



The Mountain Path

Vol. II

JULY 1965

No. 3

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

"Sit firmly in my mind
lest it elude Thee, Oh
Arunachala!"

—The Marital Garland of
Letters, verse 7.

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(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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(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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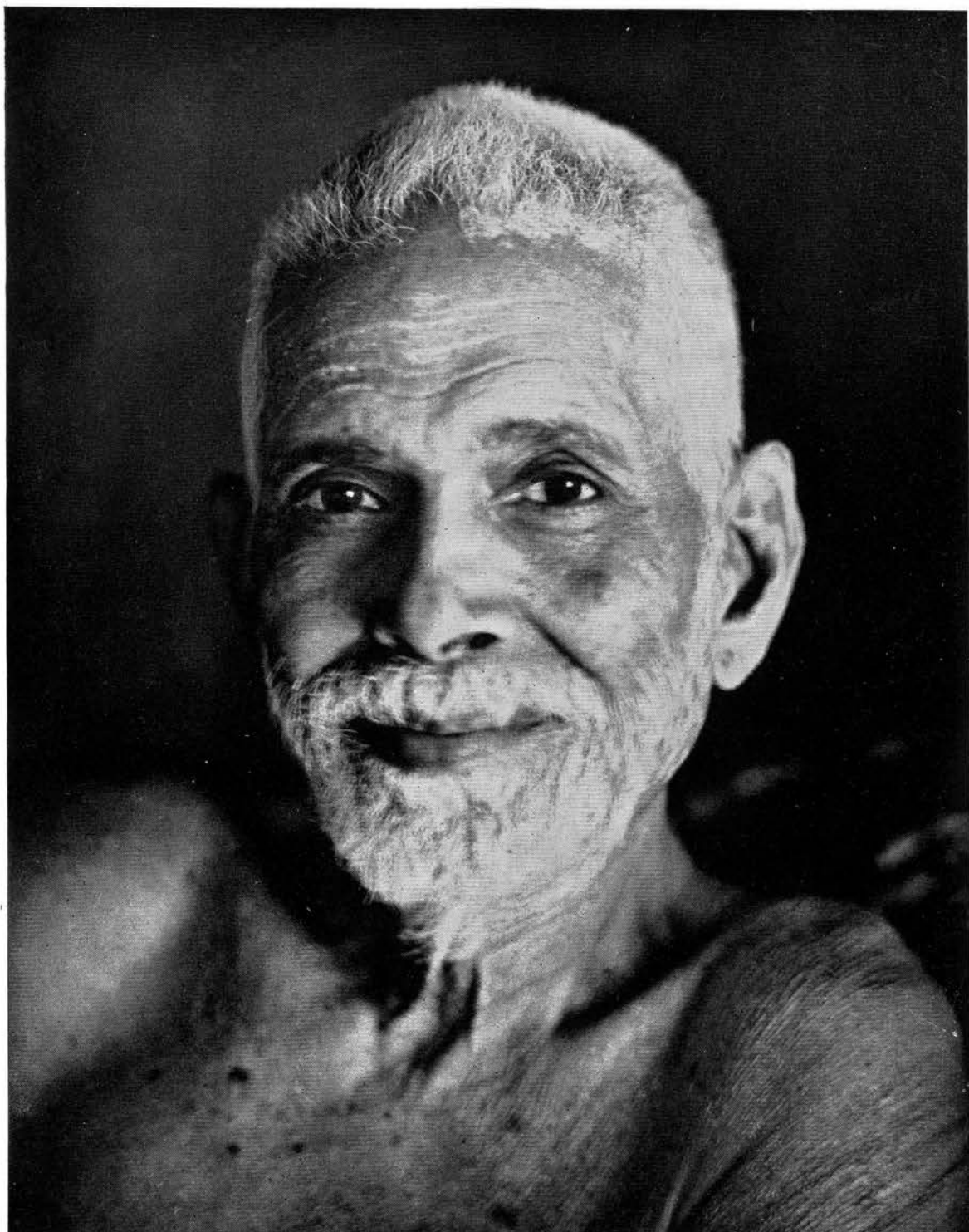
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

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REALIZATION AND GUIDANCE

[EDITORIAL]

Once it is perceived that effort and a guide are needed in the quest of life's Goal, the question arises, whichever path one may follow, whether the guide need be a realized man or not.

Strange as it may sound, there is no necessary connection between a man's state of inner illumination and the grace that flows through him to strengthen and inspire others. It is possible for such grace not to flow through a realized man, in which case his high state will not be recognized. It is simply not his function—nature—destiny—whichever term one may use—to guide others. Indeed, Bhagavan would sometimes say of wandering beggars or sadhus: "How do we know who comes to us in their form?" This implies that it is not a man's inner state that is recognizable but the dynamic effect of his state. The state remains the same whether a dynamic effect flows from it or not.

Naturally it is not easy to give examples of this, for the simple reason that such a person would remain unknown; but there are two that come to mind. One is Christ before he set forth on his mission. Accord-

ing to Christian doctrine, he was born without original sin, that is to say Self-realized from birth. And yet no one in his home town felt that he was a holy man, no crowds flocked to him, no disciples sought him out, no power flowed through him to effect cures. In fact, when he went back there later his fellow-townsmen were incredulous that the local carpenter's boy should have turned out a prophet (which confirms, incidentally, that he had spent his youth there and that they did know him as the local carpenter's boy). The other is the Maharshi. Realization descended on him spontaneously when he was still a schoolboy, but his changed state was perceived by nobody, either at home or at school.¹ It was only later when power flowed through him and disciples began to gather round that he was recognized for what he was.

It is also possible for grace and power to flow through one who is not realized. On the exoteric plane it is well known how many powerful religious leaders—the Wes-

¹ *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, Chs. 2 and 3, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

leys and Luthers of history—have inspired others and led great movements without any claim to higher understanding or inner development. It is impossible to doubt that in many such cases the Grace of God has worked through them. But spiritual guidance of the aspirant is in a different category, requiring esoteric knowledge and insight. Is it possible here too for the unrealized man to act aright through Grace? To some extent it is. It is difficult to find examples here too, this time for the reason that followers of such a one are likely to claim that he is realized. I shall take as an example the controversial figure of Swami Vivekananda. On the one hand, his followers claim realization for him, while on the other hand some foreign critics are so derogatory as to deny that he was even rightly guided. In fact one of them takes it on himself to declare that Ramakrishna was deluded by his infatuation for Vivekananda.² Let us examine the case.

Sri Ramakrishna was enthusiastic about Narendra Dutt, the future Vivekananda, and spoke of him as the person destined to carry on his work of restoring vigour to a languishing, almost decadent Hinduism. By the laying on of hands he induced in Naren a pre-vision of Realization. When this experience ended he said: "Now I am going to lock it up in a box and you will have to go out and do your work without it. But when your work is finished the Mother will give it back to you." Records of Vivekananda's last days, when he had withdrawn from all active work, show that Realization did indeed come to him and he saw aloofly and objectively the imperfections in his life-work.

Here we have a picture equally far from a Self-realized Vivekananda and a deluded and infatuated Ramakrishna. What this picture implies is that Ramakrishna's work was to be carried on by one from whom Realization was to be withheld until the work was accomplished, very much like the Mahayana ideal of the Bhodisattva.

There is no doubt about the grace that flowed through Vivekananda. After his death, the Mother, Sarada Devi, said of him: "What powers did Naren Swami have by himself? It was because God acted through him that he achieved what he did."³ At the famous Chicago Parliament of Religions—famous now only because he took part in it—it was his presence not his arguments that impressed people. He had got no farther than "Sisters and brothers of America!" when a torrent of applause swept the hall. From that point on, in speech after speech, contact after contact, people felt the power and grace in him. A recently published book of tributes, by thirty odd of his admirers, Hindu and Western⁴ shows the overpowering impression he made on people, the support they derived from him, and the simplicity and humour that he maintained despite their adulation.

Nevertheless, to say in general that the guru need not be realized would be to simplify the question far too much. In the first place, it is usually harmful for a man to set up as a guru before he has attained Realization himself. It impedes his further progress on the path by turning his energy outwards to the guidance of others when it should still be turned inwards to his own sadhana. If not impossible for such a person to make further progress, it is at least much more difficult. Not only that, but there is danger of his latent egoism being revived, bringing him to a worse state than he was in before. If the ego still exists it may lie low for a while, facilitating the flow of Grace, and then rise up and turn this to its own service, poisoning it in the process. Moreover there is the danger of hypocrisy and arrogance. So sweet is adulation to the ego that he is likely to allow his disciples to treat him as a realized man when he is not, which is hypocrisy. Or he will become arrogant and overbearing, craving flattery, refusing to listen to criticism, shouting down arguments. It is foolish to invite such dangers, which

³ *At Holy Mother's Feet*, p. 69, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta.

⁴ *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta.

² See *Language of the Self*, Ch. 2, by F. Schuon, Ganesh & Co., Madras.

few can withstand. In parenthesis, it should be added that Vivekananda does seem to have withstood them, perhaps because he passed on all the homage he received to his Master, perhaps also through that Master's invisible protection. If he had not withstood the dangers he could not have attained the ultimate Realization which is recorded.

And what about the disciples of an unrealized guru? In former times it was quite normal in India, both among Hindus and Muslims, to receive initiation from a sort of family guru, and something of this still remains. However, that is something of a low order of potency, whether for good or evil—perhaps not much more than confirmation in a Christian church. The disciple does not seek realization nor the guru claim it.

However, one who seeks a guru in his quest for Realization must understand that no one can guide others farther than he has gone himself; therefore an unrealized guru would not be of much use at the best. But there is danger of the worst—that the guru's faults of character may be transmitted to his disciples. In general, any sickness of character is as infectious as a physical disease. That is why the Masters lay such emphasis on the people a disciple associates with, urging him to seek the company of the wise and pure and shun the evil-minded. Moreover, a disciple lays himself open to the influence of his guru as to no one else. To submit to a guru who has developed the vices of hypocrisy or arrogance or any other manifestations of a resurgent ego is as foolhardy as for a woman to take a husband who has T.B. There is little likelihood of escaping infection.

Guénon likened the influence flowing through a spiritual functionary of any sort to the electric current flowing through a wire, unaffected by the cleanliness or otherwise of the wire; it would be more apt to compare it to water flowing through a pipe to a thirsty man. If the pipe is filthy inside the water will quench his thirst just the same, but it will probably give him typhoid or cholera in the process. It is advisable to

weigh the dangers against the advantages very carefully before accepting a guru.

The matter is further complicated by the question what is meant by 'realization'. Bhagavan was quite categorical that there are no stages of Self-realization. Either you have realized the Self or you have not. By Self-realization he meant the dissolution of the illusory ego-sense and its replacement by constant, conscious Identity with the universal Self or pure Being. That is the state in which he was. That is the ultimate. There is nothing beyond. For such a one there is no going into samadhi, for he is always in samadhi, whether with outer awareness or not; no prayer, for who is to pray to whom? No revelation, for who is to reveal to whom?

But this is a very rare state. There are two kinds of approximation to it. One is that of the man who has a theoretical understanding of Identity fortified by a more or less constant inner, non-theoretical remembrance and by occasional glimpses of realized Identity. It is clear from their writings that even such great mystic philosophers as Plotinus and Eckhart come in this category. This is the path of approach of Bhagavan's disciples. Such a state cannot be called realization.

Some of Bhagavan's disciples did act as gurus, even in his lifetime. He did not forbid it. If asked whether a man could act as a guru before attaining realization he would be more likely to reply non-committally: "If it is a man's destiny to be a guru he will." But he did at times warn against it. On the whole he made it clear that it is better and safer to concentrate on one's own sadhana than to try to guide that of others.

Nor is there anything egoistic about doing so. (How can there be anything egoistic about trying to uproot the ego?) In the first place, silent, invisible influences are far more potent than the materialist imagines: whether the spiritual wayfarer gives formal guidance to others or not, the influence that radiates from him will affect them, and the

greater his purity, the more free he is from the ambition to lead others, the more beneficent will the influence be. In the second place, the Maharshi is himself the Guru of all who turn to him in their heart, now as in his body's lifetime, and no intermediate guru is needed.

The other type of approximation is through the actualisation of latent powers and realization of higher states of being. Various less direct spiritual paths lead to this—yogic and Tantric paths in Hinduism, Hermetic in Mediaeval Christianity and Islam, among others. This is far more complicated. Such a path may lead through successive stages, each one approached through a new initiation and leading to a new 'realization'—not Self-realization but the realization of some higher state. This type of path also may or may not be illuminated by pre-glimpses of its goal, it may or may not involve states of ecstasy. The materialist simplifies things far too much in conceiving only of a physical world and a spiritual worldlessness; there is a vast luxuriance of intermediary states just as there is physically of forms of life between man and stone. The Advaitin also simplifies things, but deliberately, in closing his eyes to all intermediate states with their powers and experiences in order to avoid the danger of being distracted from his goal by them. But there are paths and teachings which lead stage by stage through the complexity. The hermetists had their graded heavens; the Sufis have a series of *maqamat* or stages of realization. Buddhist writers also speak of stages. It is quite evident that many of the Christian saints had neither actual realization nor even theoretical understanding of the ultimate truth of Identity, and yet they were saints and had powers, among them that of guiding aspirants.

Similarly there is no reason for presuming that prophets in the Semitic tradition must have been in a permanent state of realized Identity. Rather the Hebrew and Islamic scriptures suggest that they were not, that it was not necessary for the work they had to do in the tradition in which they had to do it. For instance, the so-called 'chariot mysticism' of the Old Testament Prophets is obviously in the realm of duality, of seeing, not being. The Qur'an in particular insists that prophets are just men who have been called to a particularly responsible but onerous undertaking. Mohammed himself is said to have declared that he had a time with God in which no angel or inspired prophet was equal to him. It seems to be straining language unjustifiably to suggest that this implies realized identity, but in any case he hastened to add that this was not his normal state but only occasional.

Returning then to a consideration of these two approaches to Self-Realization in the sense of constant, conscious abidance in a state of Identity: one who has attained stabilisation at some station on the Mountain Path, even though the summit remains obscured from his sight, even though he may not know that there is one, has thereby acquired certain powers which he is competent to use; and it may well be that the power to act as a guru is among them. He will lead others by the path he has trodden as far as he has gone. That may be less far than wayfarers of the former type mentioned, but on the other hand his stabilisation is an achievement lacking to them. It is unlikely that they will be qualified gurus, whereas he, in the organization to which he belongs, through the technique which he has mastered, will be able to guide others to the station in which he abides.

Noumenon is ubiquitous, all pervading; there cannot be anywhere in which it is not, nor any moment at which it is not present.
But itself also is not.

— WEI WU WEI.

MODES OF SAMADHI

By NAGAMMA

3rd Dec., 1947

This morning a devotee approached Bhagavan and said : "It is said that some devotees remain in thought-free awareness (nirvikalpa samadhi) for quite a long time. Do they eat or drink at that time ?"

"How can they ?" Bhagavan replied. "Do you eat when you are asleep?"

"No, but what I want to know is whether the mind exists during nirvikalpa samadhi," the questioner continued.

"Why shouldn't it? What exists in sleep exists in that state also. From 12 noon to 2 in the afternoon the doors of the hall are shut and we sleep inside. That is an illustration."

The devotee next asked how it is with those who are in a state of complete Self-awareness during the waking state, i.e. without trance (that is in sahaja samadhi).

Bhagavan replied : "It may well be asked how such a one can speak if there is no 'I' (aham). But what actually happens is that what previously appeared as the 'I' or ego now becomes our true Nature or Self (swarupa). This is brought about by the destruction of the mind (manonasa). Thought-free awareness (nirvikalpa samadhi) and other kinds of samadhi are cases of the merging (laya) of the mind and not of its destruction (nasa)."

Another devotee here intervened, saying : "Even apart from the ultimate state of sahaja samadhi, samadhi is said to be of various kinds, such as savikalpa (absorbed in thought) and nirvikalpa (free from thought). Will Bhagavan explain them to us."

Bhagavan then gave the following explanation : "Shankara described six kinds of samadhi in his 'Vivekachudamani' and 'Drigdrisyaiviveka'. They fall into the two main categories you have just mentioned, that is with thought and without thought

(savikalpa and nirvikalpa). The former is further divided into two kinds, drisyanuviddha and sabdanuviddha, and these are again subdivided, so we get the following six types.

1. Antar drisyanuviddha savikalpa samadhi : Meditating upon one's Self as the witness of desires and other activities of the mind.

2. Antar Sabdanuviddha savikalpa samadhi : Knowing the Self to be asanga (free from contacts), swaprakasa (self-luminous), sat-chit-ananda (being-consciousness-bliss) and advaita (non-dual).

3. Antar nirvikalpa samadhi : Experiencing the exalted feeling of Self derived from the ecstasy of the above two states and yet discarding them both and remaining motionless like an unflickering light in a windless place.

4. Bahya drisyanuviddha savikalpa samadhi : Discarding with indifference outer things, things which have name and form, and meditating on the underlying Reality.

5. Bahya sabdanuviddha savikalpa samadhi : Knowing and being aware at all times that That which manifests as Sat-chit-ananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) is the universal Brahman.

6. Bahya nirvikalpa samadhi : With the experience of the above two, overcoming all desires and remaining calm and motionless like the waveless ocean.

By constantly practising these six kinds of samadhi at all times and without intermission one can attain the state of natural thought-free awareness (sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi). Until this state is attained the ego is not completely destroyed. Once this state is attained one may seem to others to see and hear, to eat and sleep, but it is an appearance only. Whatever one may do one really remains inactive.

REMINISCENCES OF BHAGAVAN REFERRING TO THE SELF AND THE LOKAS

By KRISHNA BIKSHU

In spite of being in the universal state of realized Identity, Bhagavan recognised the contingent reality of higher states equally with that of this mundane state. This was shown in the case of Venkata Sastri, one of the group of devotees who put the questions recorded in 'Sri Ramana Gita'. This devotee had been ill for a long time and, expecting a near demise, he took sannyas. He sat fully conscious to the last when death was approaching, repeating the pranava (OM mantra) in an audible voice and from time to time reporting to those around him the staged withdrawal of the prana till, with his last utterance, the prana finally departed. This was reported to Bhagavan who said: "Is that so? In that case he will go, according to the sastras, to Brahma Loka and abide there till the end of Brahma's cycle when he, together with Brahma, will merge in the formless infinity of Nirguna. Yes, Venkata Sastri must have gone to Brahma Loka. You can tell his people that I said so." What further proof is needed that Bhagavan did not regard the higher worlds as mere mirages?

On another occasion a visitor of the name of Amrutananda wrote on a piece of paper the first half of a verse. This ran: "Who is this Ramana, famed for his graciousness, who lives in Arunachala Cave? Is he Vararuchi or Siva or Vishnu or Dakshina-murti? I want to know the eminence of this Guru." Now the question is not about the essential nature of the guru but about a Ramana living in a cave on Arunachala. He left the paper with Bhagavan and went out and when he returned he found it completed by Bhagavan with the words: "Ramana is the Supreme Spirit (Paramatma) who, in the form of Knowledge abides in the heart-cavern of every person, from

Vishnu downwards and if you come to the heart with the mind melting in love and see with the eye of wisdom this will be plain to you." He is not speaking here of Ramana as an individual but of the essential nature of Ramana.

It was always to be observed that Bhagavan was against intellectual discussions about personalities or about his individual nature since he was setting before his devotees the highest goal of pure formless Being.

To deny the truth of the lokas and their Lords which is proclaimed with a hundred voices by the Sruti, the Upanishads and all other scriptures is to deny the obvious.

How are we to understand activity on the part of one who abides in the state of Brahman? The Sruti says: "He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman." This implies that if it be the Saguna Brahman or Personal God that he knows he will merge in This, but if the Nirguna Brahman or Absolute then he will merge in That. Furthermore, Brahman is declared to be unmoving, unconditioned, inactive. How is this to be reconciled with the idea of His manifestation as an individual performing the work of such, whether in this one world or in many? The writer's brother Venkateswar, who wrote a life of Bhagavan in Hindi, once asked Bhagavan himself: "Swami, I see you doing work but I know that the scriptures say that the Jnani becomes one with Brahman and is non-dual. How are these two things to be reconciled?"

Bhagavan gave him the long, deep, concentrated look so familiar to his devotees and then said slowly and clearly: "Suppose I could explain this to you in words, are you in a state to understand it?"

My brother pondered for a minute and then had to confess that he was not. The activity of one beyond the range of words and thoughts is obviously not to be understood by a mind confined to them. This is a mystery that can only be unravelled by experience. Some say that it is all leela, others that it is maya, but both these explanations are just words; and words, having been formed after creation, can never go back to their source which is before creation and on a plane above them.

I have also heard Bhagavan say: "It is neither necessary nor possible for the body to have realization. I have at this moment twenty different bodies working in twenty different lokas, so if one of them suffers am I to grieve? I am not the body. One who considers himself the body may grieve, but how should I?"

On a different occasion we put the same question to Bhagavan, asking how he could exist in a number of lokas at the same time and he said that one could have as many bodies as he wished if he had the necessary power of yoga, adding: "Have you not read that at the time of ras leela Sri Krishna assumed 16,000 bodies at the same time?"

Such statements by Bhagavan affirm the existence of a number of lokas or planes of existence of which he was aware but we are not. They also show that he could assume individual form in them as in this world. Advaitic purists may be shocked at this,

saying that the Scriptures say: "He is One" But that refers only to the universal state. Every one is the same in essence on the plane of Paramartha, but that refers to fundamental, universal Reality. On the planes of empirical reality we have to note the existence of multiplicity. That is why Jesus could say: "I and my Father are One". They were separate on the empirical or manifested plane, since he had a body and the Father had not, but they were one in Essence.

Some theoretical Advaitins hold that after realization even the notion of multiplicity no longer exist. They say that once a rope which was mistaken for a snake is known to be a rope there can no longer be the illusion of its being a snake. But another school hold that even after realization the appearance of manifestation remains although it is known to be illusory. They cite the appearance of mother-of-pearl. There is no silver in it but even though one knows this the silvery appearance remains. I have heard Bhagavan confirm this view.

We must remember that the lokas are empirical realities no more real than this world of ours — but also no less real. Bhagavan confirmed this when a group of disciples from Tiruchirapalli asked him whether Siva and the other Gods and their heavens really exist. "Do you exist?" he retorted. They replied that they did, and he said: "Then in the same way they do too."

NO OTHERNESS

By JALLALUDDIN RUMI

People imagine that it is a presumptuous claim (to say 'Ana'l Haqq', 'I am God'), but really it is a presumptuous claim to say 'Ana'l abd', 'I am the servant of God', while 'Ana'l Haqq', 'I am God' is an expression of great humility. The man who says 'I am the servant of God' affirms two existences, his own and God's but he who says 'I am God' makes himself non-existent and gives himself up entirely, since what this comes to is: "I am nothing; He is all; there is no being other than God's." This is the extreme of humility and self-abasement.

THE SAGE AND THE SAINT

By N. R. BALAKRISHNAN

To abide in the Eternal Present, to be in a state of *sahaja samadhi* (natural evenness of mind) our mental apparatus should be focused to its central axis, the very fulcrum of our being. This focal point is the point of equilibrium by which both positive and negative have become possible. Men who cling to positive ideals and affirmations, thinking of themselves as the organizers or dispensers of good, miss the significance of this vital central point, which indeed they totally overlook. The Sages, having realized that ultimate Reality is neither existence nor non-existence, have termed it 'neti, neti,' 'not this, not that' or 'Sunyata', emptiness or void. But the ignorant do not realize that the so-called nothingness contains everything and the so-called void is the source of fullness.

