



# The Mountain Path

Vol. II

OCTOBER 1965

No. 4

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

"Display Thy beauty,  
for the fickle mind to see  
Thee for ever and to rest  
(in peace), Oh Aruna-  
chala !

—*The Marital Garland of  
Letters, verse 8.*

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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

—*The Marital Garland of Letters, Verse 1.*

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## (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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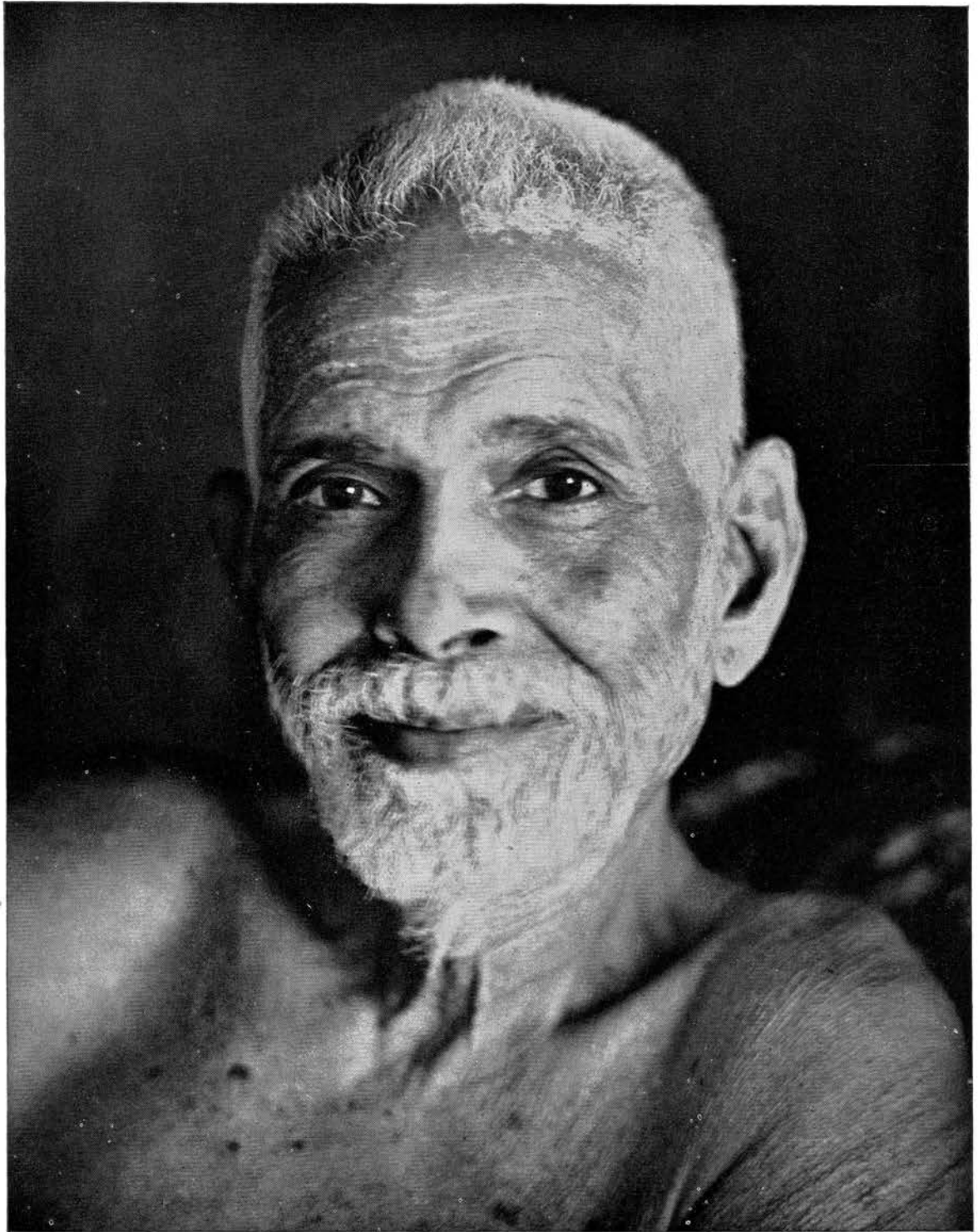
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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

