Ashram where his samadhi or shrine is located, on 17th Jan. The devotees assembled for the occasion and paid due homage to one whose life-long guidance of the Ashram in a spirit of service and devotion to Bhagavan led to the construction of the fine Ashram premises we now enjoy.

#### VISITORS

As usual at this time of year, there was a constant flow of visitors. Outstanding among them was, perhaps, Anthony Brooke of Sarawak who spent several weeks here. He was much drawn to Arunachala and often spent the whole day alone there, setting forth in the morning with a bunch of bananas for sustenance. He also circumambulated the holy hill almost every day.



Anthony Brooke

We were also interested to have a visit from the Italian novelist Piero Scanziani. He presented us with a signed copy of his novel 'I Cinque Continenti' ('The Five Continents') in which there is mention of Bhagavan and his teaching. Unfortunately there is no English translation of it.

Fast on the heels of Olga Mago, mentioned in our last News Bulletin, comes another lady from Venezuela, this time Irma Potess de Valera, an artist of international repute who is going on from here to Beyruth, where she is holding an exhibition. She was already a firm devotee of Bhagavan before leaving home and came to India only for the sake of visiting his Ashram.

#### IN MEMORIAM

Many readers were impressed by the articles we published in our issues of April and July 1964 on the Secrets and Symbolism of Arunachala. Now we have regretfully to announce the demise of their author, Sri T. K. Sundaresa Iyer, whose last article, entitled 'Siva Lingam', appears in this issue. After being a close devotee of Sri Bhagavan for some fifty years he passed away in Sri Ramana Nagar at 6-10 a.m. on Friday Feb. 5th at the age of 68. Although not of a great age, he had become very frail. For quite a while he remained permanently on the Ashram precincts, not even visiting his children. He passed away peacefully, conscious to the very end and was cremated with due rites in the presence of many Ramana bhaktas.



T. K. S.

Born into a strictly orthodox Brahmin family, he was at first put off by accounts of Sri Bhagavan's impatience with formal orthodoxy and had to be literally forced by a cousin to pay his first visit to him in 1908. Having once seen him, however, he became his ardent devotee. As he explained with profound insight to this editor: "Bhagavan was above formal orthodoxy or unorthodoxy. Whatever he did was orthodox because he did it, since he was higher than Manu and was himself the source of orthodoxy. People who failed to see that were putting the letter above the Spirit."

He was always very helpful to the Ashram authorities, gladly lending a hand with office correspondence, publication work, pujas and the Veda Patasala.

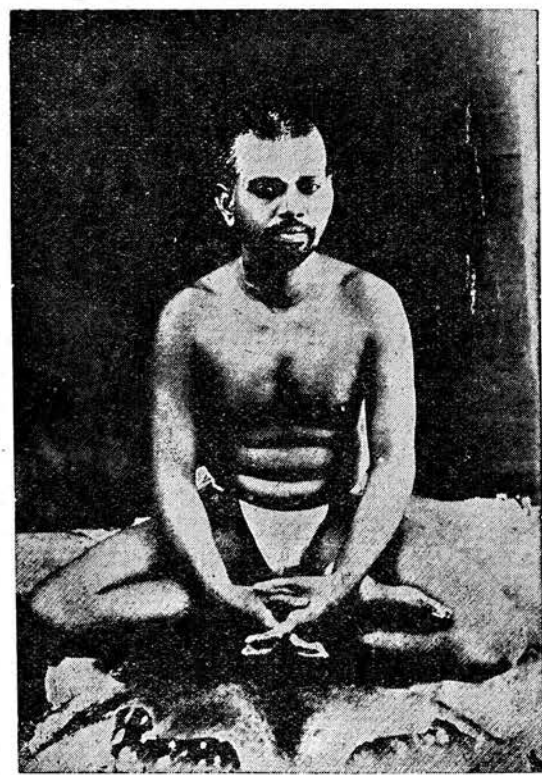
Sri Sundaresa Iyer was one of those who was captivated by the magnetic personality of Sri Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni, about whom there is an article in this issue. He learned the Rig Veda Sutras from him and under his guidance followed for a length of time the Mantra-Homa Marga. When the Muni left for Belgaum in 1926 he remained here and practically made the Ashram his home.