The Sage sits at the centre of equilibrium, poised and steadfast in wisdom. He never moves, yet the whole world moves round him. His seeming inactivity is the most potent activity. It is what the Chinese have termed *Wei Wu Wei*, inactive activity. He truly knows because he has realized the Truth in himself. He is happy because he is wise. His mind is free from the pairs of opposites — light and dark, bond and free, good and evil. Though he may seem indifferent to events it is only the wisdom of the Sage, not the learning of the scholar or the plans of the reformer that can save the world from its suicidal stupidities. When the mind reacts either for or against a policy its equilibrium is upset; it is only when it remains poised without reaction that the true revolution takes place in a man. Being free from self-will and from the 'I-am-the-doer' illusion, such a man is a true benefactor of mankind. His life is a benefit to the whole world.

There is a difference between a saint and a Sage. A saint is benevolent and sympa-

thetic, but a Sage may outwardly appear aloof and unsympathetic. A saint prays constantly to God, since he has not risen above the notion of duality of subject and object of a created being praying to his Creator. But a Sage remains silent and steadfast in wisdom, having realized the Oneness of Being. Both drink of the same fountain, but the saint gets intoxicated with love; he plays the love-drama, sings and dances in ecstasy, bows down in devotion, ever seeks the Divine Lover, while the Sage, because of his ultimate Realization, remains silent, unperturbed and immovable as a rock. Should a saint see slaughter or bloodshed he may be horrified and weep for sorrow, but a Sage will maintain a divine indifference, looking with like equanimity on the play of children and the warring of nations, seeing behind appearances and knowing that in truth none are killed and none can be killed. It is thus that Sri Krishna consoles Arjuna before the Battle of Kurukshetra: "There never was a time when I did not exist, or you or these kings, nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. Just as in this body the embodied Self passes from childhood into youth and old age, so does He pass into another body. The wise man is not distressed by this."¹

The Sage has realized the everlasting nature of his life and is steeped in immortality even while 'living. "Know That to be Imperishable by which all this is pervaded, None can cause the destruction of That, the Inexhaustible."² The saint may or may not know for he is satisfied with his loving adoration of the Lord, but the Sage knows and is wise.

Through detached self-observation we can come to that impersonal, egoless state of poised perfection beyond pleasure and pain,

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, 11; 12-13.

² *Ibid.*, 11; 17.

birth and death. This kind of meditation, if it can be so-called, can be practised at any time, while walking or standing, sitting or lying down, talking to people or doing things. No special time or posture is needed for it. It is close to what the Maharshi called Self-enquiry. He said: "Meditation requires an object to meditate on, whereas in Self-enquiry there is only the subject and no object."³ Such alert watchfulness enables us to see things as they are and to be as we are, free from distortion or exaggeration, from for or against. By means of it the mind becomes sensitive, bright and transparent. Indeed, the bliss of transcendental wisdom can be experienced only when we go beyond the frontiers of the mind to experience our pure being.

We can know the Self only by being the Self, and such knowledge-being should stand behind our doing. For without knowing the doer even our attempts to do good will only create new mischief. We raise a dust and then complain that we cannot see. We forget that muddy water is to be made

clean not by stirring it up but by leaving it to stand. It is the wrong use of the mind that leads to all the suffering and misery of the world. We are miserable because we act and live in ignorance, whereas Self-knowledge brings peace and perfect happiness beyond the power of events to disturb.

And this perfect happiness, this pure being-knowledge, is love. In its static state it is unruffled bliss; in its dynamic state it is all-embracing, all-penetrating love. This is the core of our being, but it is only when the ego-self is broken that it can well forth into consciousness. Unless the shell is broken how can we taste the kernel? It is only when we break free from the narrow individual self or ego which our mind has created and nourished that the essence of our being is discovered, and this is love. When we discover the love lying buried in the depth of our heart, which is our true being, then only are we able to live in purity and blessedness, and then only blessedness flows through us to others whether we consciously plan the flow or not, and with no taint of egoism to mar its effect on them.

³ *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, Ch. V. pub. by Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

COMPASSION

By SHEELAH ATKINSON

My eyes see the stars, but I see nothing,
For I am the stars.
My ears hear music, but I hear nothing,
For I am the music.
My hand touches my child, but I touch nothing,
For I am my child.
My foot kicks the stone, but I kick nothing,
For I am the stone.
My words wound my friend, but I wound nothing,
For I am my friend.
My body exudes filth, but I exude nothing,
For I am filth.
How then shall I not feel compassion for all that I am?

THE SAT-GURU

By DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI *

"From darkness lead me to light," says the Upanishad. The Guru is one who is competent to do this; and such a one was Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. The Guru is the dispeller of ignorance and awakener of understanding. Throughout the ages India has produced such.

Ignorance is not merely absence of knowledge. This cannot be corrected by thought nor right knowledge awakened by an intellectual process, because it is the intellect itself which is the limiting factor. The Sat-Guru, who is Divine Consciousness in human form, is the only guide to Enlightenment, the only bridge from the mental concepts in which the disciple is enclosed to spiritual consciousness. Said Sri Shankara: "Even though you possess learning and all gifts and endowments, yet will it not avail you unless your mind is protected by the Guru and absorbed in him." And again, in 'Vivekachudamani', he says: "There are three things that are rare and due to the Grace of God: a human birth, thirst for Liberation and the protective care of the Guru."

Were it not for this manifestation of absolute Reality or pure Consciousness (which are the same) in human form, spiritual knowledge would be lost to the world. The Guru, who is a knower of Brahman, is equated in the Upanishads with Brahman Himself. Though living as a man in our midst, he is conscious of his Divine Identity. Were there none such the doctrine of the Self would remain a mere theoretical concept for the discussion of philosophers. The mind of man has to be shown the way. For this the pure Consciousness embodied in the Guru mingles with the same Consciousness awakened by him in the disciple. The Guru is ever ready to help and uplift

those who appeal to him. To disregard such help would be folly. It is vanity and pride to suppose that one's own unaided efforts will suffice. To accept a Guru does not mean accepting the guidance of another man but of pure Consciousness shining through a human psychosomatic instrument.

Spiritual tradition has always accepted the need for initiation and guidance by a Master. "What is commonly called 'self-reliance' is only ego-reliance" the Maharshi said. And again: "God, Guru and Self are the same." Only he in whom this Divine Consciousness is awakened can lead one beyond the range of human perception. There are various ways in which the Guru can initiate and guide the disciple but that he should do so has always been held necessary. Those who attack this tradition are really only attacking their own false conception of it.

The Guru has already trodden the path and can show it to the seeker. Even if he has arrived spontaneously at the goal, as did Bhagavan, he can still see and indicate the approaches to it. He may even transmit direct experience to the disciple as Sri Ramakrishna did for Vivekananda. However this can never be stabilised so long as the disciple's vasanas or inherent tendencies remain, since they drag him away again to the illusory world of sense-perception. There is no wisdom that can be given to all alike, says the Gita: "This wisdom must not be given to one who has no tapas, is not a devotee and is not in earnest." This does not mean that the Guru holds guidance or Realization back from any one. The Maharshi once said that if the Guru could simply give Realization there would not be even a cow left unrealized. Most people do not want spiritual knowledge, and it cannot be given to those who do not try to awaken it in themselves. It cannot be grasped by

* For an introduction to whom, see p. 63 of the Ashram Bulletin of our Jan, 1965 issue.

the reason. Therefore the Guru will not respond to those who question him or try to argue with him out of mere academic curiosity: "This wisdom is not to be had by reasoning."

A Guru is only for those who seek contact with him for the sake of spiritual understanding, because this means seeking contact with the Truth in one's own heart through him. One who lives at a distance and approaches him in this way may receive guidance, while one who lives near him may not know how to ask. "The real Guru is in the heart," the Maharshi said; "the task of the outer Guru is only to turn you inward to the Guru in your heart." We are told that the Divine dwells in the innermost recess of the heart, but how many of us are competent to look inward and realize it? The power of the Guru in helping one to do so is far more important than any merely verbal explanation he may give, for this latter touches only the mental understanding. "A silent Guru is very potent," said the Maharshi, "his work goes on inwardly where it is not apparent to the disciple." And he gave assurance that "as the disciple dives inwards in search of the Self the Guru will do his part."

But can this not be done without the intervention of an outer Guru? The Maharshi admitted that it can, but he added that there are very few who are so close to Enlightenment that they can dispense with the need for an outer Guru. This is because it is not a case of something new to be discovered but of the removal of obstructions to Realization of the ever-existing Self. And since these obstructions are more emotional than theoretical, rooted rather in the desires than the intellect, outer aid is usually necessary to destroy them. "Sadhana is for the removal of ignorance, which is ingrained wrong ideas. It is not for acquiring the Self, because the Self is always there, but for becoming aware of it."¹

¹ While speaking thus of the need for an outer Guru, it is to be remembered that the Maharshi himself still acts as Guru even without a human body. (EDITOR)

Even though the disciple believes that Consciousness is One, he accepts the duality of Guru-disciple in order to transcend it. He serves the outer Guru in order to realize the inner. "The disciple must work inwardly, but the Guru can work both inwardly and outwardly," the Maharshi explained.

One should approach the Awakened and listen to his teaching, then dwell on it as a guidance to sadhana. When instruction comes from a Guru it carries power. Out of the relationship of Guru and disciple Realization is born, as the fire of knowledge from the former kindles in the heart of the latter.

The Upanishad says that the knower of Brahman is Brahman himself. This is an indication that if we are unable to meditate on the Formless Brahman we should meditate on a knower of Brahman. He teaches right doctrine but it is very different from the same doctrine learnt from a book. He himself is the living teaching. His presence inspires and strengthens us. His teaching has the authority of experience. It does not matter if the disciplines prescribed by the Masters vary or even if their doctrines differ on the mental plane; the essence of their teaching is the same, just as the milk from cows of different colours is all white.

"The spirit of the disciple is moribund owing to his forgetfulness of his true nature. The Guru revives him by removing his supposed identity with body and mind." The mind is apt to deny the existence of Self because Self is not an object of the senses. It can never be the object of knowledge but is itself the sole knower. Therefore a search for it by the mind can never succeed. "Logical explanations have no finality. Why look outward and explain phenomena? One should learn to attend to the knower of the phenomena." The knower of the phenomena is Reality. It just is; it is not affected by discussions or logical conclusions. It is the Grace of the Guru that enables us to realize our identity with this Reality. Since it is the Reality it is not something to be acquired in the future; it just is, now, eternally.

So long as the disciple lives in duality but seeks to transcend it, he feels oppressed by burdens and hindered by obstacles. These are in fact mere manifestations of the tendencies in his own mind that hold him back from Enlightenment and make him cling to the duality he seeks to escape from. To such a one the Guru appears as the bearer of burdens and remover of obstructions, the destroyer of ignorance and giver of Liberation. But effort must be made by the disciple to remove the obstructions, and therefore although it is true to say that the Guru is the giver of Liberation it is also true to say that the disciple must earn it by making himself fit to receive it.

The Guru does not add to the ideas or theories with which the mind of the disciple is already cluttered up. Rather he induces cessation of thought. "The mind creates world and life and obscures Self. Becoming obscures Being." It often happened that some one came to the Maharshi with a whole list of questions that he had drawn up and, sitting before him, found not so much that the answers came as that the questions faded out and ceased to be important.

Life has plunged us into a state that can be called sleep—spiritual sleep. All our life activities are done in this sleep. The Guru is the Awakened; he does not become involved in this sleep but helps us to awaken from it.

You encounter life through a thing called 'yourself', that is through a fictitious apparatus for living. It is this which takes charge of body and senses, thinks through your mind, talks through your mouth, uses your name and mistakes itself for you. But just as it mistakes itself for you, so it mistakes the Guru for another separate self outside of you; and that is its fatal error and your salvation for the Guru, having freed himself from the clutches of this fiend, can free you from it and lead you to the experience of the One Self.

Thereby he gives a new meaning to the word 'I'. Before meeting him you attri-

buted it to this pseudo-self, but 'I' or 'Aham' is the name of Being, of God. He alone can call Himself 'I'. You only can insofar as you are One with Him. Individual human life goes on like a dream. In a dream you mistake the dream-self for 'I'. Similarly in this life you mistake the fictitious pseudo-self for 'I'. The Guru helps you to awake from this illusion. "To keep the I-thought alert is the only upadesa (teaching)." He teaches you to abide in and as the Self while apparently living in the world. "One should not lose consciousness of his 'I' under any circumstances. This is the remedy for all the ills of life." "The 'I' springs up from the centre of our being and our only concern should be with this 'I'."

The true Self is qualityless and therefore beyond description or even knowledge. It is thought that obscures it. "Give up thoughts. You need not give up anything else. The body and the comforts of life are no hindrance to Realization. The loss of the body is not Enlightenment, it is death. The loss of the ego-sense, the I-concept, is what is required." The very presence of the Guru calms down the waves of the mind and brings it to that condition of stillness in which it is simply aware.

Those who saw the Maharshi sitting in samadhi were moved and awed by it. He radiated peace as the sun radiates light. His imperturbable composure impressed some, his lively explanations others, his grace and compassion yet others; some enjoyed his conversation and some his tremendous silence. Thousands flocked for a sight of him. People felt that here was God Incarnate walking on earth. He assured us when leaving the body that he was not going away. "People say that I am going away, but where can I go? I am here." Being universal, there was no going from here to there for him. Having realized that he was not this body, there was no return to any other body. He has assured us that "he who is ready for Divine Knowledge will be led to it."

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

VII

By H. W. L. POONJA

I have been a visionary from childhood. When I was only five years old I already had visions of Sri Krishna. At first I thought every one could see them. I once said to my mother : "Look ! He's standing there !" but she explained to me that only I saw him.

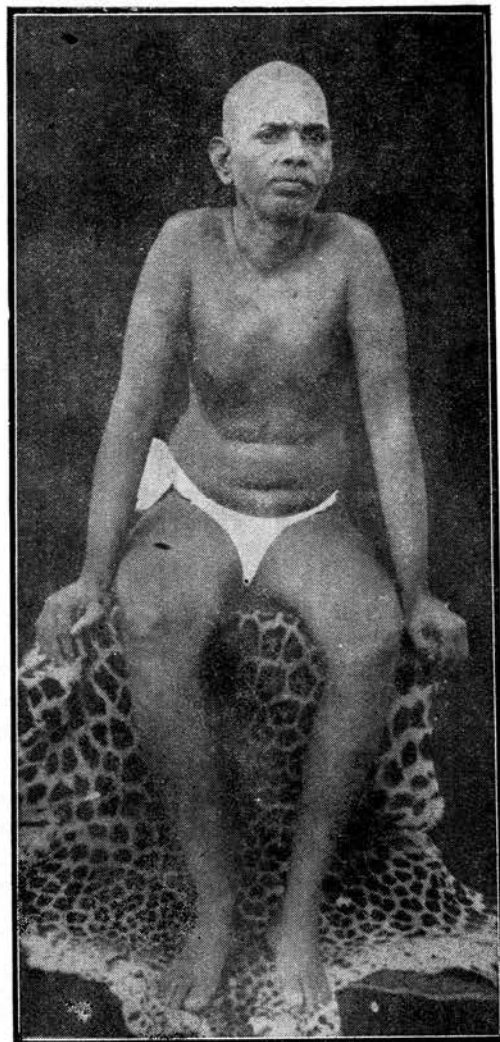
When I grew up I joined the army. However my desire for God-experience grew so strong that after some years I resigned and decided to devote my life to sadhana. I wanted to become a sannyasin but could not because I had a wife and children to look after.

I started visiting Swamis and asked each one point blank : "Have you seen God and can you show me God ?" I would allow no hedging. If they began to talk around it I said : "Please give me a straight yes or no." I found no one who could answer 'yes' and returned to my home in the Punjab feeling very depressed.

One day my wife was just serving my midday meal when a sadhu came and stood in the doorway. I invited him in and told her to serve him food too and then asked him whether he could direct me to a Swami who could show me God. He told me that I could find what I was looking for from Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai.

It was the first time that I had heard of the Maharshi or of Tiruvannamalai, so I wrote down both names. But how was I to get there? It was right down in the South, and my funds were almost exhausted. However, the next day I saw an advertisement in the paper for an ex-army man to run a canteen in Madras. I applied and was at once given the post and my fare paid.

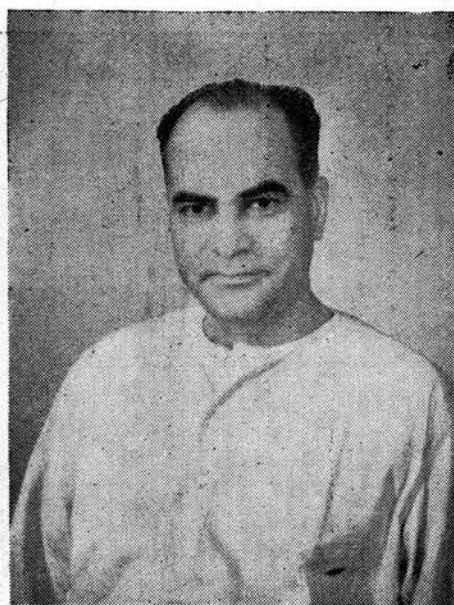
When I got to Madras I said that I must first pay a visit to Tiruvannamalai before taking up my duties. Arriving there, I dumped my bedding in the Ashram dormitory and



went into the meditation hall ; and who should I see there on the couch, but the sadhu who had visited me at my home in the Punjab !

I decided that he was a fraud. He had been travelling about India boosting himself and

had then taken a train back and arrived before me. So I got up and left the hall. I got my bedding and was just putting it back on the horse-cart that had brought me from the station when a devotee asked me why I was leaving so soon. I told him and he said : "It must be a mistake, because the Maharshi has never left this place since he



H. W. L. Poonja

first came nearly fifty years ago. Either it was some one else you saw or he appeared to you by supernatural power." So I was back to the hall.

As soon as I had an opportunity to see Bhagavan alone I asked him my usual question. I added : "It's a bargain. I am willing to pay any price, even my life, but your part of the bargain is to enable me to see God."

At first he sat silent, but I said : "That's no good ; I don't understand silence. Please give me a straight answer."

Then he said : "I can enable you rather to be God than to see God."

That puzzled me. I had very little understanding then.

A few days later I went for a walk in the rough country at the foot of the north slope of Arunachala and fell into a state of ecstasy during which I again had a vision of Sri Krishna. When I got back I told Bhagavan. He asked me : "Can you see Krishna now ?"

I said, "No ; only when I have a vision."

So he said : "What is the use of a God who comes and goes ? If he is a real God he should be with you always."

That shocked me. Again I almost lost faith in him, but some of the devotees explained to me. Before I left for Madras I asked Bhagavan for a mantra but he did not give me one. I asked him for permission to take sannyas, but he refused.

However, shortly after my return to Madras he appeared to me in a dream and gave me a mantra. Soon after this I had a vision of God in human form. This was followed by a great change in me. I lost interest in all the ritual and incantations and breathing exercises that I had been doing up to then. For instance, I used to get up at three o'clock in the morning to attend to my statue of Sri Krishna. All such things ceased to interest me. I was very worried about this. I thought it meant I had become an atheist.

At the first opportunity I went to Tiruvannamalai. I told Bhagavan about the change that had come over me and how I had lost interest in all the ritual that I had been practising regularly for so many years past.

Bhagavan looked steadily at me for some time and then said something to be in Tamil which I was told, on enquiry, meant "You, that is me, that is Bhagavan." These words sank into my heart and I experienced the most wonderful feeling of bliss I had ever known.

It was from this time that I began to understand Bhagavan and his teaching.

SACRIFICE

By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

All life is branded
 With the red cross of sacrifice, the stamp
 Of His celestial choosing.
 Who shall escape
 The sacrifice demanded
 Or what evade His high intent, refusing
 To bend upon the altar ?
 All destiny doth bear a lurid lamp
 Towards it, every instant is a tramp
 Whose footfalls dare not falter
 Along the lonesome journey towards the goal.
 All form is a keen sacrifice of soul
 Even as the soul, deep sacrifice of Him
 Who first descending to its state assumed
 The ignorant and many-gloomed
 Pathetic role
 Of feature, face and limb.
 When out of the unthrobbing womb of blank
 Creation stirred into a visible Whole
 Of complex separations, when He drank
 The poison-cup of life and beauty, dim
 With distances in time and space, each speck
 Retained a need of sacrifice to check
 The total devastation born of self,
 A need of God in man, of man in God.
 Behold ! how, from the dothood of an elf
 Into high company of seraphim
 Each thing and creature gradually doth plod
 Its heavenward way, and each
 Drunk with envisioned power beyond its reach.
 It will not let one atom dwell aloof
 In idle selfhood, roseal ring
 Of isolated dreaming, but as proof
 Of indestructible Oneness, toil and bring
 Collective bliss into the depth of everything.
 O sacrifice ! thou art the holy voice
 Resounding everywhere through centuries
 Like royal music, making life rejoice
 Through processes of yielding. With what ease
 Thou flowest through the universe, a wide
 Slow victory on every side

Planting its bannered flames of harmonies.
 Who does not bend to thee of his own choice
 Shall be compelled, in irresistible awe
 Suddenly, at one stroke of bleeding fire,
 To swear allegiance to thy sacrificial law.
 Naught shall remain
 Static, but through the sheerest act of pain.
 That men call life, they shall aspire
 To high existence ever grown to higher.
 Beauty demands as price
 An ecstasy of linked sacrifice
 Unending on the planes of time and space ;
 The humble attitude of yielding gives
 Chaste masterhood of heaven to all that lives,
 Heaven's sacrifice of cloud hath filled the face
 Of flowers with sweetness, that of the white lamb
 How flashed the rubied lustre
 In the round eyeballs of the tawny beast.....
 My God ! Thy sacrifice hath spread the feast
 Of ocean-heave and constellated cluster,
 Granting me knowledge that 'I am'.

DEATH

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

"He hath revenge on Death, for he died well,"*
 A poet wrote in life's far distant spring,
 Stumbling on truth. Death's fabled heaven and hell
 And drearier prospect yet the new times bring
 Of a blank nothingness hedge like a ring
 The seeming self whose lifelong passing bell
 Tolls in his ears, although the mind may cling
 To fragile hopes the gathering years dispel.

But "Die before you die" the Prophet said :
 Give up the seeming self that from the world
 Falls into death ; remains that Self instead
 Wherein earth, heaven and hell like dreams are furled.

The world in you, not you in it, has died,
 For That you are and no thing else beside.

* Quoted from a poem by Denzil Batchelor.

PARADISE AND NIRVANA

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

"And for him who fears the station of his Lord there are two gardens. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? In each of them green branches. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? In both of them are two fountains flowing. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? In both of them are two pairs of every fruit. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? Therein shall they recline upon couches lined with silk brocade and the fruits of the two gardens shall be within reach. Which then of the boons of your Lord will you reject? Therein shall be maidens shy of glance, never previously possessed by man or jinn. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? They shall be like rubies and pearls. Which of your Lord's boons will you reject? What is the reward of excellence if not excellence? Which of your Lord's boons will you reject?"¹

"There is, monks, a condition where there is neither extension nor motion, nor the plane of infinite space nor that of infinite consciousness, nor of the void nor of neither-consciousness-nor-unconsciousness, neither this world nor another, neither sun nor moon. Here, monks, I say, there is neither a coming nor a going nor yet a remaining, neither a falling nor a rising. It is not fixed yet it does not move. It is not based on anything. That indeed is the end of ill.

"There is, monks, an unborn, not become, not made, not compounded, and were it not, monks, for this unborn, not become, not made, not compounded, no escape could be shown here for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded."²

The former of these two promised states is central to Islam, a theme running through the Qur'an; the latter is the very basis of Buddhism. It could never be maintained

that they are the same. The former is the state of paradise enjoyed by the beatified individual; the latter is what remains on the transcendence and dissolution of the individuality.