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## GUIDANCE AND ORTHODOXY

[EDITORIAL]

Closely allied to the question raised in our last editorial whether the guide need be a realized man is the question whether he need be orthodox and legitimately appointed. There is such a widespread reaction against orthodoxy today that many will consider this question superfluous; however there are still many in the various religions who cling to formal orthodoxy. Moreover the influence of Guenon is still considerable among Western seekers. On the whole it is a profoundly beneficent influence. He probably did more than any other person to awaken Western intellectuals to their lost heritage by reminding them that here is a Goal and there are paths to the Goal. However he insisted that the path must be orthodox, no matter in what religion, and the guide duly authenticated. He illustrated this with an analogy to ordination. It is preferable in the Catholic Church for the priest who performs the sacraments to be a saintly man, but they are valid even if he is not, whereas they would be invalid if performed by a more saintly man who was not an ordained priest. Throughout history, he insisted, the same rule has applied to the granting of initiation and guidance by a guru, and it still applies and always must.

Let us first state what is the orthodox pattern. A disciple receives initiation from a Guru and strives along his path, under his guidance, until he receives authorization from him to act as a guru himself and carry on the spiritual transmission in the same initiatic order. It is better if he is a realized man, but he can give valid initiation and guidance even if he is not, while one who is not the duly appointed successor to a chain of gurus cannot even though he may be realized.

First the question of the validity of initiation given by a guru who is duly authorized but not a realized man. Of this there can be no doubt; only, as I pointed out in my last editorial, it will be of a low order of potency and there may be grave dangers attached to it.

What then of the realized man who is not the validly appointed successor to a chain of gurus? What is it that he lacks? According to the rigidly orthodox (and also on the analogy of Christian ordination of priests) what he lacks is affiliation with the Divine Source of the Grace which has flowed through the chain of gurus from its origin. But suppose he has realized his identity with

that Divine Source? Suppose he is that Divine Source? The direct vertical descent of Grace will pass through him, and who then is to bother about the horizontal flow from past ages? Only those with small, legalistic minds..

There is a story about the Maharshi that comes to mind in this connection. Nagamma's telling of it is given on another page in this issue.

There certainly are laws regulating the flow of Divine Grace, but the Grace is more than the law. Or it might be more accurate to say that a commonly applicable law is overridden by an emergency law. That guidance comes only through regular channels may be the commonly applicable law; but Divine Providence will not therefore leave men without succour in their time of need. To deny this possibility of overriding the regular law would be to attempt to tie the hands of God.

What of the predicament of those who in our times seek an authorised and realized guru and do not find one? As they look around they perceive, not in one religion but all, an aridity in the channels where Grace once flowed. They hear strident voices proclaiming themselves gurus but will do well to remember Christ's prediction that there would be false Christs and false prophets to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect. Christ's saying that he who seeks will find is a universal law; but a law must have some technique, some means of action; what is this in an age when the former life lines to those struggling in the turbulent waters of samsara have been withdrawn or have rotted and become unfit to bear the weight of a man? Willing to follow an authorized and realized guru in any religion, they look around and do not find one.

What adaptation has been made to the needs of the time? If ours is a time of emergency when a relaxation has come about in the formerly rigid laws of orthodoxy, the first persons to perceive this and react to it would naturally be the guides themselves; and it is noticeable that all the prominent

gurus of India from the time of Sri Ramakrishna onwards have diverged from the orthodox pattern outlined above.

Sri Ramakrishna himself had not one guru but two, one tantric and the other advaitic. He did not seek them out and devote his life to their service; it was they who came to him and, after acting as more or less technical janitors to open the gates for him, became his devotees.

Although he experienced and proclaimed the efficacy of Christianity and Islam also as paths to the Goal, he did not himself have foreign disciples; but his successors did. Nor can this be described as an aberration of Vivekananda's, as some Western critics would like it to be; for one of the first to initiate foreigners was Sarada Devi, the wife of Ramakrishna, whom Vivekananda and all the others revered. She justified her action, so far as she troubled to do so at all, by referring to a dream of Sri Ramakrishna's in which he saw himself in a foreign town surrounded by white followers. In telling her about it he interpreted it to mean that he would have many followers in the West.