May he rest in peace at the Feet of Bhagavan.

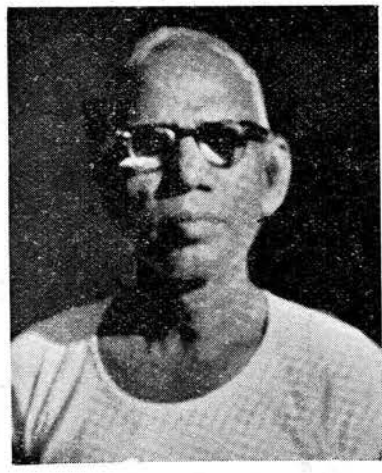
## INTRODUCING ....

Of Bhagavan's few short books one of the most beautiful is *Spiritual Instruction*. It is little known because Bhagavan never wrote it out in a continuous form, as he did *Who am I?* and *Self-Enquiry* but left it in its original form of question and answer, and it was therefore not included in his *Collected Works*. In particular, it contains beautiful definitions of the Guru and upadesa, including the following passage which shows in what an uncompromising sense Bhagavan used the term 'Guru': "The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others and is quite free from the idea that he is the Enlightened or Liberated One, while those around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance. His self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstances, and he is never perturbed."

Most of these explanations were given to an elementary school teacher, by name Natesa Mudaliar. It was as far back as 1918, before the present Ashram was built, that, fired with enthusiasm from his reading of Swami Vivekananda, he approached Bhagavan in Skandashram Cave and sought his upadesa. In those days Bhagavan spoke little and the rumour spread that he took no disciples and gave no upadesa. And indeed the first time Natesa visited him he sat silent, not vouchsafing a word, and Natesa returned home dejected.



However that only strengthened his resolve. A Sat-Guru must be found; and where was another? His mind always flew to the Maharshi. In 1920 he wrote a few letters to the Maharshi, but there was at that time no Ashram office and no correspondence was maintained, so no reply came. In one letter he said that if Sri Maharshi would not bless him with upadesa in this life he would have to be reborn to do so in another incarnation. A few days after this Sri Maharshi appeared to him in a dream and told him that his help would follow if he first meditated on God in the form of Maheswara. Natesa followed this instruction for some time and then to his surprise and pleasure received a reply from Sri Vasudeva Sastriar on behalf of Sri Bhagavan that his letters had been placed before Bhagavan and that he could come for darshan.



Natanananda

He accordingly went to Tiruvannamalai and first worshipped the Lord in the temple there. A Brahmin there to whom he told his story advised him that it would be a good sign if he could first get upadesa from the elusive Seshadri Swami who

also lived on the Hill.<sup>1</sup> The two of them accordingly went in search of Seshadri Swami. After a good deal of search they contacted him and he said: "When the mind rejects objects one after another what survives this elimination is Jnana and That is God. All is That and That alone. It is madness to run to hills and caves in quest of it. Go without fear."

Full of joy, Natesa went up the hill to Skandashram and sat before the Maharshi for some hours. The Maharshi still did not speak to him but before rising to go for food twice looked intently at him. Henceforth Natesa visited the Ashram every month but a year went by before he presumed to open his mouth and ask Bhagavan for his *anugraha* or Grace. Bhagavan said: "I am always giving it. If you can't apprehend it what can I do?" Still the silent Grace was not apprehended.

Some days later Sri Maharshi appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to unify the vision of his two eyes, withdrawing it from objects, external and internal, and to make this his form of practice. In the dream he disputed the utility of this form of practice but Sri Maharshi told him to try it and see.