Neither is a state simply to believe in as happening after death: nothing happens that is not earned. And what is earned can be earned as well before death as after. States of realization attained during this life are equivalent to paradises attained after it. Perfect Self-Realization is Nirvana.

Perhaps the first question to settle is whether the descriptions of paradise contained in the Qu'ran and in other religions (including Buddhism) are symbolical. The crude exoteric Muslim would probably feel cheated if told so. Like the materialist in every religion, he believes physical forms, to be more 'real' than subtle. And he feels entitled to a 'real' paradise, his *huris* real women. However, while dreaming he takes the dream forms for real, and in paradise he will doubtless take the paradisaical forms for real. The Sufis certainly regard the promises as symbolical. The following is a commentary on the above quotation by Ibn Arabi, one of the most famous of the Sufi philosophers:

... "And for him who fears the station of his Lord means for him who fears His session in judgment over him, inasmuch as He is ever vigilant and makes man depend upon Him . . . there are two gardens, one being the garden of the soul and the other of the heart, inasmuch as fear is one of the qualities of the soul when illuminated by the light of the heart. In each of them are green branches through the branching out of those boughs which are the forces and qualities which bring forth the leaves of actions and virtues which in turn bring forth the fruits of the sciences and the states of spiritual contemplation . . . In both of them are two

¹ Qur'an, VI, 46-51.

² Uddana, 80-81.

fountains of particular and universal perceptions, *flowing* to them from the Garden of the Spirit and causing to grow in them the fruits of the things perceived and the manifestation of the Qualities. *Of every fruit*, of the delightful objects of perception, *two pairs*, one particular, being known and familiar, and the other universal and strange; for every universal idea that the heart perceives has a particular image in the soul, nor is there anything perceived by the soul that has not its archetype in the heart. *Therein shall they recline upon couches lined with silk brocade*, for the side facing downward, that is towards the soul, is brocaded with the forms of pious deeds springing from the virtues of character and nobility of qualities and excellence of endowments; and the outer side, facing the Spirit, is of the finest silk, symbolising the manifestations of the holy lights and the fineness of the celestial boons and of the states of contemplation that may come to one through intuitions of sacred wisdom and knowledge . . . *And the fruits of the two gardens shall be within reach*: the objects of perception are as near as they wish . . . they perceive them and gather them, and immediately others of the same kind spring up in their place . . . *Therein shall be maidens shy of glance*, glancing away from such heavenly souls as approach them in their station and from such as are beneath them, whether heavenly or earthly. . . None of them looks higher than the station of her consort or demands a perfection beyond his, so that her excellence either matches his or is inferior to it. Otherwise she would pass beyond his garden and be exalted above his station and would not be shy of glance or satisfied with her marriage to him and the joys of intercourse with him and his guardianship over her. *Never previously possessed by man* by any human soul, being created especially for their consorts and essentially holy so that none who are attached to the physical self can attain to them; or *jinn* by any power of fancy or any spirit veiled in base form. *They shall be like rubies and pearls*: those of the huris who are in the Garden of the soul are compared

to rubies because of the ruby's beauty and limpidity and glow and brilliance and also its red colour, which corresponds to the colour of the soul; and those who are in the Garden of the Heart are compared to small pearls because of their whiteness and luminosity . . . *What is the reward of excellence*, that is of worship and concentration, *if not excellence?* in reward, through the acquirement of perfection and attainment to the two gardens here spoken of."

In a later passage of his commentary on this same sura he also defines the huris as symbolising "pure lights and unalloyed visions wherein is no trace of evil or any possibility of it, lovely with the manifestation of the divine Beauty and Majesty and the excellence of the Divine Qualities."

However, there can only be symbolism so long as there is something to symbolise, that is so long as the individual being continues to exist. Crude forms can symbolise subtle, but nothing can symbolise Nirvana, nothing except the Void, nothing except nothing.

Paradise is the proximate goal, Nirvana the ultimate. This is universally recognized in Buddhism. For instance, it is stated by the Dalai Lama in his article on Tibetan Buddhism in *The Mountain Path* of April 1964. It is recognized in Islam only by the Sufis. Abu Said declared that: "The world is the road that leads to the abode of love, whilst paradise is a stage on the way. The enlightened lover discards the one and transcends the other."

In Buddhism there is any amount of teaching about paradise, which, indeed, must be the goal for the many. However, for those who aspire, it keeps in mind that the ultimate goal is Nirvana, which is as far beyond paradise as it is beyond this world, being immeasurably beyond either. The most illuminating reference, as showing not only the Buddhist acceptance of paradise but attitude towards it is in a story that I will quote, with Arthur Osborne's comments on it, from his 'Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism'.³

³ pp. 111-113, published by Rider & Co., London.

"The Buddhist attitude to the heavenly worlds is the same as the Hindu; that is, as the Maharshi has been heard to say: 'They are as real as this world here.' As long as one is obsessed with the reality of one's ego and therefore of this world, so long will the law of cause and effect hold and shape one's conditions in posthumous worlds. But it is better to abide in the Self and not to worry about this world or the next. There is a story that illustrates this. Several years after his Enlightenment messengers came to the Buddha from his father requesting him to honour his home town also with a visit. He did so and was not without honour in his own home. In fact, a large number of the nobles renounced the world and followed him. Among these was his half-brother Nanda (not to be confused with his cousin Ananda, the beloved disciple). Nanda, however, was half-hearted about it. He had made the renunciation on the eve of being married to a beautiful girl and proclaimed heir to the throne and he fell to brooding over all he had missed. Seeing that he had no zeal, the Lord asked him what was the matter and whether he was not already thinking of abandoning the path and returning to the life of the world.

"Nanda replied: 'My Lord, when I left home a Sakya girl, the loveliest in the land, looked back at me with her hair half combed and said, 'May you soon be back, young sir.' It is because I am continually thinking of her that I have no zest for the Brahma path but have come to dislike it and wish to give up the training and return to a worldly life.'

"The Buddha then took him by the arm and immediately the grove in which they were standing disappeared and they found themselves in the celestial world of the *devas*. As many as five hundred dove-footed celestial nymphs were attending on Sakra, the Lord of the *devas*. The Buddha asked Nanda which he found more charming and attractive, the Sakya girl who was the loveliest in the land or these five hundred dove-footed nymphs.

"He replied: 'My Lord, compared with them the Sakya girl, although the loveliest

in the land, would look like a monkey with its nose and ears cut off. She is not worth a particle of them. She can't be compared with them. The five hundred dove-footed nymphs are incomparably more charming and attractive.'

"Thereupon the Lord took Nanda by the arm again and they found themselves back in the grove as before.

"Such a story might come from almost any religion; it is the sequel to it that illustrates the spirit of Buddhism. The rumour spread among the monks that Nanda was treading the path for the sake of heavenly nymphs and that the Buddha had promised him five hundred dove-footed maids. Thereupon they began to despise and mock him, calling him a mercenary. This so shamed him that he shut himself up alone and devoted himself with all his energy to the path, not allowing his thoughts to stray either to the Sakya girl or the nymphs or to his companions or anything else, with the result that he soon attained Enlightenment.

"Were the nymphs real? As real as the Sakya maid; but what is reality? That is the whole object of the quest."

This makes the difference clear. Buddhism as originally propounded directs a man straight to Nirvana, ignoring or deprecating the wayside stations called 'paradise'. It is based on the doctrine of anatta, 'no-ego'; and if there is no ego there can be no conditions of the ego, neither paradise nor hell; only conditionlessness, suchness, that which is. Islam, on the other hand, as taught in the Qur'an, turns men's minds to the possibility of higher states of the individuality and the danger of lower ones. Its doctrinal basis is 'Islam', which means 'submission' and thereby recognizes the existence of some one to submit. Buddhism proclaims the direct path to the ultimate Goal; Islam the striving to the wayside station of a beatified individuality.

During its later development each religion has to some extent developed the aspect that was originally lacking. There are many Buddhists who have neither the understanding nor the will to seek Nirvana, and for them

indirect paths and techniques have been fabricated—the Pure Land School, the devotional invocation of Amitabha, the elaborate ritual and symbolism of Tantrism, with its heavens and hells.

However, such developments are not altogether in tune with the native genius of the religion. However absorbing they may be, and however productive of the results they aim at, they diverge from the pure spirit of Buddhism in that they implicitly overlook the basic doctrine of anatta, 'no-ego', which all the early schools of Buddhism made their sheet-anchor. Similarly, pure Tawhid, the Oneness of Being, and Ittihad or Identity is outside the Islamic tradition of submission, implying some one to submit and a God to whom to submit. It can sustain itself only among the very few who understand and on the basis of its inherent truth and of subtle interpretations of a dualistic scripture. Muslims in general are bound to reject it.

Islam officially cannot recognize it. Indeed, there is the historical case of Mansur Al Hallaj who, in a state of ecstasy, proclaimed 'Ana'l Haqq', 'I am the Truth' (which, to a Muslim, carries the connotation 'I am God') and was crucified for it.

For those who seek paradise there is guidance in Islam and Buddhism alike. For those who aspire to the ultimate Goal the guidance in Islam is less clear. Sufis find concealed references to Nirvana in certain cryptic verses of the Qur'an, but there is no outspoken recognition of it. A Sufi might speak of paradise as a stage on the way, but the Qur'an speaks of it (for example, in the passage from sura LVII which I quoted in 'The Lesser and Greater Jihad' in our issue of July 1964) as "the supreme achievement". It is noteworthy in this connection that some of the Sufi saints claimed to have gone beyond the Prophet; but that is a subject for another article.

A WONDER

By PRANAV

I have sought Thee
 Ever and anon ;
 I have dreamt of Thee
 In my slumber ;
 I have wandered
 Long and lone
 In search of Thee ;
 Yet I have not
 Known Thee.
 I try to spell
 Thy name.
 But who will tell me
 Who Thou art ?

THE METHODS AND STAGES OF CH'AN BUDDHISM

By CHARLES LUK¹

Underlying my humble attempt to present Ch'an Buddhism as practised in my country is my belief that it is dying out in the East, where the present wave of materialism is sweeping away our precious heritage of spiritual values, while on the other hand many Westerners have already grown weary of the material civilization firmly established among them, which was the cause of the last two world wars, as it is to-day of the stresses and disturbances throughout the world. I believe also that there are Westerners whose good karmā has caused them to be reborn in countries where peace and security now prevail so that they can resume their practice of Mahayana and Ch'an Buddhism which they began in former lives. This belief of mine has been confirmed by interviews with some of my Western readers whose ability to digest the doctrine of the Mind was amazing, far exceeding my expectation.

The practice of Ch'an Buddhism can be successful only if the student is sincere and eager to learn and is ready to give up his pride and all preconceived ideas in order to cultivate the two great Buddhist virtues of modesty and humility. He should acquire some knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, the Twelve Nidanas or links in the chain of existence, the Eightfold Path, the Four Infinite Minds and the Five Precepts. I say only 'some knowledge' because it is impossible for a beginner to understand their full import, which can be gathered only when he makes real progress in his training. It is of paramount importance for him to observe the rules of discipline (*śīla*), which are indispensable to still the mind so that it can reach the state of meditation (*dhyāna*) and thereby cause the wisdom (*prajñā*) which is inherent in him to manifest. The

threefold support of *śīla*, *dhyāna* and *prajñā* is likened to a tripod which cannot stand if one of its legs is missing.

It is true that Ch'an surpasses all other methods of training in Buddhism, but that does not imply that the practiser can dispense with the Buddha's teachings as given in the Sūtras. Especially in this Dharma-ending age, when enlightened Masters are no longer easily to be come by, must he rely on the scriptures to adjust and perfect the various stages of meditation. He should study the Diamond and Heart Sūtras, the Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch, the Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment and the Surangama Sūtra² (especially the final chapter of this last, on the fifty mental states created by the five aggregates) in order to avoid falling into false theory and wrong paths that can vitiate all his efforts.

Ch'an practice begins with the wiping out of thoughts which agitate the mind. The wandering mind is in constant search of sense data to preserve its illusory existence which vanishes in the absence of externals. Therefore the mind and its objects are the two poles of a duality which splits our undivided Buddha-nature and throws us into unnecessary transmigration in samsara.

The ancients lived very simply and did not have so many attachments as we do, so when they were told by their masters to look into their minds they could do so without great difficulty. This explains why the Second Chinese Patriarch, on hearing a few words from Bodhidharma, succeeded in realizing the non-existence of mind and was thereby enlightened, and why Hui Neng realized Bodhi simply on being told by his

¹For a note on Charles Luk see our issue of October 1964.—Editor.

²My translation of the Surangama Sūtra has been sent to London for publication by Rider & Co. I hope that it will come out soon so that it can safeguard Western students of Mahayana and Ch'an Buddhism against mistakes in their meditation.—Author.

master to develop a mind that does not abide anywhere.

Later, however, life grew complex with the advance of material civilization, which increased man's attachment to things, thereby diminishing his spirituality. To cope with this reduced ability to understand, the masters invented the kung an (Japanese koan) technique, the aim of which is to strip the practiser of seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing, so that his mind can be stilled and reach the state of *dhyana*, which brings *prajna* and is thus set free from hindrances.

There are many kung ans to be found in books. The one which was perhaps the most popular in China and is now used by most Japanese roshis (Zen gurus) is: "A monk asked Chao Chou, 'Has a dog got the Buddha-nature?' Chao Chou replied, 'No!'" In this kung an the stress is on the word 'No!'. The student is urged to look into this No and believes that if he does so successfully he will be enlightened. So day and night he concentrates his mind on this No. If he thinks: "The Buddha says that all living beings, including dogs, have the Buddha-nature," even before he tries to argue with Chao Chou he knocks against this categorical No which already looms before him. If he tries to accept Chao Chou's interpretation, which is definitely contrary to the Buddha's teaching, as soon as he tries to agree one way or the other he again knocks against this unconditional No. So in whatever direction he may turn to solve this seemingly insoluble kung an he knocks his head against this implacable No, which blocks every exit and does not allow his mind to go further. Thus he finds himself as though imprisoned in a circular wall made of countless Nos which close in to isolate his monkey-mind and to disengage it from externals in a process which, to his great discomfort, may last for months or years. That is why a practiser of Ch'an sometimes looks wild and stupid during his training, for his monkey-mind is turned upside-down; he does not see anything in front of him but hears only the sound of the word

No. His breath seems to be choked and he is mindless even of eating and drinking. When this state has been reached is the moment when the kung an takes effect. His wandering mind, which was sharp and agile before, is now like a wild beast trapped and completely exhausted by its long efforts to regain its freedom. When the monkey has exhausted its ingenuity in struggling with the word No it gradually weakens and becomes impotent. This is precisely the aim of the training and the Enlightened Master notes with satisfaction the result thus achieved.

The mind thus exhausted is compared to a stone girl on the point of breaking into a dance or a wooden man about to burst into song, for the death of the wandering mind is automatically followed by the resurrection of the clean and pure mind. The pupil suddenly realizes that the aim of the kung an is neither the search for dog nor Buddha nor even for the No; and being thus set free from the discrimination and discernment caused by these three empty words, his mind leaps above the motion of 'yes' and 'no,' 'is' and 'is not,' 'Buddha' and 'dog,' beyond all contraries and relativities, and reaches the transcendental state which is inconceivable and inexpressible and which he alone can appreciate but not communicate to others, just as he who drinks water can alone know if it is cold or warm.

If the practiser fails to make progress after long training with this kung an it may mean that he is not serious in his efforts, but it may also mean that the kung an is not the right one for him. In this case he should try another in order to avoid wasting precious time. Another popular one is: "All things can be reduced to the One; to what is this One reduced?" There are many others to be found in the books.³

When men of high spiritual potentiality became still more rare, the Masters once

³ While this indicates that an aspirant can change his kung an in case of need, it also indicates that they are not to be changed lightly or frequently. In fact its real implication is that it is not the answer to the kung an that is of importance but the effect that meditating on it has on the mind of the aspirant.—Editor.

more changed their tactics and devised the Hua T'ou technique which consists in giving rise to a feeling of doubt (i-ch'ing) about who the repeater of the Buddha's name is.⁴ Here the accent is on the word 'who' which supports this essential doubt, arising from the practiser's eagerness to find out what it is that invokes the Buddha. He reasons that his transient body, including brain, intellect and organic functions, is impermanent, coming to an end when he dies, and therefore cannot be used to realize permanence, and that there must be something permanent at the root of all his activities. It is this which he seeks. Thus his doubt or quest becomes greater and greater, engulfing him and his surroundings to form a homogeneous block which no worldly thoughts and feeling can enter. His monkey-mind cannot move in this inner solitude, which will suffocate it. And its death will automatically be followed by the resurrection of his pure and clean mind. This sense of doubt or quest should be maintained throughout his training until he attains Enlightenment.

Not only worldly thoughts and feelings but also any visions which may appear during his training will be demolished by this i-ch'ing, which is used as a weapon to prevent them entering the mind. Hence Lin Chi says: "If you meet a Buddha, cut him down; if you meet an arahat, cut him down; if you meet your parents, cut them down; if you meet your relatives, cut them down. Only thus will you be liberated. And if you are not held by externals you will be liberated and completely independent."⁵ For all visions conceived by the sense organs are illusory and they can never compare with the inconceivable and ineffable Tathagata state.

Mahayana teaching lists fifty-six stages of Bodhisattva development up to Buddhahood, through which an aspirant must pass before achieving complete Enlightenment.

However, the Ch'an method, which is a short-cut to Enlightenment, demands only correct interpretation of subject and object, substance and function, host and guest, prince and minister, with their integration into the Undivided Whole or Mean, which is inclusive of both and from which both spring. This is achieved by demolishing first the coarse, objective sense data and then the coarse, subjective sense organs by means of the i-ch'ing described above, which is indeed a sharp weapon which cuts them both down and exposes their nullity or unreality. After that has been achieved the same technique serves to disengage the subjective awareness of the void from its object.⁶ When the void ceases to exist, the subjective ego is replaced by a subtle awareness of the all-embracing state of pure and clean voidness which can easily be mistaken for Nirvana.

In fact it is the primordial state of the mind when it was stirred by the first thought since time without beginning. He who has attained it is represented as a man sitting on top of a hundred-foot pole from which he has to make a step forward to realize Bodhi. But to mistake this state for Nirvana implies retention of the subtle subjective ego and its objective realization or Dharma. These are the two last hindrances and are to be overcome with the same technique of i-ch'ing. At this stage it is easier to demolish the subtle ego than the subtle Dharma, for this latter is so wonderful and alluring that it cannot easily be relinquished.⁷

If the aspirant continues relentlessly with his i-ch'ing, this subtle Dharma, which is in reality only an illusion, will vanish and, released from the last hindrance, he will overleap both phenomenon and noumenon to reach the absolute state of samadhi in which the i-ch'ing itself will be transmuted into the Buddha's all-knowledge or Sarvajna. This is the absolute Tathagata state.

⁴ It will be seen that i-ch'ing, although translated as 'doubt' is to all intents and purposes the same that the Maharshi taught under the name of Self-enquiry.—Editor.

⁵ See *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, second series, p. 125, Rider & Co., London—Author.

⁶ In this and what follows one is reminded of the Maharshi's reply when told that an aspirant came up against the Void: "Ask yourself who it is that sees the Void."—Editor.

⁷ In this sense 'Dharma' would correspond with the 'Anand-kosha' of Hinduism.—Editor.

In practice technical terms found in the sutras such as those translated as 'sense organs', 'sense data', 'form', 'voidness' 'ego', 'dharma', etc., are often avoided so as to safeguard the aspirant from making a fetish of words, which can be a great hindrance. An aspirant does not necessarily pass through the stages mentioned in the same order, for a person's progress depends partly on his individual nature; for instance, one may be more attached to ego-sense than to dharma and another more to dharma. Hence Lin Chi says: "Sometimes the subject is snatched away but not the object, sometimes the object but not the subject, sometimes both and sometimes neither."⁸

⁸ See *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, second series, p. 92, Rider & Co., London—Author.

The aspirant will experience major or minor satoris (awakenings) during his progress on the path. These will reveal his mistakes to him and will also light up the deeper meanings of the Mahayana sutras anew at each re-reading. They will show him the living meanings of Ch'an sayings, dialogues (mondos) and kung ans (koans), until he embodies all of them, to become the Dharma itself, with the Three Gems, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, intermingled in his self-nature. This is the state of Wonderful Enlightenment which will bring him out into the open to enlighten and deliver all living beings in fulfilment of the Bodhisattva vow taken at the outset of his quest.

METANOESIS

By WEI WU WEI

Every question concerns you looking or not-looking, doing or not-doing, knowing or not-knowing;

Never the thing (object) looked-at, done, known; never its being or not-being.

As long as there is you *doing*, it makes no difference whether there is doing or not-doing—for both are doing by you.

Paravritti, *metanoesis*, the "180 degree turn-over", is not a turning over by a "doing or not-doing" you, a turning from positive to negative; it is not done by "a you". It is not done by any other "entity" either. It is not done at all. It is the timeless, unceasing prajñatic functioning of our dhyānic non-being that becomes phenomenally present when there is neither doing nor non-doing, i.e. when there is "fasting of the mind".

It is not the object that is or is-not, but the cogniser of the thing-that-either-is-or-is not—that *neither* is *nor* is-not as a cogniser.

All looking, doing, cognising is the same process as looking for an "I" (the looker, doer, cogniser) as an object. Why? because a you ("I") is looking etc., and also because

every object ultimately is I. The looking for an "I" as an object is the looking that is all looking for all objects; so is the not-looking for an "I" as an object the not-looking for any object whatever.

But it is the looker, rather than the object, that neither is nor is-not. Always, always, in every case and context.¹ Therefore it is only when you cease looking that the total absence of the looking—you can be *present*—and that is the "180 degree turn".

Who is looking? As long as a "who" looks, objects can be seen only as objects, and a looking "who" cannot be replaced by *who*? that neither is nor is-not, as long as he is looking.

Only in the absence of both looking and not-looking can a looking, that neither is nor is-not looking, be present. And such presence is you ("I").

Is not that the message of the Diamond and Heart Sutras?

¹ The object also, of course, which phenomenally either is or is-not, noumenally neither is nor is-not, but only because it is integral in its subject.

ROHATSU

By GARY SNYDER

Rohatsu is the name in Rinzai Zen for the meditation week (*sesshin*) held every year from 1 to 8 December. In China and Japan, it is believed that Gautama achieved Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree at dawn on December 8; and in commemoration of this, Zen monks sit in meditation virtually without break for seven days, finishing at dawn on the eighth. This is by far the most severe *sesshin* of the Zen year.

Three a.m.—a far bell
coming closer :
fling up useless futon on the shelf ;
outside, ice-water in the hand & wash the

Ko the bird-head, Silent, skinny,
swiftly cruise the room with
salt plum tea.

Bell from the hondo chanting sutras. Gi :
 deep bell, small bell, wooden drum.
 sanzen at four,
 kneel on icy polisht boards in line :

Shukuza rice and pickles
barrel and bucket,
dim watt bulb.
till day-break nap upright.
sweep
garden and hall.
frost outside

wind thru walls
At eight the lecture bell. high chair.
Ke helps the robe — red, gold,
black lacquer in the shadow
sun & cold

Saiza a quarter to ten
soup and rice dab on the bench
feed the hungry ghosts,
back in the hall by noon.

two-o'clock sanzen
three o'clock sutras
four o'clock bellywarmer
 boiled up soup-rice mush.
dinging and scuffling. out back smoke,
 and talk.

At dusk, at five,
black robes draw into the hall.
stiff joints, sore knees bend
the jiki pads by with his incense lit,
bells,
wood block crack.
& stick slips round the room
on soft straw sandals.
seven, sanzen
tea, and a leaf-shaped candy.
kinhin at eight with folded hands—
single-file racing in flying robes
leaning wake—
nine o'clock one more sanzen
ten, hot noodles,
three bowls each.