Next there is the enigmatic Sai Baba, who lived at the turn of the century.<sup>1</sup> He had both a Hindu and a Muslim guru. He lived in a mosque but had Hindu disciples as well as Muslim and allowed them to perform ritualistic worship of him in the mosque in complete contravention of Islamic orthodoxy. The initiation that he gave to Hindus and Muslims alike was invisible, as the Maharshi's was later to be, with no mantra, no laying on of hands.

Sri Aurobindo was brought up in England and had a completely Western education. He returned to India at the age of twenty-one, knowing very little of his mother-country and not even speaking his mother-tongue, which was Bengali. He lost no time in learning Bengali and Sanskrit and flung himself into the struggle for independence

<sup>1</sup> For whom see an article in our issue of July, 1964. See also 'The Incredible Sai Baba' by Arthur Osborne, Orient Longmans, India, and Rider & Co., London.

with such zest that he soon became one of the leaders. During this phase of his life he had a yogic guru for a few weeks but did not follow up the training as it would have interfered with his political activities. After renouncing politics and settling down in Pondicherry he never met his guru again; nor did he take another. The guidance he later gave was quite different from the formalistic path of his guru; and it was given freely to Hindus and Westerners alike.

Swami Sivananda was a successful medical practitioner until middle life, when he renounced the world and withdrew into a cave in the Himalayas. He had a guru for a short period but seems to have owed little to him. Certainly it was his own more flexible form of guidance, that he gave to the disciples who later flocked to him; and he also gave it to Westerners as well as Hindus.

Swami Ramdas, a very lovable saint,<sup>2</sup> was also middle-aged when he renounced the world. He had no guru in the ordinary sense of the word. He simply took permission to use the Ram mantra from his father in virtue of the right every Brahmin has to give initiation to his own son. He visited Ramana Maharshi and received a wonderful outpouring of Grace from him<sup>3</sup> but did not become his disciple — he did not follow his path and never returned to him. On becoming a Swami he gave initiation and guidance freely to Hindu and Western disciples alike.

Ananda Mayi Ma, the Bengali woman saint who is still living at the time of writing, is said never to have had a guru. She

is surrounded by an orthodox Brahmin entourage, but receives foreign disciples also and gives them instructions for their sadhana.

To crown all there is the case of the Maharshi himself. He attained Self-realization when still a schoolboy of sixteen by a single spontaneous act of Self-enquiry, with no human guru and no religious discipline.<sup>4</sup> Later he gave his silent initiation to all who sought it earnestly and with understanding. He prescribed for them the path of Self-enquiry, free from religious forms — whatever the religion. Some Brahmins called him unorthodox. Those who understood said that he was orthodoxy itself; whatever he did was orthodox because he did it; he was higher than Manu, being the source from which Manu's authority derived. He was the Self from whom sanction and authority flow.

These are the best known but there have been and still are other guides also, less renowned but not necessarily less genuine. Two such are Swami Nityananda and Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath, described in our issues of April and July, respectively, this year. It would require rare arrogance for any one to proclaim that all these who speak with authority are wrong and it is blindness to hold that rigid formal orthodoxy is still necessary in spiritual guidance.

<sup>2</sup> For whom see an article in our issue of January, 1964.

<sup>3</sup> Described in our issue of Jan. 1965, pp. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> See 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge', pp. 18-19, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

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## THE INDWELLER

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

He ? — You ? — I ? — That which is  
Indwells this body, sees the living world,  
And is the world it sees. Pure bliss of being,  
As on a spring day, couched upon a bank  
Of grass and flowers, watching the clouds sail by —  
For a brief moment thought - and fancy-free :  
But now no moment, now a well known state.