<sup>1</sup> For whom see 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge', Ch. VI, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

After following this dream upadesa for some time Natesa had another dream in which he affirmed to Sri Maharshi that he was not the body, whereupon Sri Maharshi placed his hand on his head and then on the right side of his chest, pressing hard. This caused some pain but he considered it a gift of Grace. On waking he felt that the Maharshi had given him *Hasta Diksha* and opened his 'heart'.

On his next visit to Skandashram the Maharshi told him that the Atman was already present so that there was no such thing as obtaining it. It is already obtained. On this he experienced peace.

About 1926 Natesa asked Bhagavan for permission to renounce the world and become a hermit. Bhagavan dissuaded him, but in spite of this he could not give up the idea and finally donned the ochre robe unauthorised. He did not find that it brought him the peace he had anticipated and after a few years he was persuaded to resume his normal mode of life. He wrote in Tamil 'Ramana Darsanam' in which there is a happy blending of Gurujnana and Gurubhakti. He is still in Tiruvannamalai, under the name of Natanananda,\* but living in retirement and known to few.

\* We are glad to inform our friends that he has since purchased a house in Ramana Nagar and has settled down very near the Ashram, thus enabling his fellow-devotees to contact him whenever they wish to.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

We are glad to inform our readers that the response to the journal from readers in India and abroad has been far in excess of our most sanguine expectations. We will be glad to receive offers for the representation of the journal in all countries outside India for the purpose both of enrolling subscribers and of distributing copies to them in their own country. For terms and conditions please apply to:

*The Managing Editor,*  
 'THE MOUNTAIN PATH',  
 Sri Ramanasramam,  
 Tiruvannamalai, S. India.



# Letters TO THE EDITOR

Like an expert cook who knows the tastes of his customers, to use a mundane example, your *Mountain Path* caters excellently to the tastes of your vast audience. I have over the years perused many journals dealing with spiritual matters but none has brought such a fresh breath as yours on these difficult topics. As Lord Macaulay humorously remarked that the best part of an uncle's letter was in the seal, so the best part of *The Mountain Path* is in the last item, that is in its letters from readers and the editor's replies.

S. ANANTHALWAR.

\* \* \*

I must write and say "Bless you and thank you for the spreading of Bhagavan's teachings." They are a wonderful inspiration. May the Blessing of God fall on all who read *The Mountain Path*.

I was very thrilled to read in your January issue that a person from my home town of Sale, Cheshire, had written in to you, and even more so to read the inspiring article by Joel Goldsmith, whom I have heard speaking in England and to see in an earlier issue the letter from our good friend Clare Cameron of Chichester. I never expected to see their names in *The Mountain Path*. Isn't it surprising how spiritual seekers are somehow drawn together! I will certainly be with your Sale correspondent and others everywhere in meditation at 10 p.m. not only on Thursdays but every evening.

MRS. E. PRESTNER,  
Sale, Cheshire.

\* \* \*

I am so much impressed by the contents of *The Mountain Path* that I can hardly refrain from helping to spread it to all my Brazilian brothers by translating some of your articles and publishing them in Portuguese in our papers and maga-

zines with a universalist mentality. I would very much appreciate your approval and authorisation for this.

MARIO ALLGAYER COSTA,  
Brazil.

*By all means. We are glad to have our articles translated and republished—with acknowledgment, of course.*

Editor.

\* \* \*

The spiritual *Mountain Path* is steep and a hard climb, as we all know, but you are making the path smooth through your *Mountain Path*.

I consider it my rarest privilege to have fallen at the feet of Sri Ramana in 1939.

M. P. SELLASAMY,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

\* \* \*

Without a question of a doubt this is the finest journal I have ever had the privilege to read. You can quote me as saying that the universal Truth, Faith and Hope expressed in the various articles, especially in the works of Sri Ramana, is the real hope for the future of mankind in these troubled days. I want to thank you personally for giving such a work to us. Sri Ramana dwells on each page and in each breath.

DAVID TEPLITZ,  
San Rafael, California.