Sit until midnight. chant.
make three bows and pull the futon down
roll in the bed
a black.

A far bell coming closer
— (From *Six Years*).



BUDDHIST MEDITATION IN THE WEST

By L. H. EWELS

If Buddhism is to be of practical value in the West, what is needed in addition to adequate translations of the scriptures and plenty of books to explain them and their application so that all kinds of people may learn about them? In English at least there are ample books. Most other European languages carry a sufficient supply of information. Clearly the vital need is to apply the teaching itself, first and at all times in the ethical field, but whenever possible to undergo a course of strict meditation under the supervision of a fully trained bhikkhu at a meditation centre. This requirement has long been appreciated in the East where ordinary lay folk attend the local monasteries or wats on the Buddha memorial day in May each year and in between go to the various meditation centres for laity. It remains for the West to establish and maintain similar meditation centres and to encourage or at least assist young men who show promise in such work to spend some years in an eastern wat. A useful start has been made at the centre of the English-speaking world with the foundation of such a Meditation Centre in the heart of rural England in 1963. It is most important for the basic principles as taught by the Buddha to be kept free of concepts preached in other religions. In practice the meditator must place his former beliefs on the shelf, as it were, for the time being, while he or she gains first-hand experience of the psychosomatic processes within.

Buddhist meditation flows in two main channels; one of these trains the mind to be attentive to a group of processes which go to make up one's being. This may entail quietly observing the breath entering and leaving the tip of the nose, without any attempt to control the breathing; or bare attention may be directed and held (if one practises steadily) to the manner in which

one's feet are slowly pacing the ground; or one may be the silent watcher of events going on around one, without letting the mind follow its normal inclination to wander among its egotistical amusements. The other channel of discipline is to try to hold the attention at a given position within the body, catching the mind and bringing it back to the given spot each time it displays its mercurial tendencies to dart away. Also an external object may be set by the teacher as the concentration exercise appropriate to the pupil, because the experienced teacher soon recognizes the kind of mind he is helping to train and can vary the exercises according to need from day to day.

The writer was privileged to attend the English centre soon after it opened and can vouch for its efficacy under the guidance of a competent monk of Canadian origin who was trained in Burma and Thailand. At the time of writing the monk's own teacher, an acknowledged expert in his own land, has arrived from Thailand to give further instruction in meditation. More of this kind of help is needed in bringing the Buddha-Dharma from the East to the West, because when practical-minded Europeans and Americans begin to see for themselves that the system works and is non-violent, that it is free from bigotry and crusading, they will not be satisfied for long with lectures and books but will want to get on with the job. It is sometimes held that the doctrine of rebirth implies endless ages in which to please oneself. Some disservice to the truth has been rendered by occult and mystical movements which tell their adherents that each 'reincarnation' is higher or better than the previous one. Analysis in the light of the Abhidhamma reveals that too many causes and effects interweave with the energies which make up the human being to assume any such thing. Until the supramundane

Path is entered and one leaves behind forever attachment to rituals, images and beliefs, the questing mind can only transmit its characteristics at death, good and evil together. How many of us realise that we are in danger of ending our lives as worse characters than when we began?

Anyone who has made a careful study of Buddhism and Buddhist meditation knows

that there is much more to the Noble Eight-fold Path than has been indicated in the foregoing paragraphs. Hundreds of volumes do not contain it all. Few meditators attain the goal in one lifetime. Nevertheless the start has to be made if suffering is to be overcome. The start must some time be made NOW and when the Enlightenment comes it will be in earthly life as with all the great spiritual beings known to man.

FIRST BE STABILISED IN THE SELF

From a record by ALAN CHADWICK*

Before I came to India I had read of people who had had flashes of what they called 'cosmic consciousness'. I asked Bhagavan about this and whether it was possible after having gained Self-realization to lose it again. He took a copy of *Kaivalya Navanita* and told the interpreter to read a page of it to me. This showed that at first it was quite possible and even probable. As long as the least desire or tie was left a person would be pulled back into the phenomenal world by it, Bhagavan explained. After all, it is only the vasanas or inherent tendencies that prevent us from being always in our natural state; and vasanas are not got rid of all of a sudden. One may have worked them out in a previous incarnation and have little left to do in the present life, but in any case they have to go.

I was reminded of Ramakrishna who said that as long as a single desire remained unfulfilled one had to go on being reborn in order to fulfil it. He said he himself had always wanted to wear a silk cloth and a gold ring and smoke a hookah. One day he asked Mathura Nath to obtain these things for him. Then he sat on the banks of the Ganges dressed in silk, wearing his gold ring and smoking his hookah. After a while he got up, threw his ring into the river, flung his silk cloth on the ground and stamped and spat on it and broke his hookah. He had fulfilled his desire and no longer had any wish to do these things again.

Ramakrishna knew the truth about Self-realization but did not want it. He used to pray that he should not lose his identity (ego) but should still be able to enjoy the bliss of the Mother. "I want to taste the sugar, not to become the sugar," he would say.

Bhagavan explained that although there are no stages in Realization there are on the way to it. Or perhaps it would be better to say that there are stages of descent from the Absolute to objectivisation. Chit or pure Awareness projects its light down through Mahat, known in the West as 'cosmic consciousness' to the ahankara or ego. Thus manas or mind arises, followed by the conception of body and world. What appears as a process to us is just a shadow for the Self-realized being. The Self is one and indivisible. There is no becoming; there is only being.

Bhagavan advised his disciples not to take on the onerous duty of being a guru. It would only lead to trouble. Their disciples would expect all sorts of impossible things of them and look up to them as Jnanis, and in trying to satisfy the disciples they would resort to hypocrisy. Even if one could work miracles it was not a good thing to do, as they would deflect him from his true aim of Self-realization.

* For whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of January 1964.

JOEL GOLDSMITH—AN APPRECIATION

By I. G. SCHULTZ

Once when the German philosopher Schopenhauer was taking an evening walk in a cemetery the caretaker, wanting to close the cemetery, asked him to leave, adding the question: "Who are you, sir?" The philosopher answered: "My dear friend, if only I knew that myself!"

Many people have put this question without finding the answer and for centuries mankind has been enquiring into it. The Sages and the illumined know, but when asked their answer is only: "Be silent!" "What is truth?" asked Pilate; but the Master gave no answer, he remained silent.

The human mind cannot grasp the eternal Truth hidden behind the veil of appearances. Even if it were possible there would be no words to express it. Nevertheless everybody can approach Truth more or less and understand something of the meaning and aim of life if he earnestly wishes to.

This search for Truth or God can be compared to climbing a mountain. The experienced mountaineer lays aside all superfluous luggage to avoid burdening himself. Let us do the same, taking only the cloak of desirelessness and the staff of silence. And yet how hard it is to leave behind all desires: the sick long for health, the poor prosperity, the sad for solace, and so on. All this is a drag on the path to the summit, the path to God-realization, to the goal which the illumined indicate, to which the American mystic Joel Goldsmith refers when he says: "I only long for knowing Thee aright. My God, reveal Thyself to me. In Thy presence there is safety, peace and joy." (from 'The Art of Meditation'). Speaking of the difficulties, he says: "In the midst of any trial or tribulation try to understand that God is seeking you to bring you back home to Him, not in death but in life eternal. Realize that this very pain, unhappiness or lack is but the



Joel Goldsmith

sense of separation from God and immediately rest back in the assurance of His presence." (from 'Our Spiritual Resources').

It is not by our own merit that we reach the supreme goal or even touch the hem of the garment. We attain by Grace as a gift from the Most High, when we are mature enough to do so. We do not know when the moment will be. It is not the result of our strife. Joel Goldsmith says: "When we struggle and battle with the enemy, whether that enemy is physical and external or mental and internal, we do not win any victories. The real victories are won when we use no

power and do not fight our opposition but rest in the knowledge that all opposition destroys itself. The battle is not yours . . . stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. We need not fight or struggle. We need only be still." It is like the ascent of a mountain. We do not know when we shall reach the summit, but the higher we mount the more the valley fog dissolves till we attain a level where the veil parts. The darkness of the valley is transcended and the peak rises before us in all its splendour. The same is our experience on the spiritual Mountain Path, to whose summit Goldsmith refers when he says: "God is my fortress and I hide in that fortress. God will never leave me." When the veil of ignorance parts, life eternal is revealed to us. The wisdom that then comes is said to be so light that a child can carry it away in its hands and yet so weighty that a sage needs all his life to gather it up. We must understand that we ourselves, as human individuals, are nothing, that the true Self of us is our aim and merging in the Absolute, realizing the Absolute in us, is our only goal. Only then does the fog dissolve, revealing behind its veil the eternal goal that we can reach in silence, humility and desirelessness. As Goldsmith says: "When we have rested, when we have become still, and when we have permitted the Spirit to permeate mind and body, a Something greater than ourselves goes before us and prepares the way for us. In complete silence, with no attempt to use

God, use Truth, or use a power over anybody or for anybody, something takes place within us that dissolves the problems of life and makes the way one of joy and fulfilment. In that Silence we find Allness. In that quietness and confidence we find our strength and peace." (from "The Thunder of Silence.").

In that Silence man discovers his Oneness with the Absolute. Then he is liberated from the bonds of the ego, he is 'Jivan-mukti', liberated already in this life, standing on the summit. Then we no longer try to remove our problems with our own power. We no longer have any problems to remove. "We rest in His word. We rest from all power and God works the miracle."

This was the mission of Joel Goldsmith, to show us the spiritual path that he himself had followed in his life, as he wrote to the present writer a year before his passing away in June 1964: "For that reason only I am on earth—to reveal God's harmony on earth, to show forth God's Glory, to reveal God's grace." He experienced Truth Eternal, having beheld the parting of the veil; so he could say: "Rumblings of the thunder of the deep Silence of My peace reverberate and increase in power until eventually they break every barrier. The mighty noise of the Silence grows in volume until its thunder rends asunder the veils of illusion and God stands revealed in all His majesty, glory and peace." (from 'The Thunder of Silence.')

THE INDWELLER

By A. RAO

There is no one here.
Life now is an empty boat
Governed by remote control,
The lunatic helmsman gone.
Waves rise up —
People and things to do —
He, the Invisible, steers.
There is no one else here.

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STARTING THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

By JOEL S. GOLDSMITH

The question is not one of attaining at first that degree of illumination which would set one up as a spiritual teacher, but how to attain sufficient illumination or enlightenment to be able to free oneself from the discords and inharmonies of human living and build up within oneself a spiritual consciousness that would not only lift one above the world's troubles, family troubles, or community troubles — but enable one to live one's normal human, family, business or professional life and yet be inspired, fed, and supported by an inner experience or inner contact.

We know that all people of a religious turn of mind (and it makes no difference what their religion may be), attain some measure of inner harmony or inner peace and then find themselves in possession of an inner Grace that lives their lives for them. The reason it makes no difference what their religion may be is that there is only one God, one Spirit, and Spirit does not know the difference between a Jew or a Gentile, a Protestant or a Catholic, an Oriental or an Occidental, or an American Indian. As far as Consciousness is concerned, It is entirely without religious beliefs, convictions, ceremonies, rites, creeds, or forms of worship. It is an absolutely free and independent Spirit that permeates us, just as the life of nature permeates a blade of grass, or an orchid, or a daisy, or a violet. It does not know the difference and it does not make any difference to It whether it is a mongrel dog or a full-blooded dog. The same Life and the same Spirit animates all.

We are told in Scripture that "He sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,"¹ and that as far as God is concerned there is neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free. The Master made that very clear when he said, "Call no man your father upon the

earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."² If he were personalizing, if he meant that only for those who were listening to him, then God is only the Father of the Jews. There were no Christians in his day, nor was there a Christian church or a Christian sect — there were only Jews in the holy lands and he was one of them, a rabbi in their midst. Therefore, if we were to take him personally when he said, "Call no man your father upon the earth," we would have to say that the Jews are the only ones who have God as their Father. We know from his teaching that he was not speaking to anyone personally, he was voicing Truth. In other words he might have said that two times two are four while speaking of cabbages, yet not meaning to imply that the principle applies only to cabbages. Two times two are four whether applied to cabbages or kings. Therefore, when he says, "Call no man your father upon the earth" he is not addressing only you who are reading this, nor was he addressing only those who were sitting before him listening to him — he was talking out into the world, proclaiming a message that was given to him of God.

No person on the face of the globe can hope for spiritual enlightenment unless he can first of all recognize that there can only be one creative Principle and that Its location is neither in holy mountains, nor yet in the temples in Jerusalem. Its location is neither here, nor there, but within you — and it makes no difference who the "you" may be. It makes no difference if it is the you in a hospital, the you in prison, or the you in business, in art, or in a profession — the kingdom of God is within you and the kingdom of God is Spirit, not a superhuman

¹ *Mathew*, 5: 45.

² *Ibid.*, 23: 9.

being. This step constitutes the very first step in attaining spiritual light. The presence of God is within *you*, whoever the *you* may be.

When you have taken that as a point of meditation and have come to the place where you actually feel the truth of it, where you actually feel the presence of God in the air, or in your body, in your business, in your home, in your competitor, or in the enemy across the sea or across the street — you come to the next step. This step everyone must take before enlightenment can come, which is the realization that — since the kingdom of God IS within you — It must be permitted to flow out from you. It cannot come to you and you must, at some stage in your unfoldment, let It flow forth through you. For instance, companionship is so simple to demonstrate because all it requires is that you be a companion. That is all! Once you become a companion, you have companionship. Once you find something or someone to companion with, and it does not have to be a human being at first, or a member of the opposite sex, or a stranger, you can begin to find companionship with members of your own family or with the birds that come to your lawn, or you can find companionship with the stars. The point is this, that companionship is an emotion, an experience, a sharing of one's self. It could be at the level of neighbourliness or friendliness, or it could be at the level of husband, wife, brother or sister. All companionship means is a sharing of one's self with someone else. Therefore, companionship is always available to you because it is within you; it is the gift of God within you and you are the one who determines whether you will keep it locked up or whether you will be a companion. The moment you decide to be a companion, you have companionship.

The kingdom of God is locked up within you, so there is no way for us to produce supply for anyone. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."³ Everyone on the face of the earth has all that the Father has, which is infinity, and to try to

get something out there in space is folly. Supply is not demonstrated in getting, but in opening out a way for the supply to flow out from its Source — which is the kingdom of God within you. Therefore, illumination can only come to those who realize: "The kingdom of God, Light, Truth, Wisdom and Love is within *me*. All that the Father hath is mine." Just as you have to find a way to express companionship, so do you have to find a way to express supply. You do it in many ways, as the Master has indicated in the Sermon on the Mount. Give, but be sure no one but God knows about your prayers. Pray for your enemies, and forgive. The Master gives all of it as an action that takes place from within you to the without, and at no time does he indicate that there is a getting of something. "That ye may be the children of your Father,"⁴ he says, "pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you,"⁵ and he tells you to "forgive seventy times seven."⁶

There is no way to gain love from the world or from the people of the world. Many have tried and all have failed, because it cannot be accomplished. The only way is the way of spiritual light. By loving you become loved, and there is no other way. Waiting first to be loved is like waiting for something to come from a blank space "out there." You must first put love out there before it can flow back. You must first cast the bread upon the water before the bread can come back to you. Only that which you put out there finds its way back here, because in and of itself that space has nothing to give you. However, in proportion as you put something out there into space, the very act makes way for it to find its way back to you — pressed down and running over.

Spiritual illumination begins with the realization of these simple truths, all of which are based on the premise that the kingdom of God is established within you and that, in order to enjoy it, you have to find a way

³ Luke, 15 : 31.

⁴ Mathew, 5 : 45.

⁵ Ibid., 5 : 44.

⁶ Ibid., 18 : 22.

to bring it out. As you meditate on these things and as you ponder them, you come to a place where there is nothing more to think about. You have said it all, you have thought it all, you have declared it or affirmed it, and you have come to a place where you become still. In the very moment you achieve stillness, you find something takes place within you, something of a transcendental nature, something of a "not human" nature. Something comes into your awareness which you yourself are not declaring, affirming or stating, but which you are hearing. You are receiving from the depths of your withinness, but you yourself have created the circumstance by means of which this the Truth, intellectually know the Truth. declared it, felt it, stated it, and then been still as if you had created a vacuum, and now up into that vacuum the voice Itself can announce Itself and bring with it illumination. The first step is to consciously know the Truth, intellectually know the Truth. Through this constant pondering, meditating, cogitating, you bring yourself to the place where you have said it all and thought it all and are still — then into that stillness and up from that stillness comes the very Light that you have been seeking.

It is necessary first to divest yourself of every belief that God is a respecter of persons, religions, churches, or races, and come to see clearly that God is Spirit, God is Life, God is Love — and that the presence of God is actually within you! "The (very) place whereon thou standest is holy ground,"⁷ because the presence of God is there. However, when you are declaring that about yourself, look up and notice the hundreds of people in your neighbourhood and remember: "Whether or not they know this Truth, I know it is the Truth about them." If you are not praying for your enemy, if you are not knowing the Truth as being a universal Truth, you are again trying to finitize It, or limit It, and God cannot be limited.

The next step is easier because of the two previous steps. You now come to the place where you recognize that man cannot influence God, man has no power over God's

world, and man has no jurisdiction over God. Man cannot have his own way with God; man cannot get God to do his will or his way. Therefore, the next need is the ability to be a beholder. Since you cannot influence God, at least you can watch what God is doing. You can become a witness to what God is doing in your life, in his life, in her life, or in its life. When the sun comes up in the morning, it comes up for Jews and Gentiles, whites and blacks, Orientals and Occidentals. It has no favorites and, if you want to watch the sunrise, you must be willing to acknowledge that the sun is rising for everyone in the community.

There must always be the remembrance that what God is doing God is doing, that He does not need your help, nor can He be controlled by you. God's grace cannot be stopped. Even if you think you are in disobedience to His law, God's grace is still flowing. You may not receive the benefit of it, but only because you have cut yourself off from it.

It is very much like the subject we have of karmic law: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."⁸ God has nothing to do with your sowing or with your reaping. It is as you sow. If you sow. If you sow to the flesh, you reap corruption. If you sow to the Spirit, you reap life everlasting. Therefore, it is always *you*. By your thoughts and actions of today you are determining your karma of tomorrow. By your sowing today, you are determining your reaping tomorrow. Therefore, if you have shut off health, safety, security or inner peace through an act of disobedience to one or more of the Ten Commandments, or through a violation of loving your neighbour as yourself — do not blame God. God neither gives you peace nor takes it from you; God neither gives you health nor takes it from you; God neither gives you supply nor takes it from you. God's grace is as free as the sunshine. You can pull down the shades and never see or feel the sun if you wish, but that is your action, not God's. As far as

⁷ Exodus, 3: 5.

⁸ Galatians, 6: 7.

God is concerned the sunshine is always there. God's grace is very much like the sun in the sky. It is there and it is available for everyone, even though temporarily there may be clouds hiding it.

Your recognition of this, your lack of trying to get God to do something, your ability to refrain from trying to entreat, beg, influence or bribe God — your very act of refraining brings the action of God into your experience. "God is, not because of me but actually in spite of me, God is. God is closer to me than breathing . . . the place whereon I stand is holy ground . . . where the presence of the Lord is, there is freedom and fulfilment!" In the moment when you learn to refrain from taking heaven by storm, in the moment when you are able to sit back in the realization, "Where I am, God is," and be still, you have opened out the way in your own consciousness for the Omnipresence which was already there to make Itself manifest and evident in your experience.

The error is the attempt to influence God: "God, go out there and destroy my enemies' possessions." The attempt to personalize God or to get God to do something for someone is due to the inability to understand that God is Spirit. That very statement is in itself a freeing and a healing one. There is nothing you can do about moving Consciousness, or influencing It, or bribing It. There is nothing you can do but LET It envelop you, LET It pick you up, LET It dominate you, LET Its will be done in you, and then you find that you have made yourself a transparency through which the Light can shine.

This Light is already present within you, not a Light you gain from books or worship or teachers, but a Light that books or worship or teachers can reveal to you as having existence within you. The teacher's function is to unveil the Light that already constitutes your innermost Being, your innermost Self, your innermost Identity. The function of the teacher and the teaching is to unveil the presence of the Spirit of God that

is within you, so you can eventually say, "Thank you, Father. I and my Father are one."

The function of this Presence that is within you is to heal the sick, raise the dead, preach the gospel, feed the hungry, forgive the sinner. It never has left you and It never will leave you. You could change your religion seven times, but that Presence would still be with you. You could live in a location where a church had never been heard of, and that Presence would still be with you. It will *never* leave you nor forsake you. It is always there, but your coming into the benefits of It is dependent only on your contemplation of this Truth, and you then gradually find you receive confirmation from within yourself that is true. You receive an assurance from within. Actually the Voice speaks to you, although whether It speaks audibly is of no importance as long as you feel an inner assurance in one way or another that you are living by Grace. Not by might, not by power, not by force, but by Grace, by a divine Grace that operates just as freely as the incoming and outgoing tides or the rising and the setting of the sun — and just as painlessly. It is not a matter of earning or deserving God's Grace. As humans we cannot earn or deserve the Grace of God, and that is why we are told that we must "die daily" and be reborn of the Spirit. As humans we are not going to earn or deserve God's Grace, but as children of God we are heirs to it and all we have to do is recognize our sonship.

As you contemplate these basic Truths, as you learn to come into a state of mind, a state of consciousness that always has the assurance that there is an inner Presence, an inner Power, an inner Grace — and relax in It — you find that It does your thinking for you. It does your directing; It does your enlightening; It will go before you to make the crooked places straight; It is a healing influence in mind and body; It is a supplying Presence — and It does this with no help from you. All that is necessary is your ability to relax in It.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. . . . He performeth the thing that is appointed for me.¹⁰ . . . He will perfect that which concerneth me."¹¹ It is always He, but He cannot do it if you take the reins and run away, if you take thought for "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed." You are then not leaving room for Him; it is all "me", the me that should be dying daily in order that I can be reborn. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."¹² How can you be quiet and how can you have confidence unless you have the awareness of an inner Grace?

This Path constitutes a way of life. It is a religious way of life, except that if such a term is used, it would seem to denote a religion and it is not that kind of a life. It is a religious life in the sense of a knowledge of God Life, but to avoid giving the impression that we have found some particular religion through which God is blessing us—this should rightly be called the contemplative way of life because it can be lived by Jew or Greek, Protestant or Catholic, Oriental or Occidental. It can be lived by anyone. It is a contemplative way of life which recognizes that God is Spirit, that Spirit is Omnipresence, and that Spirit is within your own being. It is a contemplative way of life that is absolutely unrestricted. It is available to anyone of any faith or no faith, as long as one can recognize that God is Spirit.

This temple has God as its central theme, not your God or my God, just GOD—and a God that belongs to no one—a God that just is and has to be universal. That is why this particular order¹³ can flourish in every

country on the globe where there is freedom and where one is not compelled to worship in a specific way. Wherever there is freedom this order is to be found, because it does not give a name to God nor does it give a religion or a faith to God. It just recognizes God as the Principle of life, the Grand Architect of the whole universe.

It is for this reason that the contemplative way of life is the way of life for an individual who can recognize this great Truth, that wherever or however God is worshiped it is the same God because there cannot be more than one God. Whether as Hebrews we go into a temple with our hats on, or as Christians with our hats off, as Orientals with our shoes off, or as Christians with our shoes on, it must be understood that this can make no difference. What we are doing is worshipping in whatever way means dedication or sacredness to us.

The contemplative, then, is the individual who is paving the way for world peace, because he is recognizing that there is only one Father, one God, equally of all, and that we are therefore brothers and sisters. The only relationship that is essential is that we treat each other as members of one household. To do this is to love God supremely, but it is also to love your neighbour as yourself.

The next step in your Infinite Way unfoldment is going to be to learn the nature of the life of a contemplative, and the willingness to understand that a person can be a contemplative and yet follow any religion or no religion, because it is all based on God's Omnipresence. Therefore, there can be only one Presence and that Presence must be the only Power. Call It by any name you will, worship in whatever form you will, fast if you like or feast if you like, as long as you are doing so from an inner feeling of sacredness.

⁹ Psalm, 23: 2.

¹⁰ Job, 23: 14.

¹¹ Psalm, 138: 8.

¹² Isaiah, 30: 15.

¹³ By 'this order' the author refers to the 'Infinite Way' groups which he directed. (Ed.)

I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE

By SAGITTARIUS

But who is this 'I'? Not the 'I' who is anxious what the morning post will bring, who likes one person and resents another, who plans for the future and broods over the past. I am not raising the question whether it is bad or wrong to do these things but only stating that the person who does them is not One with the Father. Every one admits this; that is why, putting it crudely, they say that they are not One with the Father but only Christ was. But that is putting it very crudely, treating it as a mere accident of birth, just as one person might be born the son of the king and others not, and there is nothing you can do about it. If that were so, would Christ have urged us to do something about it, to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect?

If the 'I' who is One with the Father is not John Robinson it is also not the individual Jesus of Nazareth, the man who trod the streets and gave sharp rejoinders to his critics. How could it be when the Father is eternal and immutable while John or Jesus is situated in history and subject to change and growth? How can the two be the same?

Then what is this 'I'? If you stop thinking but retain consciousness you become aware of a sense of being that is more essentially 'you' than your thinking mind or your body is. It is hard to describe but it can be experienced, perhaps after some practise. If it could not, describing it would not help much. One clue is that the individual consciousness of John or George is situated in the head, while this, so long as physically located, is in the region of the heart. I say "so long as physically located" because it may involve a state of trance; but it need not. It can be accompanied by full physical awareness. In that case it perceives the physical circumstance of life, its obligations as professional man, husband and father, its powers and liabilities, but all

impersonally, as though they concerned somebody else. The whole environment seems a reflection of itself, and at the same time seems to be contained in it. It sees the world as something ephemeral in it, not itself as something ephemeral in the world. It has a sense of changelessness, of reality, of eternity or timelessness, untouched by the world of forms.

And what is the Father that it is One with? The temptation might be to say 'God'; but to answer such a question with an undefined word is no answer. What is meant by 'God'? One can feel rather than understand that there is pure Being manifested in the entire cosmos but unaffected by it, manifested equally and simultaneously in each individual creature and in the whole universe. As good a definition as any is by a Christian woman to whom an experience of Realization came spontaneously: "it was all that is, and there was no God, and equally no Not-God."¹

Then how does this differ from the being that one feels in oneself? The whole point of Christ's saying is that they do not differ but are the same. And yet they must be the same differently or there would be no need for the saying. There is a feeling of universal Being within which the worlds and beings are no more than a shadow-show; there is the feeling of being in the heart; there is a feeling that this derives from that and yet is the same as it, that it is the Son of the Father and yet One with the Father. It is not John or Jesus or Horatio Gubbins but the One that manifests equally and simultaneously as all of them. One illustration might be that the water in a bottle is the same as the water in the ocean that it is taken from, but it is not quite adequate,

¹ *The Following Feet*, p. 21: By Ancilla, Longmans.

since the water in the bottle can on occasion draw on the power of the Ocean.

It is sometimes queried how this pure being that is One with the Father can function as John Robinson or Horatio Gubbins. It obviously can because there have been examples of it. There was one in modern times in the person of Ramana Maharshi. And such rare exemplars have always been felt to be more human than the rest of us, not incompletely human. Visitors to the Maharshi did not feel that he was unnatural but that they were. They felt that he alone was fully and naturally human, because he alone was fully divine.

But can the 'I' who is One with the Father be trusted to look after my affairs? Will he bring off the business deal I am planning? Will he get the promotion I have been angling for? Will Sarah Jane consent to marry him? The answer to such questions is neither 'yes' nor 'no'; it is that the asker of them is that very ego who must abdicate in order that the true 'I' may appear. The fact that they can be asked is the obstacle to realization of one's true identity as One with the Father. If it is more important for a business deal to come off than for the Self to be realized, then the Self will not be realized. Whether, if the Self were realized, the business deal would also come off is another matter. The only way is to take the great leap into the dark, to say: Let the sense of being awaken and take control whether it is good for business or not, whether Sarah Jane will marry me or not. And once it awakens and takes control one sees that the questions were unnecessary because what is due to happen will happen, what is appropriate will happen, whether it is what the grasping, scheming ego would have wanted or not.

Then how does it work out in practice? The person in whom the sense of pure being awakens has a body-mind instrument at his disposal just as has the ego-person. He can walk and sit and stand; he can distinguish hot from cold, sweet from sour; therefore he can find one sensation pleasant and another unpleasant. But, and here is the great

difference: he accepts both alike impersonally. As a further result of this, it follows that he can react to situations in the way that he feels to be required. For instance, he can get up and open the door when somebody knocks—or not. He can dismiss a dishonest employee—or not. He will feel what is required and act accordingly. This implies that he can think; he can use his mental faculty just as he can his sense of taste or smell. He can say "this calculation is wrong" just as he can say "this apple is sour".

Then why do they say that Realization means the death of the mind? When they do it means the mind as helmsman, that is to say the ego. The thinking faculty will still exist, and in fact will become more efficient, being no longer distorted by sentiment or self-interest, just as an unrealized person thinks more efficiently in matters that do not concern him personally, where emotion and prejudice do not come in to cloud his judgement. Only when the Self is realized nothing will concern him personally; everything will be impersonal.

Then will life be worth living? Won't that take all the spice out of life? That is what the ego thinks; that is why it insists on a life of frustration punctuated by brief triumphs and pleasures but mortgaged to sickness and dwindling powers instead of the unclouded happiness the Sages speak about. The best answer would be: Try and see.

But if we do, what kind of actions can still be performed and what kind have to be given up? There is no such rule. It is not any kind of activity in itself that has to be given up but personal involvement in it, that is to say the idea that you are the performer of it. What remains is impersonal activity, what the Chinese call *wei-wu-wei*, act-no-act, inactive activity. A man may be outwardly Horatio Gubbins, inwardly *Wei-Wu-Wei*. When personal involvement is eliminated it will become apparent spontaneously what activity is harmonious and what inharmonious.

Another question that is sometimes asked is whether, on realization of the true 'I' who is One with the Father the fictitious individual 'I' or ego ceases to exist or still survives but in complete submission to the Father. Perhaps it is not very important which. Either is possible. The ego-sense may evaporate completely or may survive but subjugated or may occasionally rise up again but too weak to cause obstruction. In Ramakrishna a vestige of it must have remained because he said that he wanted to stay separate in order to serve and enjoy the Mother. In Christ also. It was only the historical, individual Jesus that could pray for the cup

of suffering to pass him by and then add : "Not my will be done but Thine." Insofar as he was the 'son of man', as he so often declared, this feeling would come to him ; but insofar as he was the Son of God and One with the Father there would be no 'my will' to surrender to 'Thy Will'. The last gasp of the ego-sense was the despairing cry upon the cross : "My Lord ! Why hast Thou forsaken me ?" This question of ego-survival is, however, as I said, of secondary importance. The great thing is the awakening of the true sense of being. Thereafter the effort to stabilize it and make it permanent. The rest will follow.

TIME TO CHANGE

Translated by PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN

From the Tamil of Muruganar for an introduction to whom see our issue of October, 1964.

Fond, foolish heart of mine, long have you known
That your sure strength is Ramana alone.
And yet, forgetting him, you have your own
Destruction sought so far. Give up now straight,
Now, though already late,
Give up at one sharp wrench and utterly,
The world and dwell on him unceasingly.

He forgets himself, he is no longer conscious of his selfhood ; he disappears and loses himself in God and becomes one spirit with Him, as a drop of water which is drowned in a great quantity of wine.

— Suso.

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The minds of the wise are not without activity but through their knowledge of the vanity of earthly things they are without those feelings which bind.

— VASISHTHA.

THE CHIEF END

By W. MC. K. AITKEN

According to the Christian denomination in which I was brought up,¹ "the chief end of man is to enjoy God." Not to praise God, not to serve Him, not even to realize That One, but simply to enjoy. The emphasis is wholly on experience: "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good."²

To accommodate the chief end means arranging our lives in order to allow the Spirit full play. In fact, of course, the Spirit arranges everything. All we can do — if we are foolishly sensible and submit to Grace — is enjoy.

The obstacle on the mountain path to enjoying God is sin, the creation of the ego, caused by the mental illusion that man, who in essence is a spiritual being, can find his highest good in the material. Since this is basically a mental obstruction several means can be used to clear it. We can have faith that God alone is, or we can be still and know this. Or we can have the obstacle cleared in the presence of a saint. One can see enjoyment of God quite clearly in the faces of saints of all religions. So it was that artists in an age of faith would depict a halo to indicate the vibrations set up by the indwelling Spirit of God.

The path of enjoyment, like any other inner way, requires continual effort to quell thoughts, the roots of the ego. But if we remember that it is at God's prompting we are making the effort even the difficulties on the way can become a source of enjoyment.

Whichever way we choose to remove our sin and ignorance we must first have an open heart, a fit home for holiness, for it is from this centre that God operates. "The king-

dom is within you." That is to say God saves only me, only here, only now, just as I am. "To-day if ye will hear His voice."³

It is strange, then, to think that enjoyment of God, immortality, can only start with the death of this body, that is to say when I am not here to enjoy it! It is doubly strange to think that immortality 'starts'. Strangest of all, however, for him who would enjoy God, is to *think*! For our chief end is not to think but to enjoy. Saints enjoy and theologians think. And thanks be to God we are "called to be saints" not theologians.

God is enjoyed within the heart and this enjoyment connotes awareness, not pleasure. By thinking we cannot understand the bliss of the Spirit. It is within the heart, the home of the Spirit, that understanding of what is dawns. The mind is the home of the ego, the cause of man's Fall, and can only understand what seems to be — the material. The mind distorts and limits God, Truth, That which is, with names and labels; it divides, separates and excludes. The relationship of the mind to the heart is that of the moon to the sun. The mind can only exist by virtue of the heart. "It is He that hath made us, and not We ourselves."⁴

Only when thinking subsides can the Spirit shine forth and Oneness, enjoyment, be restored. Only then does the stone⁵ shine forth as the mountain of fire⁶ and is Krishna seen as the blue canopy of the universe. Only then is the veil of this body-temple rent asunder, the carpenter revealed as King, and Resurrection — the chief end — made real.

¹ The Church of Scotland.

² Psalm, 34.

³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵ Siva lingam.

⁶ Ramana-Arunachala.

LIGHT ON THE PATH

By I. S. VARGHESE

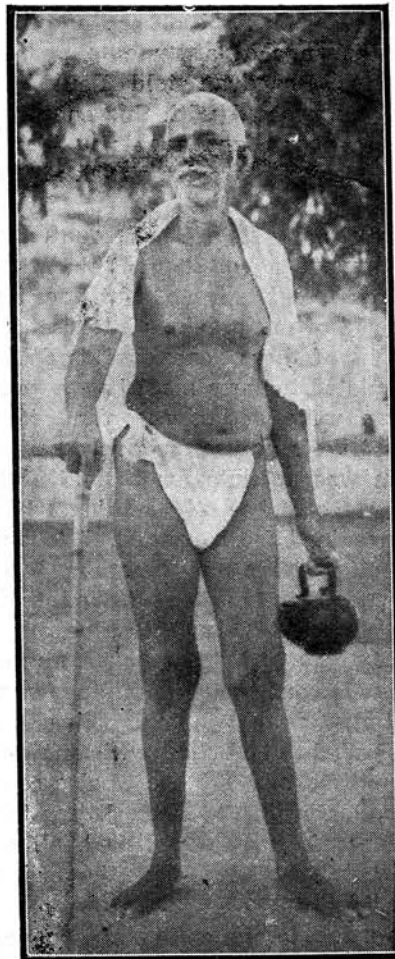
The technique of the spiritual path advocated by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is well known to be the path of self-enquiry, though Bhagavan often directed particular aspirants to other paths, mainly devotion. It may be helpful to seekers to know about the experience of one who has tried to follow the path of self-enquiry for some years.

Though I have always been vitally concerned with religion, the position I had come to in middle age was one of agnosticism. I had totally lost faith in the Christian dogma which had been taught me as a child. The nearly one hundred denominations of Christianity nauseated me. All external forms of religion I held in utter contempt as the domain of old women and fools. It was at this time that I accidentally read Paul Brunton's 'A Search in Secret India'. This book produced a deep impression on me. I re-read it carefully, and some sections I read a large number of times, and found that I was on very shallow ground.

Being trained in the modern scientific method it had been my outlook that nothing is knowable beyond the things experienced by the senses. The very first fruit of self-enquiry, after the practice had proceeded for a few months was a total change of this attitude, and the conviction grew more and more that there is a realm of reality which I would call the realm of the Spirit. Though this conviction was very strong during the periods of meditation when the mind was quietened, during other times the mind tried to take revenge on this assault of its domain and tried to reassert its supremacy, especially by suggesting doubts about the validity of this conviction. To my scientifically trained mind this took the form of a persistent query "Cannot this conviction itself be an illusion?" Further meditation on the theme "To whom does this illusion appear?" reduced the frequency of this assault. I now

realise that this is a doubt that must last so long as the mind exists.

Another aspect of self-enquiry that became apparent after some months of practice was



the assurance of being taken care of by some Higher Power. There was a feeling of power all around, but always subtle power. In very complex situations totally unexpected solutions have automatically appeared. Some experiences which may be classed as mira-

culous have also come unbidden. It is not relevant to discuss these here. In short, I could personally testify to the findings of one of the earliest of Bhagavan's disciples, Mr. F. H. Humphreys —

"Though it takes years to find that 'That' (the Self), the result of this concentration will be seen in four or five months' time — in all sorts of unconscious clairvoyance, in peace of mind, in power to deal with troubles, in power all round, yet always unconscious power."¹

Still a further fruit of self-enquiry was the total change of attitude to people and events. As Bhagavan told Paul Brunton "When you proceed with this enquiry your attitude to people and events will change." I was particularly wonder-struck at the disappearance of the hostility I had towards certain persons, whom I had counted as my enemies. I had never thought that this was possible or even desirable. But now I found that instead of my previous interpretation of the actions of these 'enemies' as deliberate and calculated to harm me, I began to realise that they were acting according to their lights and their nature, and no other course of action was possible for them. With this disappearance of hostility a thing I had not at all bargained for happened. I found that my 'enemies' were now becoming less hostile to me. Actually, after a period, the chief of them got quite reconciled to me, and went out of his way to help me on a number of occasions. It confirmed the findings of many spiritual masters that the only thing that has to be attended to and changed is oneself, and all else will follow. For me, it also confirmed the aphorism in the Yoga Sutras "When non-violence is fully established, all beings discard their hostility in his (the aspirant's) presence."²

An aversion to the eating of non-vegetarian food began to manifest itself only after a period of some years. It was to all appearances sudden. I had developed a distaste for beef much earlier, but fish and eggs con-

tinued to be indispensable items. It was at this time that I read R. L. Stevenson's "Travels in the South Seas". The chapter on cannibalism and meat eating in general affected me powerfully. And I found that I could no longer relish non-vegetarian dishes. It was rather hard at first to enjoy a vegetarian meal. But by and by I felt quite at home among vegetarian dishes. I must here state that incidentally my general health improved, and some digestive complaints I used to have disappeared altogether.

One of the most salutary changes in my attitude to things in general has been a growing capacity to treat so many complex situations with equanimity and without being unduly perturbed by them. This I sense to be due to the growing inward certainty about the course of events not being under our control at all and the conviction that we are only infinitesimal functionaries carrying out the behest of the Supreme One. And I have found that many complex situations have resolved themselves without any interference on my part.

Another thing that has changed has been the clinging to personal possessions. The tyranny of the world diminishes in exact proportion to our indifference to its value to us. In the last resort, when one becomes like a 'fakir' (one who possesses nothing and desires nothing) one is free of the world and the world has no hold on one. All our apprehensions, fear, planning and scheming are based on our overvaluation of the worth of worldly things, and the result of our considering ephemeral things of permanent value. If a man grows to the stature of a 'fakir,' he is free of all fears and apprehensions, as the phenomenal world does not bind him. He is indeed free in the most comprehensive sense of the word, and moves as a feather carried on the wings of the wind. He is indeed the 'jeevanmukta' — the one who has attained freedom while yet in the body. We are all treading the Path to that Beatific State.

May the Grace of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi be with all who read this.

¹ *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., p. 103.

² *Yoga Sutras*, 2-35.

CLIMBING ARUNACHALA

By MADGUNI SHAMBHU BHAT

Having been inspired and exhilarated by walking round Arunachala Hill in pradakshina,¹ I felt that it was too sacred to tread under foot, especially the peak, where the Divine Presence is concentrated. So, giving up the idea of climbing to the top, I prayed reverently to the Lord and the Goddess and bowed down in complete surrender. I even began to wonder whether it was not because of the extreme sanctity of the hill that Bhagavan Sri Ramana advised devotees rather to make pradakshina of its base than to climb to the summit.

That was on Monday, 1 June, 1964. I was intending to leave by the 10.30 bus that morning, and then it struck me that it is not auspicious to leave a Siva Kshetra on a Monday, that day being peculiarly sacred to the Lord, so I stayed on.

At about 2.30 in the afternoon, as I was resting under the neem-tree beside the little room where the Maharshi attained Mahasamadhi, gazing at the stately peak, I began once again to think of climbing it. "Sacred it is," I thought, "but how can one pray to the Lord without approaching him? How could they light the annual beacon on the peak if they did not go there? And if others go up why should I not too? Does a child not climb on its mother's lap? Does a father not carry his child on his shoulder or even his head? Am I not a child of the Parents of the universe?" So I decided to go. Indeed, I felt invited to do so. With little preparation and no more hesitation I set off up the hill at about a quarter past three in the afternoon, carrying two mangoes in my hand.

The afternoon sun was hot and bright. The stony path up to Skandashram, the first lap of the way, was scorching beneath my bare feet. It took me about half an hour

to get there. Skandashram is very cool and shady in the afternoon, when all around is hot and barren. I placed one of my two mangoes in offering before the picture of Bhagavan there and drank my fill of the cool water from the spring. Then I set out. The attendant put me on to the narrow path just east of the cave, running up to the peak, but he objected that I ought to have started out in the morning and that a stout staff would have been useful. I could do nothing about that now, so I ignored his suggestions and went on my way. He called out to me to be careful not to miss the path either going up or coming down.

At 62 I am fairly hardy and well preserved, but it was not long before this climb began to exhaust me. The sun was still hot and I had to walk over rocks and stones, not on a smooth path. My throat became parched and I felt a craving for a little water, but there was nothing I could do about it. Every hundred feet or so I stopped to draw breath and to gaze up at the peak and down at the town below and the countryside spread out beyond it. When I had gone about two thirds of the way up I began to feel rather lonely; but stopping and looking around I was heartened to see a few goats grazing nearby. Then I heard voices. Two young goatherds, boy and girl, were sitting on a large rock, talking and laughing—perhaps at me. Coming up to them, I asked them where the Seven-Spring rocks were, but I could not understand what they said. They got up, called to their goats and ran down the hillside as nimbly as their charge.

The sun was losing its power now and a cool, refreshing breeze had sprung up. There were a few thorn or cactus bushes by the way and I was elated to see a couple of small pure white spider-lilies in full bloom smiling up at me. I was tempted to pick

¹ As described in his article on pp. 85-86 of our previous issue.—Editor.

them, but they looked so secure there that I did not. I felt that they were a good omen for my approach to the sanctuary above. A little further on I was delighted to see many more of them nodding and smiling happily at me. I picked just one of them, although I felt some compunction at thus disturbing Mother Nature in her splendid worship of her Lord.

I had now reached the shoulder of the hill where it was level walking for about a hundred yards. The path had wound round to the east, so that I was in the shadow of the peak. It was pleasantly cool and it was a real pleasure to see the country below on both sides of the hill. My breath was coming in gasps and all the time to the constant chanting of OM. I looked around in humble prayer to have a sight of the mysterious Arunachala Siddha. Bhagavan Sri Ramana had seen him as a young man, but what a world of difference between him and a frail mortal like me!

The path now swung round to the north, so that the peak stood up to the south of me. Its steepness seemed ominous. The path narrowed and was badly cut up by water-courses, dry now of course. Every step was an effort and at each few steps I had to stop and gasp for breath. Each time I looked the peak seemed farther away and higher. Then I climbed another small shoulder of the hill; the path twisted again and I was facing north. At last the peak had come. I do not know how I climbed the last fifty or sixty steps. It seemed that I was lifted up by a helping hand.

So I reached the peak of Arunachala and was standing on the oval flat stone summit about fifty feet long by twenty wide. I gazed in silent devotion at the vast sky above with the bright sun sinking in the west and then surveyed the earth stretching out on all sides below. I bowed down to the Almighty. Well could man give up the ego and reject worldly life in such a spot. I noticed that the rock on which I was standing was dark and burnt from the oil and fire of the annual beacon. Then my heart leapt at the sight of a little pool of clear water in a small

depression of the rock. My throat was parched dry and Lord Arunachala had graciously provided me with that water. I sat down before it, facing north, prayed, and then drank the water in my cupped hands. The single remaining mango and the one lily I had picked and carried reverently to the summit were humbly offered to the Lord, remembering Sri Shankara's words: "A single bilva fruit offered to Siva in full devotion is enough to carry a man to Bliss and Salvation." I sat there in meditation for awhile, feeling the presence of the traditional figure of Lord Siva standing behind me. Then I rose and walked the full length and breadth of the oval. I found some more water in a rock pocket under a boulder and drank my fill.

The temples of Adiannamalai and Tiruvannamalai were both visible now from where I stood. I was standing on the axis joining them, facing the setting sun, the right or northern arm somewhat longer than the left.

It could not have been 6 o'clock yet when I started the descent. It was dusk by the time I reached the spot where the goats had been grazing, and I could see the town below all lit up. Thinking of the Lord and praying as I went, I slowly descended. By the time I reached Tiruvannamalai Temple (from the northern gopuram of which the path starts) it was about half past eight already. After having darshan of the temple Deity and having a light supper in town, I got back to the Ashram by 9.40, and went straight to bed, feeling exhausted but happy and elated.

Next morning I was told at the Ashram that there was an imprint of the holy feet of the Lord in the centre of the oval flat rock on the top of the mountain, where I had found the small pool of water that I drank. I was told also that Bhagavan Sri Ramana, when a young man living at Skandashram, used to climb up to the peak and back daily, taking only about two hours. Blessed are those feet of the Lord and twice blessed those who worship them! May this be acceptable to Him!

THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

By DR. K. M. P. MOHAMED CASSIM

We are all searching for happiness. The question is whether it can at all be attained by the mind. The mind is apt to mistake mere pleasurable sensations for happiness. And yet we find from experience that although gratified desire produces such sensations they only intensify the desire for further similar sensations.

The best way is for the mind to observe its reactions silently, as this enables it to erase the pollution caused by past impressions on it. It should be alert in watching its thought processes and the impressions made on it by people, ideas and things. Left to itself, it reacts by attraction or repulsion in contacting objects owing to its memory of past associations. This automatic process destroys its vigour and capacity for dispassionate observation. Self-observation is, therefore, the way to free it from subjection to past impressions.

When we watch the mind we find that it is filled with discontent and insufficiency. Its guiding motive is to get some sort of pleasure by dwelling on its past sensations, but such indulgence only weakens its power of concentration. Instead of depending on such sensations it should learn to observe its internal confusion calmly, as that will enable it to transcend the conditioning influence of past impressions. But it makes every possible attempt to deviate from such self-observation and thus evade perceiving Reality. It does not face the fact of its confusion but tries to escape the suffering caused by it by projecting fictitious distractions.