\* \* \*

I have received the January 1965 issue with your exquisite poem in it—"Be still . . ." Oh how hard it is to be so in this modern age but how absolutely essential it is. That poem is a gem. Have you written any others like it?

Needless to say I sent my subscription for another year. It's a fine paper—I think unique in its scope by its embrace of all facets of religion with no bias on any one.

NELL SHARP, Surrey.

The beauty of truth shines over the poem, 'The Two Paths' in the October editorial.

HANS DE REEDE, Elba.

\* \* \*

I have just read every sentence of the editor's book reviews in the back numbers. What clarity, what ripeness of mind! And I have just read the answers he gives to readers' letters. I feel that he just says what Bhagavan would have said himself. The way he legitimately condemns certain books in his reviews will do a lot of good to readers. I feel it will be difficult to maintain this standard of excellence. I shall be happy to be wrong in this.

BABCHI, New Delhi.

\* \* \*

*The Mountain Path* is improving from issue to issue and I must congratulate you on this. Your editorial on 'Karma Marga' is superb in form and expression.

D. S. SASTRI, Madras.

\* \* \*

I have to compliment you on your magazine. It is so far the only magazine which I really read from the first to the last page and to which I refer back when reading other publications.

K. PRACHT, Bombay.

\* \* \*

I would like to request you to include photographs of Sri Ramana in different positions. This will be of much help to those like me who had not the good fortune of seeing Bhagavan in human form.

DR. M. D. NAYAK,  
Kumta, North Kanara.

*From time to time as occasion offers.*

Editor.

\* \* \*

*The Mountain Path* is indeed a joy and a blessing. Being a devotee of only recent standing, I can nevertheless marvel at the way Sri Bhagavan's influence has been shaping all my life. His kindness and help in various recent trials have been tremendous.

JAMES WARNER,  
Ramataim, Israel.

\* \* \*

Thanks for the 'super' October issue. To Mr. Devaraja Mudaliar who wrote 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' I can only give grateful thanks. The problem for me is this: I have been conditioned since childhood to do everything I can first and then surrender. Somewhere I am confused. We seem to be able to do something about our problems, Krishnamurti not-

withstanding, but then he perplexes me. He is opposed to meditation and at the same time friends who have known him over the years say he is the product of meditation. All very confusing.

JUNE L. HEATH,  
Menlo Park, California.

*To do what you can first and then leave it to God when you can do no more means that you are using God as a last instrument for furthering your interests; but how do you know that they ought to be furthered? In the editorial of the Jan. 1965 issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH you will have seen the quotation from the Bhagavad Gita: "Do not be motivated by the fruit of action, but also do not cling to inaction." That answers your problem. You should act in the way that seems to you right, simply because it is right, and leave the outcome to God.*

Editor.

\* \* \*

There is always great joy for me in receiving *The Mountain Path*, not only because of the splendid articles but also for the news of so many people I met at Sri Ramanasramam who are now dear to me. The pictures of Bhagavan and Muruganar in the October issue made me extremely happy.

DOROTHEA GRAEFIN VON MATUSCHKA,  
Berlin.

\* \* \*

It is with pleasure and anticipation that I send you the enclosed Postal Order for next year's *Mountain Path*.

I am a teacher of English in the BBC's world-wide service of 'English by radio' and it was in our library here in Bush House that I first came across Mr. Osborne's book of the Maharshi's Collected Works. I was transfixed. Here was a hundred percent corroboration of the teaching I was beginning to learn from the lectures and books of Joel Goldsmith.

Now I have found the same teaching hidden in Buddhism and Islam. Really *The Mountain Path* is an inspired publication.

NORMAN FRASER,  
London.

\* \* \*

I have just bought your quarterly, *The Mountain Path*, and I feel that I must write to you to congratulate you on such an enterprise, and so well produced too.