What is needed is just to be aware of the state of confusion without identifying one-

self with personal reactions or introducing one's emotional coloration. This sets us free from it and enables us to watch everything aloofly without acting on mere impulses. Thus in watching mental conflicts we find that the emotional attachment is dissolved. This capacity to observe aloofly but with full attention the problem that occupies our mind is the only solution to psychological complexes. Only by constant observation of our mind can we understand the various layers of our mental make-up.

Why is our mind so distracted? Obviously owing to the sensations that the physical world provides. It is excited by the pleasure that it derives from its relationship with the physical world. It is attracted towards the resultant sensations because it seeks mechanically the habitual excitements they cause, even though these ultimately produce dissatisfaction. To contact Reality the mind must be still, and only by stilling it can real happiness be attained.

Happiness is really a pure and natural state in which the mind is silent. When the mind is calm and still there is the blessing of true happiness, the beauty of divine radiation. Happiness is not the creation of the mind; it is something higher which elevates the mind to the spiritual plane. Misery and worries are products of mental reactions; therefore, since it is the mind itself which produces confusion and misery, it cannot produce their absence, which is peace and happiness. It cannot grasp happiness because happiness is not a sensation to be grasped. Only when the mind is completely calm happiness comes naturally, spontaneously and sweetly; and this is our true state.

THAKUR SRI SRI SITARAMDAS OMKARNATH MAHARAJ

By PROF. SRIKUMAR BANERJEE

Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath in his various moods of divine communion and ministration presents a picture of infinite diversity to the reverent observer of the inner workings of his mind. Tranquil, absorbed in inner prayer and meditation with eyes now piercing into the great mystery, now mellow with the calm, ineffable joy of realisation, now poring over letters and focussed on intellectual pursuits, and again radiating a serene tenderness of assurance, the picture reflects every phase of the human spirit in contact with Divinity. One can very well say that the beauty and tranquillity, born of habitual commerce with the highest visions that the human mind can conceive, have passed into that face.

It is an almost impossible task for one uninitiated into these radiant visions to interpret the facts of the Saint's life so as to relate them to his progress towards the ultimate goal, to reconstruct the inner history of his quest and realisation from the outer events of his apparently uneventful career. The shell offers but little clue to the steady but invisible ripening of the kernel within. While outwardly he was following the beaten track, the customary trail of an average Bengali householder's life with its grim struggle with poverty, its all-too-familiar gropings and experiments, its usual scholastic pursuits and dark, uncertain prospects, the inner light was burning with a steadily growing lustre and an increasingly luminous realisation of the supreme mystery of existence. Behind the apparent aimless driftings, the unadventurous conformity to the normal routine, God was slowly, but inevitably drawing His chosen vessel on to Him, touching his lips with the sacred fire and filling his heart with the quintessence of divine knowledge and inspiration. Sri Sitaramdas (then known as Prabodh



Chandra) lived like other men ; but hidden from all eyes, he was nestling closer in the bosom of the Eternal Mother. The bare facts of his life, we are afraid, will but little avail to reveal the essential core of his reality.

Yet such as they are they must be narrated ; it is only by the winding stairway of facts and events that we may reach the topmost tower of the soul's communion with its Maker, although we may not be privileged to enter the sanctuary.

He was born in his maternal uncle's home at Keota in the District of Hooghly on the 17th February, 1892. Thakur Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath was descended from a pious Brahmin family of Dumurdaha on the

bank of the sacred Ganges in the District of Hooghly in West Bengal. Even as a child of six, he received the beatific vision of Lord Siva, who revealed Himself to him through one of the windows of his dwelling house. The vision was renewed several years afterwards, in 1948, when he was a resident pupil studying Sanskrit at the Viswanath Chatuspathy, Chinsura. In this vision Siva appeared before him with his divine consort, Parvati and gave him his Ista Mantra, the holy symbolical letters through which the God of one's choice is meditated upon and attracted to oneself. The same year on the Dole Purnima day, he was blessed with the fulness of self-realisation, the attainment of the Ultimate Knowledge. This was followed by a mystic revelation in the presence of his Gurudeva, the latter's wife and his own wife which disclosed to them, in a blinding flash of illumination, a nameless, sealed truth about his real identity and mission in life. We are interdicted from the very attempt to express this Inexpressible Mystery and must perforce draw the veil on what must remain an incommunicable secret. A few dazed, tranced words of his own Guru, some incoherent sentences of emotional outpouring through which the stunned and reeling soul struggled to express its utter feeling of helpless surrender are the only record of this supreme moment. In the year 1936-37, he abjured his family name of Sri Probodh Chandra Chattopadhyaya, thereby cutting himself loose from his old domestic ties, and assumed, at the instance of his dedicated soul, his present designation of Sitaramdas Omkarnath.

Today, to all people in India, he is known as the indefatigable preacher of the Nama Mahamantra. He breathes and lives in the very atmosphere of this Name-chant, which folds him round as a finer garment of the soul and is, as it were, the subtler breath of his spiritual life. An indissoluble, ever-lasting partnership has sprung up between him and the Name; they have become almost interchangeable entities. He seems to have laid down, voluntarily abdicated, every vestige of that superhuman power, that wonder-working, miraculous potency which direct

vision of God confers upon the Saint who has grasped the last prize. He is now like a little child, wrapped up in the singing of the name, intoxicated with the nectar of the Divine melody, pouring forth his whole soul in congregational prayer and worship, at one with his common disciples and the God-seeking multitude. To propagate the Name, to bring home to all and sundry its incalculable and unmeasured power, to extol it as the easiest method of salvation, to found centres where the chant goes on without a break for an indefinite and undetermined future has become the principal mission of his life.

This mystic chant Hare Krishna, etc. was revealed to him in his long trances as the Supreme Truth. The very Omkar sound, the repository and symbol of eternal verity, has merged and dissolved itself into this simple couplet, to be heard from the lips of almost every devout person, sung on every conceivable occasion by strolling mendicants and monks and householders, certainly the most familiar and oft-repeated song in the rural life of India. This truth came home to him not merely in the wake of his profound inner conviction, but was further reinforced by a direct divine mandate, emanating from Sri Sri Jagannath Deva of Puri-dham before whom he had prostrated himself in agonised entreaty and prayer to receive the light. It was in April 1937, shortly after the beginning of the Bengali New Year, that this command was vouchsafed to him and ever since that date he has dedicated his life to carrying out this command. When his disciples speak of him as an Incarnation of God, he neither assents to nor openly disclaims this deification. He humorously compares himself to a lump of dull, grey iron which has been made to shine with a red-hot glow because of its being steeped in a fire-bath. If he is a God, he is not so in his own right but because the fiery touch of the Name has adhered to him and transformed his human stuff. The credit therefore, if any, is not to him, but to the name :

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
 Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
 Hare Rama Hare Rama
 Rama Rama Hare Hare.

To immerse oneself in this sublime chant is to feel round one's body the loving embrace of Sri Sitaram and his heart-throb beating against our own!

Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath has twenty-six ashrams throughout the whole of India. He visits one or another of them from time to time but has no fixed place of residence. He travels about the country in response to invitations from devotees and disciples, and wherever he goes he propagates the invocation of the Holy Name. His stay in one place is often quite brief. He is

perpetually on the move, accompanied by a mobile caravan of chanters of the Name. The best way of discovering his whereabouts in order to contact him at any given time is perhaps to write to the Manager of 'The Mother', a monthly journal that he sponsors, at P-19, Belliaghata Main Road, Calcutta-10. Many do seek to contact him because, although he speaks only Hindi, apart from his native Bengali, he has many Western followers also, both European and American. There are Indian Muslims also among his disciples.

THE SADHU'S PRAYER

By EBBANA GRACE BLANCHARD

Awake among sleepers,
Mindful among the thoughtless,
Silent amid noise,
Still in mobility,
At Peace between tensions,
May I lie always at Thy Feet,
In calm devotion.

Sell this present world of yours for the next world and you will gain both in entirety, but do not sell the next world for this one or you will lose the two together.

—HASAN AL BASRI.

* * * *

The lover of the world is like a man drinking sea-water : the more he drinks the more thirsty he gets, till at last he perishes with his thirst still unquenched.

—AL-GHAZZALI.

* * * *

The knower and the known are one. Simple people imagine they should see God as if He stood there and they here. God and I, we are one in knowledge.

—ECKHART.



The Bhagavad Gita

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

CHAPTER TWO

1

Said Sanjaya :

Despondent, overwhelmed with compassion (as he sat), his troubled eyes filled with tears, Krishna the Slayer of Madhu spoke to him :

2

Sri Bhagavan said :

Wherefore has this affliction in the hour of crisis fallen on you, Arjuna ? It becomes not the noble soul, leads not to heaven, but brings disgrace.

The appellation used here for Krishna is 'Sri Bhagavan' meaning 'Lord God', the same that was commonly used in addressing the Maharshi.

3

Yield not to unmanliness, Son of Pritha ; it beseems you not. Cast off this base faint-heartedness ; arise O Scourge of the hostile.

4

Said Arjuna :

O Slayer of Madhu, how shall I loose my arrows in battle against Bhishma and Drona, both worthy of honour ; how, Destroyer of the foe ?

5

Better it were to live in the world a beggar than to slay these honoured teachers. Were I to slay my teachers, even though

they seek their profit, the pleasures I enjoyed in the world would be stained with blood.

6

Nor do we know which is better for us, that we should conquer them or they us, these sons of Dhritarashtra arrayed against us, slaying whom we should not care to live.

7

Overwhelmed with compassion and bewildered as to dharma, I appeal to you to tell me clearly which is better. I am your disciple ; teach me ; I seek refuge in you.

8

I see no way to dispel this grief that shrivels my senses even though I should attain wealth and unrivalled earthly power or lordship over the gods.

9

Sanjaya said :

Arjuna of the Crested Locks, the terror of his foes, spoke thus to Krishna of the Flowing Locks, to Krishna Lord of Herds. "I will not fight," he said, and fell silent.

10

(As he sat) despondent between the two hosts, O Bharata, Krishna of the Flowing Locks spoke thus, smiling as it were :

11

Sri Bhagavan said :

Although you speak of wisdom you grieve for those who need no grief. The wise grieve neither for the dead nor the living.

12

Never was a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor these lords of men, nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be.

13

As the Embodied passes through childhood, youth and old age in this body, so does it take on a new body ; the wise man is not confused by this.

At the beginning of this chapter Krishna simply exhorts Arjuna to be manly, as any comrade might, but in verse 7 Arjuna appeals to him for instruction, seeking refuge in him as his disciple. So now, beginning from verse 11, Krishna, speaking as a Guru, raises the discussion to a completely different plane, striking at the ignorance that is at the root of Arjuna's grief, that is the illusion of separate individual being. Verse 12 might seem contrary to this teaching since it affirms the permanence of Arjuna and his foes, but what it really implies is: "You are the eternal ever-existent Self, though not necessarily in the Arjuna-body; so also with each of these."

14

The sense-contacts it is, Son of Kunti, that cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain. They come and go and are impermanent. Bear with them, O Bharata.

15

The wise man whom these perturb not, O Chief of Men, who remains the same in pleasure and pain, he it is who fits himself for eternal life.

Again an apparent contradiction. If the Self endures eternally behind every series of incarnations, how does the wise man differ in this from others? The answer is that, by identifying himself with the Eternal Self and not the transient form it assumes, he experiences this eternity.

16

The unreal has no being, the Real no not-being. These two facts the Truth-seers perceive.

In this verse the present exposition culminates. It is the essence of metaphysics, the heart of doctrine. It is all the theory that one needs to know. Not that the illusory individual being will come to an end at death or Realization or that the true Self will be attained, but that now and eternally only the true Self is, while the apparent individual self is unreal, non-existent.

17

Know That which pervades all this to be indestructible. That immutable none can destroy.

18

It is these bodies of the eternal, indestructible, incomprehensible Embodied that are said to come to an end.

19

He who considers That to slay and he who considers It to be slain are alike in error. It slays not, nor is It slain.

20

That is not born, nor does It ever die ; nor, having been, does It ever cease to be. That unborn, eternal, abiding, primeval Being is not slain when the body is slain.

21

Knowing It to be indestructible, eternal, beginningless, immutable, whom can a man slay or cause to be slain, O Son of Pritha ?

22

Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, so does the Embodied cast off worn-out bodies and take on new.

23

Weapons cleave Him not, fire burns Him not, waters drench Him not, wind dries Him not.

24

Invulnerable He is, not to be burnt, not to be drenched or dried. He is eternal, all-pervading, changeless, motionless, enduring.

25

He is said to be unmanifest, beyond thought, immutable. Knowing Him to be so you should not grieve.

26

Even if you consider That evermore coming to birth and evermore dying, still should you not grieve, O Mighty-Armed ;

27

For to him who is born death is indeed certain, and to him who dies birth is certain. Therefore should you not grieve for the inevitable.

28

Beings are unmanifest in their beginning, manifest in mid-course, and unmanifest again

in their end, O Bharata. What is there in this for lamentation ?

29

One looks upon Him as a wonder ; another speaks of Him as a wonder ; another hears of Him as a wonder ; but though hearing of Him none know Him.

30

The Embodied in every body is eternal, O Bharata. Therefore should you not grieve for any creature.

31

Furthermore, in view of your own dharma you should not falter ; there is no greater good for a Kshatriya than a battle enjoined by dharma.

The Kshatriyas are the warrior caste whose dharma is the upholding of righteousness and justice in the world. Krishna and Arjuna were both Kshatriyas.

From here to verse 38 Krishna resumes his exhortation to fight, but with the difference that Arjuna's illusion of the mortality of man has now been exposed, so that the objections to fighting need no longer appear so terrible.

32

Happy the Kshatriya, O Son of Pritha, to whom such a battle comes unsought, an open doorway to heaven.

33

But if you evade this righteous battle then will you betray your dharma and glory, and incur sin.

34

Moreover men will relate your lasting dishonour, and for one who has stood in honour dishonour is worse than death.

35

The great warriors in their chariots will think you left the battle from fear and you will be despised by those who thought well of you.

36

Many abusive words will your enemies speak, belittling your manhood. What could be more grievous than that?

37

(But if you fight) slain you will attain heaven or victorious you will enjoy the earth. Rise, therefore, Son of Kunti, resolved on battle.

38

Regarding pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, with an equal eye, prepare for battle. Thus will you incur no sin.

39

This that has been told to you is the wisdom of Sankhya, O Son of Pritha. Hear now the wisdom of Yoga, which, if you grasp it, will free you from the bondage of action.

Sankhya and Yoga are two of the six Hindu orthodox darshanas, that is schools or viewpoints. However, the terms are not used here in quite this sense. 'Sankhya' is used rather to denote 'right understanding' and 'Yoga' 'right action'. Arjuna is instructed first in doctrine so as to correct his viewpoint and enable him to understand life as it really is; then his attitude to life and activity has to be prescribed so as to enable his new-found wisdom to fructify in total regeneration.

One thing that the terms 'Sankhya' and 'Yoga' as used here have in common with their traditional usage is that neither of them is theistic. They are not atheistic, since they do not deny God; but they do not employ the concept of a Personal God, although the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali do recognize this in one verse as a possible approach; so also does this chapter of the Gita in one verse.

40

In this (path) no effort is wasted and no impediment prevails. Even a little of this dharma saves from great fear.

41

In this (path) the resolute are single-minded, O Joy of the Kurus, but the minds of the irresolute are divided and branch out endlessly.

42

The ignorant, being attached to the letter of the Vedas, declare in flowery language, O Son of Pritha, that there is nothing beyond.

43

Bound by desire, they make paradise their goal; they seek rebirth as the fruit of their actions, practising various rites for attaining pleasure and power.

44

Their thoughts being turned to pleasure and power and their minds captivated by words, they do not abide in meditation.

Krishna is not here denouncing the evil-minded, as he is to do later, still less condemning the scriptures, but warning Arjuna against those formalists and ritualists (equivalent to the Pharisees of Christ's day) who are content to seek the proximate goal of a beatified individuality in a state of paradise.

The word 'Karma', which is translated as 'action' at the end of verse 39, has the three cognate implications of action, ritual and destiny. It is against karma marga understood as ritualistic activity that Krishna warns Arjuna here; later he enjoins karma marga in the sense of disinterested activity.

45

The Vedas treat of the three gunas, but be free of the gunas, Arjuna, free too of the polarities, free of acquisition and preservation, established in the transcendental state, possessed of the Self.

The gunas are the three trends or tendencies whose mutual stress holds the universe in being: sattva, the aspiring, upward, spiritual tendency of return to the Source, whose colour is white; rajas, the expansive, outward-going, active tendency, whose colour is red; tamas, the downward tendency, whose colour is black.

The opposites or polarities are the pairs such as good and evil, pleasure and pain, of which one implies the other. Arjuna is exhorted to abide in the Self, free from the gunas and above the polarities.

Yoga (etymologically 'union') is here translated, according to its context, to mean acquisition.

46

No more use than a well in flooded land are the Vedas for an enlightened Brahmin.

Another reminder not to be dependent on scriptures. When understanding floods in from all sides, the collection of its records in scriptures, like water in a well, is not needed.

As remarked in the note on v. 31, Arjuna was not a Brahmin; both he and Krishna were Kshatriyas. But the Gita later on defines the true Brahmin as the man who knows Brahman, whatever his parentage may be. That is obviously the meaning here.

47

Your concern is only with action, never with its fruit. Be not motivated by the fruits of actions; but do not cling either to inaction.

So far as regards the conduct of life, this verse, further developed by those that follow, can be regarded as the essence of the Gita. It prescribes the application to life of the doctrine enunciated earlier. A man should play his part in the cosmic dance of life, acting according to dharma, doing what is right because it is right, not motivated by desire or fear or by his own profit, but also not shirking his role in life for inactivity. Applied to Arjuna it meant that, as a Kshatriya, he must fight a righteous war because that was his dharma, accepting with an equal mind victory or defeat, death or dominion. He was not obliged to renounce victory or dominion if it came to him; only if that was his motive in fighting it would be wrong.

48

Steadfast in yoga and without attachment, do your duty O Wealth-Winner, indifferent alike to success and failure, For equanimity is called yoga.

In this verse karma implies 'allotted work' and is therefore translated 'duty'.

'Yoga' is used here to imply an attitude of mind. Sometimes, as in the following verses, it is used as equivalent to 'marga' to mean 'a path to Union'.

49

Mere action is far inferior to the yoga of understanding (buddhiyoga), O Wealth-

Winner. Seek refuge in understanding. Despicable are they whose motive is the fruit of their actions.

50

One who has mastered the yoga of understanding transcends good and evil even here. Therefore strive for yoga. Yoga is skill in action.

51

The wise who have mastered the yoga of understanding and renounced the fruit of activity are freed from the bond of rebirth and attain the state free from sorrow.

Here is the definite statement that right understanding combined with right action leads to Liberation.

52

When your mind has crossed the quagmire of delusion you will no longer care about what has been heard or what is to be heard.

This refers to the scriptures. Once delusion has been transcended instructions how to transcend it are no longer needed.

53

When your mind, bewildered now by the scriptures, stands firm and steadfast in concentration you will attain Yoga.

The word rendered as 'concentration' is samadhi.

Here, it will be seen, 'yoga' is used to mean not the path but the Goal. Indeed the path leads to and merges in the Goal. Similarly in China 'Tao' means both path and goal, and for Christians Christ is the Way and also the End.

54

Arjuna said:

What is a man like who is established in wisdom and steadfast in concentration, Krishna of the Flowing Locks? How does one of firm understanding speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

So common a desire this, in seekers—to model oneself on externals!

55

Sri Bhagavan said:

When a man casts out all desires of the mind, O Son of Pritha, and is content in himself he is said to be steadfast in wisdom.

56

He who is undismayed in grief and controlled amid pleasures, from whom lust, fear and anger have passed away, he it is who is called a Sage of steadfast wisdom.

The word translated 'Sage' is Muni, meaning 'silent', a word still used with that implication.

57

He who is free from attachment, who accepts good and evil alike without exultation or loathing, his mind it is that is established in wisdom.

58

He who withdraws his senses from sense-objects as a tortoise draws in its limbs, he it is who is established in wisdom.

59

Sense objects withdraw from him who abstains from them, but their attraction remains. On seeing the Supreme even this goes.

That is to say that abstinence as a discipline, although wise, is not enough. So long as desire has to be resisted it is not complete. Only when the Supreme State is seen desire itself passes away.

The word translated 'Supreme' is 'Para', more often found in a compound, as for instance 'Paramatma' or 'Parabrahman'.

60

Even though a man strives and is wise, O Son of Kunti, the impetuous senses forcibly distract his mind.

61

Restraining them all, let him remain steadfast, concentrated on Me, for he whose senses are under control is established in wisdom.

This is the only verse in the present book implying worship. The devotee will understand the 'Me' as Krishna, the follower of Sankhya or Yoga as the inner Self.

62

When the mind dwells on sense-objects attachment to them arises. From attachment springs desire, from desire anger.

63

From anger springs delusion, from delusion forgetfulness, from forgetfulness weakness of mind; and from weakness of mind a man perishes.

64

But he who moves among sense-objects with his mind and senses controlled, free from desire and aversion, attains serenity.

65

In serenity comes the cessation of all grief, for the mind of such a one is soon stabilised.

66

The uncontrolled have no wisdom and the uncontrolled have no concentration. Without concentration there is no peace; and what happiness can there be without peace?

67

When the mind follows the wandering senses it carries away the understanding, as winds do a ship upon the waters.

68

Therefore, O Mighty-Armed, he whose senses are withdrawn from sense objects is established in wisdom.

69

When it is night for all beings the self-controlled is awake; when all beings are awake it is night for the Sage who sees.

That is to say that manifestation of the universe is obscuration of Pure Consciousness, while the re-absorption of multiplicity is the unveiling of Pure Consciousness.

70

He attains peace whom all desires enter as waters do the ocean, leaving it undisturbed though ever being filled, not he who desires desire.

71

He attains peace who abandons all desires, acting without attachment, free from 'I' and 'mine'.

Correction; In the first sentence of the introduction in the previous issue 'Brahma Sutras' should be read instead of 'Vedic Hymns'.

72

This is the Divine State (Brahmasthanam), O Son of Pritha, which having attained a man is free from delusion. Abiding in it even at the end (of life) he attains Brahma-Nirvana.

This is the Second Chapter and is called Sankhya-Yoga.

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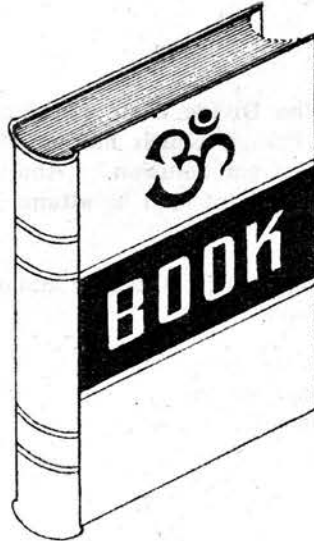
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REVIEWS

RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS DISCIPLES: By Christopher Isherwood. (Methuen, Pp. 348, Price 36s.)

To tell an oft-told tale about a life that was outwardly uneventful of a teacher who wrote no books is an assignment that many would shrink from. It is remarkable how well Mr. Isherwood has accomplished it. His account is aimed primarily at Western readers, and he shows great skill in weaving in the necessary amount of social background and Hindu doctrine for them without ever allowing it to become dull or heavy. It remains a vivid story of a rare ecstatic and his devoted band of followers. Moreover Mr. Isherwood writes quite simply as a devotee without the overtone of supercilious scepticism which used to mar earlier Western writings on such subjects.

Readers of deeper understanding, however, will not find the book altogether satisfactory. For one thing there is too much emphasis throughout on seeing God. How can one see the Formless? One can see a vision of some form assumed by God, but visions bring one no nearer to Realization.

Then there is the rather pointless attempt to prove Ramakrishna as an Avatar. In the strict scriptural sense of the word, there are only ten Avatars in this whole cycle or manvantara. The 8th was Krishna; the 9th, described merely as the 'Mleccha' or 'Foreign' Avatar, is variously identified with Buddha or Christ or both; the 10th is the Kalki Avatar who is to wind up this cycle and introduce the next and is yet to come. In this sense, therefore, Ramakrishna was certainly not an Avatar. But if the followers of a holy man like to use the term in a looser sense

who is to forbid them? From the viewpoint of Advaita what is to be realized is one's Identity with That which is manifested in the world with all its Buddhas, Prophets and Avatars, and the question is not very important.

In dealing with it Mr. Isherwood shows not very much acquaintance with either Hindu scriptures or other Swamis. He writes: "We have already seen two of the avatar's peculiar powers demonstrated by Ramakrishna himself. One is his ability to remain for long periods in the state of samadhi, which would quickly destroy the physical body of an ordinary human being. The other is his power of transmitting spiritual enlightenment to another person simply by touching him. . . ." (p. 94). The second of these two powers is by no means rare; it was particularly prominent in Swami Nityananda, about whom there is an article in our last issue. The first looks like a sort of endurance test—up to so long a saint, above that an avatar. A queer idea. What is more serious is that it shows no understanding of the state of sahaja or 'natural' samadhi which, as in the case of Ramana Maharshi, can be permanent, not spasmodic, since it subsists with full outer awareness and requires no states of trance or ecstasy at all. Mr. Isherwood does refer to this possibility on another occasion when he says: "Ramakrishna had, throughout the rest of his life, the faculty of being simultaneously aware of God and the physical universe." (p. 124). But was this so? He continues to describe him falling into states of trance and ecstasy after this as before.

The cause of the confusion may be that Mr. Isherwood, as he himself tells us, writes from

hearsay with no direct knowledge of what he tries to describe. And what can a spectator know of the glories and hardships of the quest? He admits that: "The very object of sadhana—to obtain direct, unitive knowledge of God—can be, for most of us, only a hopeful phrase. It is not merely that we could never dare to attempt—we can scarcely even imagine—the supreme act of ego-surrender, surrender of all individual identity, through which God is known. And if we can dimly imagine it for a few moments at a time, it must appear to us as appalling as death itself; a leap into the utter void." (p. 99) What a frightful attitude of mind! How can one who holds it write about sadhana?

LONG PILGRIMAGE: The Life and Teaching of Sri Govindananda Bharati, known as the Shivapuri Baba. By J. G. Bennett. (Hodder & Stoughton, Pp. 191, Price 25s.)

Govindananda Bharati, who was to become known as the Shivapuri Baba, was 137 years old at the time of his death in 1963, Mr. Bennett tells us. He attained Realization in 1876 at the age of fifty after many years of complete solitude in a forest. He then travelled around India and later spent many years travelling over the whole world. Everywhere he was respectfully entertained by the most eminent persons, including the Shah of Persia, Queen Victoria, the President of the U.S.A. and Bernard Shaw. It is a pity that no documentation is offered of so extraordinary a claim. Surely some writers of memoirs or reminiscences must have noticed so remarkable a visitor. At least one of the claims made seems untenable: that is (p. 22) that he met the future Sri Aurobindo who was then a schoolboy in Baroda State. Actually Sri Aurobindo was a native not of Baroda but Bengal and went to school and university not in India but England. His connection with Baroda started only after his return to India at the age of 21 in 1893.

Be that as it may, what was the Realization that Sri Govindananda attained? We are told (p. 20) that it means seeing God; and indeed throughout the book he is urging people to make that their aim in life. But what does that mean? Has God a form to be seen? As long as there is seer and seen one is still in the realm of duality. What is seen can have no more reality than the seer of it.

And how is one to set about it? By thinking of God, the Swami constantly repeats. "Think of God alone. Put every other thought from your mind." (p. 110) But thought is the great barrier to God. One can think of the attributes of God—

beauty, majesty, goodness, etc.; but it is impossible to think of what is beyond thought. It would only mean putting a mental concept in the place of God. Even meditation is described as "profound thinking" (p. 110). Actually the meditation that can lead to Realization is suspension of thought while retaining consciousness and directing it gently but firmly towards pure being, pure, impersonal awareness. (This provision is inserted in order to safeguard against a modern technique which, by laying the mind open without proper direction may, as Christ put it, let in seven worse devils.)

One feature of the Swami's teaching which may be particularly appropriate for Western seekers is his insistence on a strict discipline of life and behaviour. Even here, however, his prescription of three separate disciplines of body, mind and soul seems to defeat the purpose by unnecessary complication and to by-pass the real need.

THEURGY, THE ART OF EFFECTIVE WORSHIP: By Mouni Sadhu. (Allen & Unwin, Pp. 263, Price 30s.)

In his latest book Mouni Sadhu turns back from his unfortunate attempts to expound Hinduism to Christianity, with which he seems far more familiar. By 'theurgy' he seems to mean Christian devotional worship, though on the rather low level of seeking boons in reward for one's worship (p. 15). On a more spiritual plane the worshipper turns to God for love alone with no thought of reward.

What vitiates the book is the author's obsession with powers and occultism and his constant self-advertisement as a master of these. There is no doubt that ritual can be effective, in Christianity as in any other religion, but only when it is prescribed by tradition and conducted by duly ordained persons. A hotch-potch of ritual from ecclesiastical and occult sources prescribed by a self-styled authority and conducted by unauthorised persons is something from which it would be well to abstain.

The writer who calls himself 'Mouni Sadhu' paid a brief visit to this Ashram and makes a point of referring to the Maharshi in his books and giving alleged quotations from him. Readers should be warned that these references and quotations are quite unreliable. For instance, in the present book he quotes the Maharshi (on page 143) as saying: "Realization is nothing but seeing God literally." Nothing could be farther from the truth. It so happens that the

article 'How I Come to the Maharshi' by H. W. L. Poonja in the present issue of *The Mountain Path* illustrates the Maharshi's disapproval of the dualistic desire to see God.

TUKARAM'S TEACHINGS: By S. R. Sharma. (Bhavan's Book University, Chowpatty, Bombay-7, pp. 60, Price Re. 1.)

Tukaram came at the end of a glorious series of Maratha poet-saints. He was neither Brahmin nor recluse but a low caste farmer and trader. Owing to his unworldliness he was chronically poor, and his wife was scold enough to let him know it. Finally, in 1650, he passed from life in a blaze of light, leaving no body behind.

Tukaram attained to the supreme experience of Identity, but by the path of love, service and devotion. He worshipped an idol but said: "The idol is installed within the mind, and the mind worships itself therein." He often combines the language of Identity with that of devotion: "I achieved the supreme experience: only the One remained in body, mind and speech. This was Bliss in all the three worlds. Tuka says: 'We have overcome this transitory existence by becoming slaves of God.'"

This little book gives an excellent account of the saint's life and teaching. It is well furnished with quotations whose radiant certitude is an inspiration to the reader.

IAMBlichus' LIFE OF PYTHAGORAS: Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. (John M. Watkins, pp. 252, Price 63s.)

The translator begins his introduction to this volume by declaring that: "When it is considered that Pythagoras was the father of philosophy, authentic memoirs of his life cannot fail to be uncommonly interesting to every lover of wisdom." Since the publishers have brought this reprint out in a limited edition of 500 copies (which perhaps accounts for its high price) they must be very pessimistic about the number of lovers of wisdom. Even though the words "father of philosophy" in the above quotation need to be qualified by the adjective 'Western', it is to be hoped that a larger reprint will soon be called for.

Of the great world teachers, Pythagoras has most affinity with Confucius. Like him, he taught wisdom indirectly, through the intermediate sciences such as music, ritual and mathematics, social behaviour and political skill; not the simplicity of the Tao. But whereas the whole of

China patterned itself on Confucius, the Greeks in general ignored Pythagoras.

He was already an Ancient in the times of his biographer Iamblichus. Nevertheless numerous records and traditions survived. The biography has a strong air of authenticity. It conforms also with the fragments from the writings of various Pythagoreans also contained in this book. Mr. Taylor's translation is extraordinarily felicitous, the 19th century idiom helping to recapture the tone of the original better than would that of to-day, without being archaic.

GITA REPRINTS

BHAGAVAD GITA, THE SONGS OF THE MASTER: Translated with an introduction and commentary by Charles Johnston. (John M. Watkins, pp. 132, Price 15s.)

THE GEETA, THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD SHRI KRISHNA: Put into English by Shri Purohit Swami. (Faber, pp. 95, Price 6s.)

There is a grandeur about Charles Johnston's translation of the Gita which does not for the most part detract from its scholarly accuracy. The publishers are indeed to be congratulated on having revived it. On the other hand, the introduction and comments betray an antiquated scholarship and fanciful outlook from which the reader might well have been shielded—for instance the Kshatriyas are called 'Rajputs' and are credited with higher and more ancient wisdom than the Brahmins; and the four basic castes are represented as branches of the white, red, yellow and black races all living in India side by side but as yet unmixed.

To some extent this lack of precise scholarship common to an earlier generation vitiates the text also, for instance in the use of the rather vague Western term 'soul' in Book 11, vv. 49 and following, where 'buddhiyoga' is translated as 'union in soul vision'. Prof. Radhakrishnan translates it more accurately as 'discipline of intelligence' and indicates that it may be understood to mean the yoking or union (yoga) of the intelligence with the Divine. Even the translation of the title as 'Songs of the Master' is less accurate than the usual 'Divine Song' or 'Song Celestial'.

Faber also have brought out a welcome reprint of a Gita translation, and in a paperback, which seems to indicate wide demand. It is in clear, bold English and makes good reading. It is on the whole remarkably accurate, though not scho-

larly since, in the first place, it is without introduction, notes or commentary, and in the second place it is not precise in the translation of philosophical terms. For instance, when in Chapter 11, v. 45, Arjuna is exhorted to rise above the pairs of opposites or polarities this is translated 'the pairs of opposing sensations'. Here again Prof. Radhakrishnan is more exact when he says 'be free from dualities', adding in brackets 'the pairs of opposites'. It means far more than sensations. But there is no doubt this is a good translation for the general reader.

GLIMPSES OF THE DIVINE MASTERS: By Ranbir Singh. (International Traders Corporation, New Delhi-5, Pp. 408, Price Rs. 16.50.)

It is with the ardour of a disciple not the probing of a historian that Ranbir Singh recounts stories and legends of the ten Sikh Gurus. There is much beauty and nobility in the stories. They are further beautified and enriched by translations from the poems of the Gurus. The author, commenting on their teaching, justifies the transition from the non-violent simplicity of Guru Nanak to the militant organization by which the later Khalsa defended itself from its persecutors.

The book ends with an account of the Sikh viewpoint and way of life. In this the author explains that it is a religion of devotion and practice, not of philosophy and speculation.

TRAINING THE MIND THROUGH YOGA: By M. V. Waterhouse. (Shanti Sadan, London, Pp. 166, Price 12s. 6d.)

The late Hari Prasad Shastri stood out among interpreters of Hinduism to the West for soundness and sobriety. He founded the 'Shanti Sadan' in London, in which his disciple, the late M. V. Waterhouse succeeded him as Warden, maintaining the same wise tradition. The present book is a compilation of fourteen lectures delivered at the Sadan, in which Mr. Waterhouse presents Yoga from various aspects as a system of mind and character training. Central to them is his teaching of the three stages of Adhyatma Yoga, that is *manana* or 'hearing of true teaching followed by *shravana* or cogitation upon it and then *nididhyasana* or meditation on it. He emphasises how much preparatory work can be done on these lines before contacting a Guru.

BLISS DIVINE: By Swami Sivananda. (The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, Pp. 520, Price Rs. 15.)

There have been few writers so prolific as the late Swami Sivananda. He was writing essays

up to the end of his life and the present edition is published posthumously, the essays being arranged in alphabetical order from Ahimsa to Yoga. They are both learned and orthodox, but the vigorous style in which they are written prevents them ever becoming academic.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

STUDIES IN ADVAITA

ADVAITA VEDANTA: By M. K. Venkatarama Iyer. (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, Pp. 213, Price Rs. 18.)

ONTOLOGY OF ADVAITA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MAYA: By K. B. Ramakrishna Rao. (Research and Publications Department, Vijaya College, Mulki, Pp. 34, Price Rs. 5.)

The first of these two books is an excellent study of the fundamental principles of non-dualism as perfected by Shankara in his commentaries on the 'Triple Texts' and elsewhere. Prof. Iyer has also drawn on his knowledge of European philosophy to bring into relief the unique features of Advaita. The central concept of Shankara's Advaita is the Absolute. The non-dual nature of the Absolute, the unreality of the universe and the non-differentiation between the individual and Brahman are the triple features. Shankara demonstrates the intuitive truth of Advaita with the help of logic and scriptural support.

The complex question of the relation between Brahman and the Personal God or Ishvara is discussed with caution. Advaitic tradition does not seek to negate God but only to transcend the personal in spiritual experience. "When we view Absolute Reality under name and form it is described as 'God'. The Absolute does not suffer any change, for it is immutable and impartite."

The chapters on ethics and theology in Advaita make excellent reading. Within the range of 200 pages Prof. Iyer has touched on all relevant topics and answered critics of Advaita in India and abroad. One merit of his excellent manual is that it is based on the original works of Shankara.

To readers of *The Mountain Path* this book should be of special interest, since Bhagavan Ramana is in the tradition of Shankara and teaches Jnana marga as he did. Ramana Marga is Shankara Vedanta.

The small book that follows is a study of the nature and function of Maya in Advaita metaphysics. The author feels that in studying Advaita

men have missed the ontological aspect and failed to distinguish it from the epistemological. The traditional view is that Maya is a positive power that is beginningless but not eternal. It conceals the truth of Brahman by projecting in its place a world of appearances. But this is destroyed at the moment of Realization. Maya in this sense cannot be classified as real or unreal or as a combination of the real and the unreal or of a negation of them. The principle of Maya is used to explain world appearance, but Shankara did not develop it in all its details. Post-Shankara thinkers have worked out its implications more fully.

PROF. P. NAGARAJA RAO.

ESSAYS ON SAMKHYA AND OTHER SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: By Dr. Anima Sen Gupta. (Patna University Press, Pp. 170, Price Rs. 5.)

Dr. Sen Gupta is well known to students of Indian philosophy as an independent thinker who has specialised in the Samkhya system and has written two valuable works, one on the Chandogya Upanishad from the Samkhya point of view and the other on the evolution of Samkhya thought. The book under review contains a series of critical essays dealing with several problems of Indian philosophy.

In one of them, 'Philosophy Indian and Western', she brings out clearly how the two differ in their approach and also in their methods. Her conclusion that philosophy should succeed in making us spiritually pure and free will be endorsed wholeheartedly by every Indian. Her statement that a true realization of Indian culture presupposes an accurate analytico-synthetic knowledge of all important changes and developments that have occurred in the various spheres of Indian life through the ages is also sound. However her view that the philosophy of Buddhism tallies with that of the Upanishads seems open to question. Also one may query her statement that Buddha wanted to differentiate his teaching from what she calls the degenerate form of the traditional religion of the Hindus.

The Essays are critical and learned and the book is a distinct addition to the range of modern books expounding the problems of Indian philosophy.

There are a few spelling mistakes which more careful proof reading could have eliminated.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

YOGA CHUDAMANI UPANISHAD (with translation and notes): By Vishnuprasad V. Baxi, M.A. (Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar, Pp. 79, Price Rs. 3.)

Yoga Chudamani is an excellent compendium of the different processes that are normally grouped under the broad head of Kundalini Yoga and aim at liberating man from subjection to Prakriti into the freedom of the pure Spirit by arousing the latent energies in his system—by more or less mechanical means—and developing them to their fullest potential.

In 121 verses the text deals with the six *Chakras*, twelve *adharas*, three *Lakshyas*, five *vyomas*, the main nerve-conduits or *nadis*, the gradations of *pranayama*, the several *bandhas*—combinations of body postures and breath regulations etc. Sri Baxi who gives a straightforward translation of the text has added explanatory notes which are indeed very helpful for the background they provide to the intricate concepts in this science. He cites from several other authentic treatises and makes the subject interesting. His caution against attempting to practise these methods from a reading of books and emphasis on the necessity of a Guru in these matters are pertinent.

A very informative book presented with commendable restraint.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HINDUISM: By Satishchandra Chatterjee. (Dasgupta, 54/3 College St., Calcutta, Pp. xii plus 179, Price Rs. 3.50.)

There are already a number of short but comprehensive manuals of Hinduism in the field. Whereas most of them indicate the principle scriptures and classify them, enumerating the various schools with their basic doctrines, Prof. Chatterjee begins with an account of the philosophical basis of all Hinduism and relates the rest of the matter to this philosophy. He tries to satisfy the critical Western reader and at the same time to "serve the needs of university students as well as of general readers interested in Hindu philosophy and religion" (pp. xi-xii). It has the merit of not being a mere factual guide-book to Hinduism but trying to provide a central point of view and interpretive temper. This temper is, however, obtrusively philosophical in an academic sense and not primarily spiritual.

PROF. K. SUBRAHMANYAM.

JOURNAL OF A SOUL: By Pope John XXIII
(Geoffrey Chapman, Price 42s.)

Pope John said of this Journal: 'My soul is in these pages', but those who seek to find here the secret of that power which enabled Pope John to open the Catholic Church to the rest of the world as had not been done for many centuries and to become one of the best 'loved figures of the twentieth century, are likely to be disappointed. There is little evidence here of that breadth of vision and warmth of humanity which endeared him to so many people, or of that new understanding of the nature of the Church which has been awakened by the reforms which he set in motion. On the contrary, his piety is seen to have been moulded from the beginning according to the norms laid down by the Council of Trent, and there is scarcely anything to distinguish it from that of any devout priest or Seminarian of the past.

Yet there is perhaps a lesson here, that any form of traditional piety can always become the means for a profound spiritual transformation, if it is followed with total sincerity and self-abandonment. The basis of Pope John's spirituality was the two virtues of humility and charity and it is impossible to find anything more fundamental than this. For humility is essentially the total renunciation of the self and charity the total surrender to God, and in this all wisdom is to be found. To this one may add a constant search for 'recollection', for stillness and peace of mind and soul which enabled him to keep constantly in the presence of God.

But to these fundamental virtues Pope John brought something else, an immense simplicity, which is perhaps his dominant characteristic. It was the simplicity partly of a peasant and partly of a child and it became the simplicity of a saint, who sees everything in God. It was this that enabled him to break through the established routine of centuries and restore to the Church something of the simplicity of the Gospel, while opening his heart to men of every class and race and religion.

DOM BEDE GRIFFITHS.

THE SUFI MESSAGE AND THE SUFI MOVEMENT: By Hazrat Inayat Khan. (Barrie & Rockliff, Pp. 47, Price 2s. 6d.)

Hazrat Inayat Khan made an immense impression on his followers in the West and even now, some forty years after his death, the organization and movement he founded are still flourishing.

His writings, lectures and sayings have recently been published in eleven volumes, and the present booklet by the same publisher gives the essence of their message together with a biographical introduction. Although himself the disciple and successor of a Chishti murshid, it was not orthodox Sufi teaching that Inayat Khan imparted or an orthodox spiritual training that he gave but some vaguer and more general message.

A. QUTBUDDIN.

OTHER BOOKS

THOUGHTS OF A SHAKTA: By M. P. Pandit.
(Ganesh & Co., Madras, Pp. 45, Price Rs. 2.)

Nilakantha Mahadeva Joshi, otherwise known as Yogishananda Natha, is an eminent exponent of Tantrism. During his visits to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Mr. Pandit has noted down many of his sayings and explanations. These are here reproduced. They display both technical expertise and wisdom.

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

We have received two more booklets from the Buddhist Publication Society of Kandy, Ceylon, unpriced as usual. They are 'The Wheel Publications' No. 76 and Nos. 77-78.

The former is an exposition of the profound significance of seeking 'The Threefold Refuge' by the German bhikku Nyanaponika Thera. He shows how much more this implies than a mere profession of faith.

The latter, a double volume, is a centenary tribute to Dr. Paul Dahlke, the first to spread the Buddha Dhamma in Germany and to found a 'Buddhist House' there. A number of his essays here reproduced can still be read with interest and profit.

Both books are in English.

SRI LA SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL

An attractive booklet, apparently unpriced, entitled 'Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal, A Siddha Purusha of the South' is about a miracle working saint who is still living. It is published by the Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal Gyana Sat Sabha, 'Revatee', 1st Road, Chembur, Bombay 71.

TOWARDS THE SILVER PEAKS OF THE HIMALAYAS: By G. K. Pradhan. (Laxmi Syndicate at Lentine Chambers, Dalal St., Bombay 1, Pp. 213, Price Rs. 10.)

Mr. Pradhan has written in fictional form his conception of life lived in quest of Realization and in service of a Guru.

Gaudiya Math, P.O. Baghbazaar, Calcutta-3, Price Re. 1.

RAMBLES IN ADWAITA: By Sri Vimalananda Nrusimha Bharati Swami. Published by the author at Gudivada, Price not stated.

ITALIAN GITA

WE have received an Italian translation of the Bhagavad Gita with introduction notes and commentary by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, published by 'Ubaladini Editore', Rome.

CORRESPONDENCE NETWORK

In continuation of the list in our last issue:—

C. K. R. Nair,
Designs,
H. M. T. Ltd.,
Bangalore-31.

Archer Forsyth,
P.O. Box 428,
Mill Valley,
California,
U.S.A.

Francis Allen,
C/o. The Chartered Bank,
38, Bishopsgate,
London, E. C. 2,
England.



An ink drawing of Arunachala done in the Zen style by Irma de Valera, the Venezuelan artist mentioned in our last *Ashram Bulletin*.



Ashram Bulletin

ARADHANA

On April 29th was observed the 15th anniversary of Sri Maharshi's *videha kaivalya*, when he left the body. A large gathering of devotees assembled for the occasion.

The function started at 5 a.m. with the chanting of 'Arunachala Stuti' and 'Ramana Sat-Guru Stuti'. The puja proper commenced at 8 a.m. with the chanting of the Taitireya and Mahanarayana Upanishads and Sri Rudra Chamaka, Purushasukta, etc. Ekadasa Rudra Mahanyasa Abhishekam was performed. After Sahasranamam, the chanting of the thousand names of Bhagavan, the arati of flaming camphor was performed and the devotees felt very powerfully Bhagavan's gracious Presence.

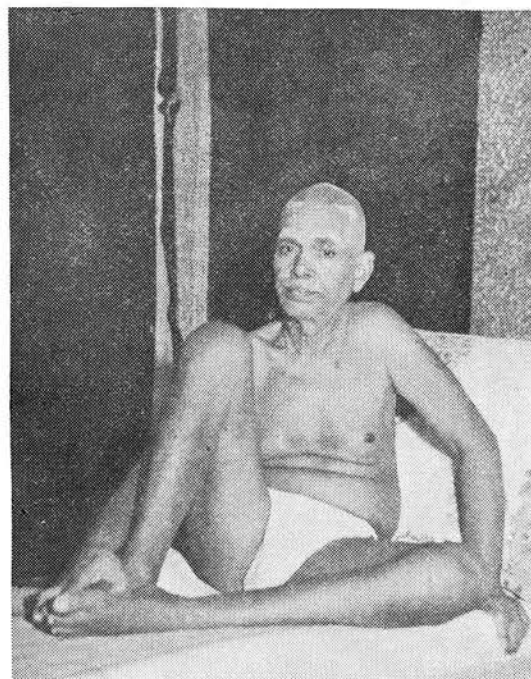
The Lt.-Governor of Pondicherry, Sri Sayaji Sailam and his wife and Sri A. S. Kankeyan, Finance Minister of Pondicherry, were the chief guests.