I have been interested in the published accounts of Sri Ramana Maharshi's sayings and answers for

over ten years now. Soon after reading the first volume of 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi' I had a dream in which he sat quite unperturbed while outside the room in which he sat and just behind his back there occurred the most violent earthquake and storm. He seemed not to know fear at all, and I then realised that this is what realisation is, a rebirth into a new life where there is fear no longer but only serenity.

Perhaps one day I may be able to visit you in the Ashram. Whether a visit would help me to follow the so hard yet so simple precepts of the Maharshi I do not know. I rather think that we stay with the same thoughts wherever we are and it is these thoughts, the mind, that are the impediment, is it not?

Will you write an article giving us who never met the Maharshi some idea of the silences and the sort of length of time they lasted. For instance, I often wonder whether the Maharshi always answered immediately the questions put to him in the Talks? Was there a pause? How long did it last? Did any questioner ever leave without an answer? Or was it more conversational in style and for the most part rapid?

Thank you again for including all religions and faiths in your net — a truly wonderful attitude — and most refreshingly new — the spirit of the age to come.

MARK WILDING,  
Bournemouth.

*It is, of course, one's own mind that is the impediment. Nevertheless, the pervading Presence of Bhagavan at Tiruvannamalai can be a great help in mastering it. It varies from case to case whether and for how long such help is needed.*

*The Maharshi's replies to questions also varied from case to case. Usually they were quick and conversational, but when the motive behind them was not right or when silence was called for he might delay or withhold a verbal reply. Typical illustrations of this are given in the 'Letters' of Nagamma in our first three issues.*

Editor.

Permit me to congratulate Prof. K. Subrahmanyam on his brilliant article 'Transcendence of Karma'. In particular I liked:

1. His saying that sadhana "in earnestness and humility renders us less and less ineligible to receive the highest gift." But adding that finally it is always an act of Grace.

2. "Attention is alertness, it is sraddha." "Inattention is death itself." The more one becomes attentive to one's vasanas and watches them, the

more they loosen their hold, thus lightening pure awareness.

3. His exposition of yajna.

It is a profound article and should be read and re-read.

U. D.,  
Sri Ramanasramam.

I appreciate the spiritual tone of your journal and note that your appeal is a universal one. Any other approach is immature and the Christian Church itself will have to re-think its attitude to other religions.

ERNEST SWIFT,  
Wiltshire.

The fortieth verse of Bhagavan's 'Forty Verses on Reality' on page 205 of the October 1964 *Mountain Path* reads: "If it is said that Liberation is of three kinds, with form or without form or with and without form, then let me tell you that the extinction of the three forms of Liberation is the only true Liberation."

It is my humble opinion that this does not convey the exact meaning so I request you to correct that verse. The real meaning is that the extinction of the ego which enquires which form of Liberation is true is the true Liberation.

This is an important difference and, as the Maharshi's words are eternal, they should be translated true to the spirit.

Also at the beginning when I saw in the first issue of *The Mountain Path* the words "after the death of the Maharshi" it pained me and I wished to write to you about it. I take the opportunity to do so now.

M. S. NAGARAJAN,  
Tiruchirappalli.

Thank you. Your correction of the translation is justified and important.

As to the expression "the death of the Maharshi", it is more usual to say "the Mahasamadhi" or "Mahanirvana" and to say that a saint "attained Mahasamadhi" rather than that he died; but in the case of the Maharshi this is not strictly correct, since he was already in a state of Mahanirvana in his lifetime and attained nothing on death. As he himself said: "There is no difference between Jivanmukti and Videhamukti. There is nothing more to attain." On the other hand, he spoke frequently of the 'death' of a Jnani, explaining that it made no difference to him. Therefore it was considered better to use this expression, as he did, to denote a simple physical event.

Editor.

## CORRESPONDENCE NETWORK

The following would be glad to correspond with other *Mountain Path* subscribers:

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California 94027, USA.

—Particularly for letters on the relationship  
between scientific teaching and Advaita.

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East Africa.

## “THE MOUNTAIN PATH”

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