The guests were all invited to lunch by the Ashram, apart from which there was feeding of the poor on a large scale.

In the afternoon there was a musical performance by Sri Kamudhi M. S. Ramadass (vocal), accompanied by Sri T. N. Ramamurthi on violin and Sri T. B. Subramaniam on mridangam. The performance was very much appreciated by the assembled audience, which included many Westerners.

Messages of good wishes were received from Sri C. R. Pattabhi Raman, Deputy Minister for Broadcasting and Information, Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam, Chief Minister of Madras, Sri S. M. A. Majid, Minister for Local Administration, Madras, Smt. Rani Padmavati Devi, Minister for Local Government, Madhya Pradesh and Sri Karumuttu Thiagarajan.

Among the hundreds who thronged at the Ashram specially for the occasion, mention could be made of Sri H. C. Khanna and his family.



Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami and his family, Sri Thiagarajan of Ceylon, Sri K. Padmanabhan of Bangalore, Sri Framji Dorabji of the Wellington Talkies, Sri B. S. Ranganatham of Nellore, Prof. Viswanathan of Chidambaram, Sister Diana of Pondicherry and Miss Sarah Farrand of London.

After the evening poojas, at 8-30 p.m. Brahma Sri Jagadeesa Iyer and party conducted a thrilling Bhajan, which lasted till late in the night.

MADRAS

The Sri Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Alwarpet, Madras, celebrated Guru Puja on Sunday April 18th After Veda Parayana, Shri V. H. Subramanya Sastri, of the Mylapore Sanskrit College, spoke

of Sri Ramana as Guru, Bhagavan and Ananda Murti and of his refreshingly modern and yet strictly Upanishadic teachings. Pandit B. C. Lingam read and explained a Tamil poem, on the miracles wrought by Bhagavan's eyes, specially composed by Sri Sadhu Om for the occasion. After the singing of songs from Muruganar, Manavasi Ramaswami Ayyar and Suddhananda Bharati and the distribution of prasadam, the function came to a close.

KOLHAPUR

The Dharma-Tatvajnana Mandal of Kolhapur celebrated the 15th Brahma Nirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan on 29th April. Sri Vasantarao Vagh and Pandit Khuperkarshastri spoke on Ramana Maharshi and his teaching, after which there was meditation followed by prayers, bhajan and arati. There was a beautiful spiritual atmosphere at the meeting.

KOPPAM

The 15th Mahasamadhi Day of Bhagavan Sri Ramana was celebrated at Vijnana Ramaneyya Mandiram, Koppam, Palghat, on April 29th. There was puja, archana and stotram in the morning. In the evening there was chanting of the Gita by Kumari P. Devaki Kutty, after which Prof. M. M. Menon spoke of the significance of Bhagavan's advent at a time when the world needs a universal teaching free from the clash of creeds. This was followed by nama-japa of Arunachala Siva which continued up to 8-47, the time when Bhagavan entered Maha-Nirvana. The function came to a close with arati and distribution of prasad.

CALICUT

The fifteenth anniversary of the Brahmanirvanam of Bhagavan Shri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated at Calicut on Thursday the 29th April at the Sri Sai Baba Mission Bhajan Mandir in the presence of a very large gathering of ladies and gentlemen. The proceedings commenced with a thrilling speech on the life and teachings of Bhagavan by Sri V. K. Kochunni Thampan, an eminent Sanskrit pundit of this place. This was followed by Guru puja by Sri Venkatarama Iyer, an ardent devotee who had the good fortune to sit at the lotus feet of Bhagavan and earn his grace by serving him. Dr. M. Anandan, an old devotee, brought the celebrations to a close by speaking about Bhagavan's greatness and distributing leaflets containing his essential teachings.



THE OBLATION: The 12th SRI VIDYA HAVAN (for a description of which see our July, '64 issue p. 185) was celebrated on the 26th March, '65, at the Ashram, amidst a large gathering of devotees.

PUBLICATION

Bhagavan often quoted or referred to 'Kai. valya Navanitam', 'The Essence of Emancipation', a Tamil classic advocating Self-enquiry. This work was translated into English by the late Swami Ramananda Saraswati, the compiler of the well loved record 'Talks with the Maharshi', about whom there is a note in our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964. Only now the Ashram has got round to publishing it.

MAHAPUJA

Mahapuja for the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan's mother was celebrated on 24th May this

year. Mahanyasa Rudrabhishekam was performed at the shrine of Matrubhuteswara in the morning and after the usual parayana and pujas prasadam was distributed to the devotees, who were invited to stay for lunch, and there was feeding of the poor.

ARUNACHALA

In connection with our article in the April issue on 'Arunachala as a Mandala', 'Kisor', a resident devotee, relates his experience in the matter as follows:

May-June 1964: Various mantras were tried during pradakshina, but only prayer to and talking to or about the Mother could fill my mind up to Adiannamalai, especially near the place where Uma is said to have made tapas. From Adiannamalai onwards there was mostly silence.

March 1965: The idea of Mother was the only thought that persisted along with the chanting of OM up to Adiannamalai. From there onwards even OM tended to fade out.

4th April 1965: Climbed the hill chanting OM and the names of Mother and Siva. Lost the way. Prayed to the Father-Mother combined and on opening my eyes saw the path clearly. Reached the peak. Chanted OM, Arunachala-Siva, Koham-Naham-Soham with feeling for awhile. Then this faded out to my surprise but there was joy in submission and Grace from the Guru. Only silence. Is that Ramana's "Just be!"? While returning there was only a faint chanting.

SRI H. C. KHANNA

One of those who came for the aradhana celebration at Tiruvannamalai was H. C. Khanna, who took advantage of his visit to hold the opening ceremony of the fine house he has built just outside the Ashram. It is built on Ashram ground on the understanding that when the owner and his family are not in residence the Ashram will be at liberty to use the ground floor as a guest-house.

RETURN

Sri Viswanathan, author of the article on Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni in our previous issue, is one of the seniormost devotees of Bhagavan. He has a wealth of reminiscences about Bhagavan as well as extensive knowledge of his teachings and of the scriptures. Since Bhagavan left the body Sri Viswanathan has suffered much from ill health and has been mostly away from here. Now he is in fairly sound health and has

taken up his abode at the Ashram again. This will be a great boon to visitors eager for accounts of Bhagavan's life and teachings.

It is noticeable how many of the visitors who come here leave with the intention of returning and how few seem able to do so. Circumstances seem to favour a first visit but rather to obstruct a return. One of the fortunate ones to come back here is Sarah Farrand who came for a few days two years ago and is now here for a much longer stay.

She writes: "Whenever any one asks me about Sri Ramanasramam I tend to eulogize unreservedly, especially in England where distance giving rise to nostalgia, lends added charm. But a return visit this year convinces me that I haven't exaggerated at all. The old magic began to operate from the moment when I saw the silhouette of Arunachala by twilight as the train approached Tiruvannamalai. The burdensome memories of hectic weeks in Bombay and Delhi as well as the weariness resulting from three days spent travelling in third class railway compartments began to fall away and now, two weeks later, I feel the same sense of lightness and unconcern for either past or future. My problems have been handed over to Another—One who is far more capable of dealing with them. Some would call it self-delusion, but in my heart of hearts I know that this special, indescribable 'something' that lures people here from all corners of the earth is very real. I also know that I shall have to return again and again."



Sarah Farrand

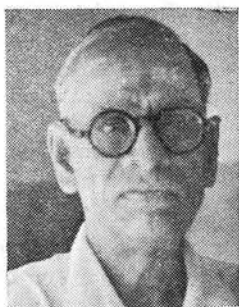
Another welcome returner is Peter Bright. He came here first in 1960 and made many friends here. After his return to England he kept up connection with the Ashram and in particular became an enthusiastic supporter of 'The Mountain Path' after its launching (as shown in his letter to the Editor on page 161 of our October issue). It has now become possible for him to return here, this time with the idea of settling down.

No less welcome than unexpected was another visit we received from Jerry Stofsky and Annie

Alt, the concert pianists mentioned in our Ashram Bulletin of April 1964.

ASHRAM DOCTOR

We have again an Ashram doctor, a post formerly held by Dr. K. Shiva Rao, whose obituary appeared in our issue for January this year. Dr. V. P. Ramaswami Iyer L.M.P., an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan, is a retired Civil Assistant Surgeon from 1949 to 1960. He has come to live at Bhagavan's Ashram as a devotee attending to the medical needs of people here as an act of service and devotion.



Dr. Ramaswami Iyer

ASHRAM NURSE

There is also an Ashram nurse, Miss Arlette Hans from France, who first came here for a short visit in 1962 and has now returned for a longer stay. She is a trained nurse who has had some years experience among the Eskimoes. From the Arctic to the tropics, from 76 below zero, she has come in the hottest part of the year when it is over 100 above.



Arlette Hans is one of those devotees who is wise enough to see the benefit (as pointed out in our editorial of January 1965) of having at least a part time occupation and not aspiring to spend the whole day in meditation.

Miss Arlette Hans

OBITUARY

'Maha Yoga' and other works by 'Who' have been widely read and appreciated both in India and abroad. Their author, Sri Lakshmana Sarma, passed away on May 3rd this year at the age of 86. He was a lawyer by profession and served for a while as a judge in Pudukottai State, but most of his life was devoted to Vedanta and to naturopathy. Sitting at the feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, he wrote a much appreciated commentary on Bhagavan's 'Forty Verses'. Apart from that, he wrote 'Maha Yoga' in English, 'Ulladu Narpadu Urai' in Tamil and 'Sri Ramana Hridayam' in Sanskrit verse. He rendered selected verses from Muruganar's 'Guru Vachaka Kovai' into both Sanskrit and English under the title 'Guru Ramana Vachanamala'. He translated Bhagavan's 'Forty Verses' also into Sanskrit.

Sri Sarma had a passion for nature cure. Apart from writing a book on the subject, he was the founder-director of the Nature Cure Institute at Pudukottai and editor of the monthly journal *Life Natural*.

May he find peace at the feet of Sri Bhagavan, who was his Guru and Master in this life.

* * *

Echammal, now no longer living, was one of the best known devotees of Bhagavan in the early days before the Ashram was built. Her younger sister Venu-Ammal, was also a staunch devotee. Venu-Ammal passed away recently at the house of her nephew at Vilapakkam near Polur. Venu-Ammal rendered signal service to Sri Bhagavan's mother at the time of her last illness. She became a life member of the Ashram only two days prior to her demise.

May her soul rest in peace.

The October issue of *The Mountain Path* will be largely on the subject of orthodoxy.

The January 1966 issue will be dedicated to Ramana Sat-Guru. Any who wish to write for it are requested to submit their contribution in good time.

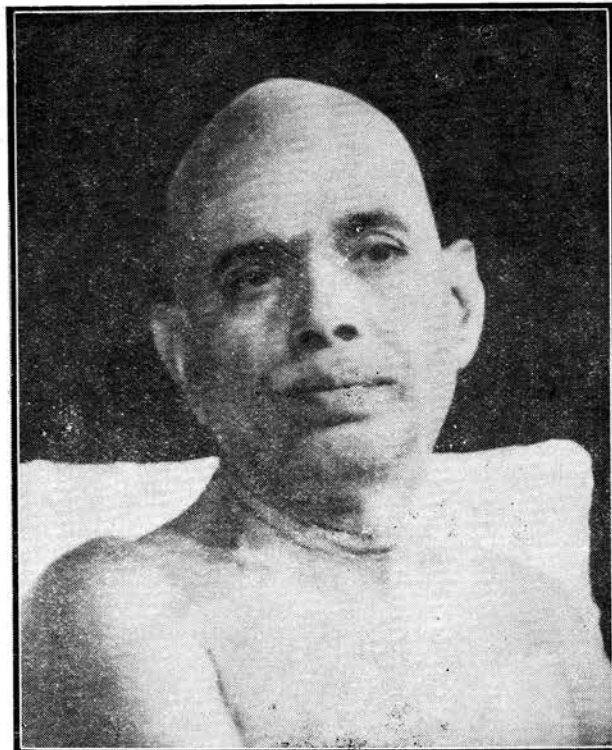
INTRODUCING

Many of the devotees of Bhagavan are familiar with the name of Nagamma from her published volumes of 'Letters from Sri Ramanasramam'. Readers of *The Mountain Path* will recall that most issues up to now have contained such a letter and will have been struck by the sensitivity and close observation with which they record not only Bhagavan's words but the tone and manner in which he spoke.

Nagamma is a Brahmin widow dressed in the plain white sari that tradition demands. She has little formal education and speaks no language but her native Telugu. It may be recalled that this was no great handicap at the Ashram, since Bhagavan knew Telugu and answered questions in it.

Owing to domestic misfortunes, Nagamma was thrown much on her own resources in early life and solaced herself by the study of classical (which means spiritual) Telugu literature. She herself developed a literary bent and wrote a number of books both in prose and verse.

On coming to Bhagavan Nagamma renounced her literary ambitions, just as did Muruganar (for an introduction to whom see P. 244 of our issue of October 1964). Like him, she vowed her literary talent thenceforth entirely to Bhagavan's



service. Sitting at his feet, day in day out, she felt a powerful urge to record the wisdom and wit of his replies, the graciousness of his presence, the beauty and occasional sternness of his manner. Her brother, D. S. Sastri, was manager of a bank in Madras and could only occasionally take a few days off to come to Bhagavan; so Nagamma began writing down her observations and impressions in the form of letters to him. The first 75 of these, carefully perused by Bhagavan, were published by the Ashram during his lifetime. Another 60 were published after Bhagavan had left the body. Both volumes D. S. Sastri translated into English and the Ashram published them.

Nagamma does not now live permanently at Tiruvannamalai. With her brother's assistance she has established herself in a small house at Vijayawada in the Telugu land among a group of like-minded people who often look to her for advice. She is, however, still a frequent visitor here and even those who cannot speak her language welcome the warm friendliness of her smile.



Nagamma



Letters TO THE EDITOR

Recently I enjoyed a remarkable instance of Bhagavan's Grace. I work in a London office which is being renovated structurally; the noise of the powerful electric drills 'stabbing' into the brickwork was positively maddening — like a thousand dentists' drills vibrating through my soul. At home I prayed Bhagavan to stop this noise—a seemingly impossible request. Next day I was dismayed to find that the drilling was still in progress and I must confess that I felt quite resentful (if that's the right word) that Bhagavan could have failed me.

Then a remarkable thing happened—I soon became aware that I was no longer noticing this terrific noise: for lengthening periods it simply was not registering on my mind, thus enabling me to work undisturbed.

Of course, Bhagavan knows best! Had he caused the noise to cease I should have remained vulnerable to future noises. As it is, I no longer care what disturbance I may meet—a most satisfactory state of affairs in this excessively noisy metropolis.

Please add my name and address to the 'Correspondence Network'. It is an excellent scheme for those who, like myself, feel exiled from their spiritual home at Sri Ramanasramam. I was happy to see in the April issue the name of my dear Ashram acquaintance Nell Sharp. Greetings to her!

In this issue I very much like your and Prof. Kulkarni's translation of and invaluable notes on the first chapter of the Gita.

FRANCIS ALLEN,
London.

In the January issue of *The Mountain Path* there is an article about 'The Poet-Saint Tulsidas' by T. Krishnaji. Will you kindly let me know where I can get an English biography of Tulsidas.

P. SUKUMARAN,
Tellicherry.

I had already written to say that there is none when I received a letter from Orient Longmans Ltd., Nicol Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay-1, informing me that, on the request of the author, Chandra Kumari Handoo (whom I do not know) they were sending me a copy of a newly published book on the life and works of Tulsidas. The book is entitled 'Tulasidasa'. It is priced Rs. 18.

Editor.

The April issue of *The Mountain Path* is splendid. I liked particularly the piece on Kundalini by Unnamulai. It is so genuine and what she says is true. The break through of the Shakti does not of itself imply realization. The experience repeats itself and each time it does so the possibility is confirmed till the experience deepens into a solid realization. I have known of many instances where the break through has occurred but has not brought about any decisive change in the consciousness. It opens the passage. The ascent of the Kundalini through each of the 'granthi' indicates 'conquest' of the principles governed by that centre; but conquest is not actually achieved by the mere fact of the Kundalini passing through. The possibility is created and the conquest is to be achieved by repeated ascents and the assimilation of their results.

M. P. PANDIT,
Pondicherry.

The article on the Sri Chakra at Ramanashram by Krishna Bhikshu is a highly educative and thought-provoking exposition of Sri Vidya. The central idea of Sri Chakra has to be rightly understood. The bindu and trikonas form a unity. In other words they are parts of a divine whole. This idea is emphasised in the text which speaks of the relativity of the chakras as one of the 'Avina bhava sambandham'. One chakra cannot

exist without the other. We miss the mark if we say that each more outer chakra is a grosser form of the preceding one; it is more true to say that each is an indivisible part of the whole.

K. HARIHARA IYER,
Sivaganga.

* * *

When I was in Pondicherry recently a friend of mine gave me the scorpion yantra which appeared in your journal. On May 4 I had the occasion to use this remarkable yantra on a girl of about 12 in my village. A scorpion stung the tip of the index finger of her right hand at about 8 a.m. I contacted her at about 9 a.m. or a little before. There was a burning sensation in her whole hand right up to the wrist. I made the yantra on the back of her hand four times in all, each one below the other, until I reached the middle of her index finger. The pain gradually receded until it was confined to the tip of the finger. It remained there for a long time, though it had left the hand and the first two phalanges of the finger. I was myself amazed at this remarkable cure.

M. R. JAHAGIRDAR,
Headmaster, S. S. M. Shala,
Chadchan, Bijapur District.

Perhaps it was because the operator stopped the yantra before reaching the actual spot of the sting that the pain still continued in that spot.

Editor.

* * *

The article 'A Yantra for Scorpion Stings' by Ethel Merston in your April issue should prove a boon to people living in scorpion infested parts. I learned the yantra some five years back and have used it scores of times and find that it relieves pain instantaneously.

SWAMI KRISHNANAND,
Degaon, Maharashtra

* * *

Prof. K. Swaminathan's review of 'From Literature to Religion' by D. S. Sarma was both evocative and trenchant. What particularly appealed to me was the sentence in a quotation from this book: "The Self is realized not by one's doing something but by one's refraining from doing anything, by remaining still and simply being what one really is." I understand better now the words from the psalm: "Be still and know that I am God."

G. G. R. KRISHNAMMA,
Secunderabad.

The 'Letters to the Editor' section is a great boon to 'The Mountain Path' readers in that they can express their doubts and difficulties and get them solved. I wish also to claim the same privilege. There are two short sentences in the book 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words' which defy my understanding. If you will kindly explain, their significance I shall be ever grateful to you. They are:

"Be still and know that I am God" and
"I am that I am."

R. BALASUBRAMANIAM.

It so happens that neither of these two sentences is original to the Maharshi. Both are quoted by him from the Bible, Old Testament, the first from the Psalms and the second from Genesis.

"Be still and know that I am God" means: "Keep the mind still, without thoughts, and know that the 'I am', the sense of being, in you is God."

"I am that I am" or "Being is" is the reply that God gave to Moses when Moses asked what he should say if the Israelites in Egypt asked him who had sent him to them and authorised him to act as their leader and deliverer. "Say that 'I am' sent you, that the Being or the Self sent you." Moses was asking the Name of God and was told that 'I am' is the Name. Moses is the mind or spirit of aspiration in a man that makes him undertake the quest; the Israelites and Egyptians are the down-trodden good tendencies and triumphant evil tendencies in him when the quest or sadhana starts; 'I am' is the consciousness of Being in the heart that illumines and inspires him.

Editor

* * *

I would like to know:

(a) If there is any difference between the technique of 'whence am I?' and that of 'what am I?' or 'who am I?'

(b) The technique of 'whence am I?'

(c) The technique of 'what am I?' (or 'who am I?')

I have puzzled over this for a very long time. May I know whether the Maharshi used to say 'what am I?' or 'who am I?'

'Whence am I?' seems to seek the source of the 'I' without bothering about its nature.

'What am I?' and 'who am I?' seem to analyse the nature of 'I'.

DR. KRISHAN,
Chandigarh.

Bhagavan did sometimes tell a devotee to find out where the I-thought arises in the body. This was a way of teaching concentration on the heart at the right side.

More often he told enquirers to ask 'who am I?'. As explained on page 194 of our issue of July 1964, the cryptic Tamil form is 'nan—yar' (I—Who), not distinguishing between 'who' and 'what'. There is no real difference and the question is not analytical. It is a spiritual, not a mental, exercise, and therefore Bhagavan insisted that no answer the mind can give can be right. It is rather an attempt to suspend thought and feel the pure being or I-ness of you. That comes to feeling the being-consciousness that survives when thinking stops.

Editor.

I take the liberty to congratulate you on your excellent magazine. Its coming always causes great joy in our home. My wife's and my greatest desire is to go to Tiruvannamalai some time in the future and stay at Bhagavan's lotus feet.

Now, if it is permitted, I want to contribute to 'our' *Mountain Path*. I have noticed that in general our epoch is still wrongly called Kali Yuga in spite of the fact that we already entered the Dwapara Yuga 264 years ago.

HALMAGYI TIBOR,
Porto Alegre, Brazil.

From here Mr. Tibor continues with a detailed calculation of the Yugas. Actually there is much disagreement on this theme, some holding that the Kali Yuga or spiritually dark age is just beginning, others that it is in mid course and others that it is ending. The most usual opinion is that it began with the Battle of Kurukshetra at which the BHAGAVAD GITA was enunciated, 5066 years ago and is now approaching its end. Without wishing to enter into any such technical discussion, it may be well to remind 'Mountain Path' readers that Bhagavan was once asked for a decision on the subject and replied: "What is yuga? The wise man is always in sattya yuga." That is to say: Why occupy ourselves with the state of the world when it rests with us what state we are in?

Editor.

You are doing the most wonderful work in editing *The Mountain Path*, and in reading it I feel as if Bhagavan was sitting before me. Never before have I felt His presence so fully and

vividly as in reading this quarterly. All the five issues received have articles which bring Bhagavan shining before us. The printing, get-up, selection of advertisements, articles and handling of the matter in such a delicate and firm manner, in the tradition of Bhagavan, warm my heart and make me feel as if I was sitting in the Old Darshan Hall before Bhagavan.

BHAGAVAT PRASAD SINGH,
New York.

I have received a sample copy of your very interesting magazine and have deeply appreciated its contents, in particular the magnificent texts of Ramana Maharshi, whose 'Collected Works' have been reviewed by me in French.

FATHER THOMAS MERTON,
Abbey of Gethsemani,
Trappist, Kentucky.

We highly esteem this tribute from the Trappist monk who has become one of the leading Catholic writers of the day.

Editor.

I wish I could put into words what *The Mountain Path* and the awareness of Ramana Maharshi's life and works has meant to me. I have long been a student of Joel Goldsmith and now that he has left for the invisible plane this new dimension of awareness seems to be completely at one with the rhythm of unfolding Consciousness.

I want to say too that every one of your articles and book reviews has been most inspiring to me. Thank you.

MRS. MAURINE MCINTYRE,
California.

I take the opportunity to say how much I enjoy 'The Mountain Path'. I particularly appreciate the fact that contributions come from all quarters and am excited to find how all converge on one central truth.

MRS. SHEELA ATKINSON,
Orpington.

Congratulations on the issues to date. I particularly like the policy of devoting each issue to a particular aspect of spiritual life.

C. FREEMAN,
Seattle, U.S.A.