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## INITIATION REJECTED

By NAGAMMA\*

13-1-1949

For readers who do not know the background of the following story it should be explained that the great Shankaracharya, the 8th Century restorer of Advaita Vedanta, founded four orders of sannyasins in the four corners of India, north, south, east and west. A regular succession of gurus continued in these orders and became the upholders of Hindu orthodoxy. Every sannyasin is supposed to receive initiation and normally from an initiate of one of them. That is to say that a man cannot simply take sannyas; it has to be bestowed on him.\* Similarly a man is not supposed to act as a guru unless he himself has received initiation. The position of Bhagavan, living as a sannyasin and acting as a guru, was therefore technically incorrect. The point of the story is that he was above technicalities and was fully aware of the fact.

There was talk in Bhagavan's presence about a conference of the heads of mutts at Sivaganga, and in this connection a devotee said to Bhagavan: "It is said that a long time ago somebody from Sringeri Peetam came and asked Bhagavan to take initiation. Is that so?"

Bhagavan replied: "Yes, indeed. In the early days of my stay at Virupaksha Cave a shastri from Sringeri Mutt came to see me one morning. He spoke with me for a long time and fully understood what I said to him; then, before going into town for food, he approached me with folded hands and an air of devotion and said: "Swami, I have a request to make; please consider it." I asked what it was and he replied with great humility and an air of submission: "Swami, as you were born a Brahmin, is it not necessary that you should receive *diksha* (initiation) according to the sastras? Isn't that our ancient tradition? This is not unknown to you, so what need is there for me to explain? It is our wish to include your name also in the list we already have in the stanzas in praise of gurus. So if Bhagavan consents arrangements will be made to bring the necessary things and perform the rite here. Even if you don't want to wear the full ochre robe, you could at least wear an ochre loin-cloth (instead of the white one you wear now). Please give it your earnest consideration while I go down into the town for my

midday meal and let me have your answer when I come back at 3 o'clock. The people at our Mutt have heard of your great reputation and sent me here to speak with you about it." So saying, he went down the hill into town.

"Soon after he had left an old Brahmin came with a bundle that seemed to contain books. His face seemed somehow familiar. He put the bundle down as though he already knew me and said: 'Swami, I have just come and not even taken my bath yet. There is no one to look after this bundle, so please look after it.' So saying, he went away.

"As soon as he had gone it occurred to me for some reason to open the bundle and look at the books. On opening it I was immediately struck by the title 'Arunachala Mahatmyam' (The Greatness of Arunachala) in Sanskrit on one of them. I was not previously aware that this Tamil work existed in a Sanskrit version also. I opened the book and my eye fell immediately on the stanza in which Ishvara (God) says: 'Those who live within three yojanas (thirty miles) of this place (Arunachala) will attain Liberation free from all attachments even if they have not received initiation. Such is my decree.'

"Seeing this, I said to myself: Splendid; now I have a good answer to give to that

\* For an introduction to whom see our issue of July, 1965.

shastri. So I copied the sloka out and tied the bundle up again as it was before. Then I sat in meditation. When I opened my eyes again the bundle was gone. When the shastri returned in the afternoon I showed him the stanza. Being a learned man he saw at once that there was nothing he could say against it, so he bowed down before me with great respect and devotion and left. It seems that he told the whole story to the Shankaracharya Narasimha Bharati and the latter regretted the episode and told his followers to make no such attempts in future.

“There were a number of other occasions too when people came and tried to convert

me to their ways. I used to listen to all they had to say but would never consent to take initiation. I always found some excuse such as this to get out of it.”

One of the devotees asked whether the old Brahmin who brought the bundle of books returned.

Bhagavan said : “I don't remember whether he did or not. I only know that the bundle was not there. We got what we needed. Isn't that enough? It means that Arunachala Himself appeared in that guise.”

He then remained silent.

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## THE FIRE

By PRANAV

Lord, Thy messenger entered my kingdom  
 And enkindled a tiny flame. It has  
 Become a stupendous conflagration,  
 And I see the city that I had built  
 Now lies a heap of grey ashes,  
 No more shall bricks and mortar be. Instead  
 Thou hast laid out anew a garden vast  
 Where pines of aspiration touch the Heaven  
 And where jasmin, lotus and lovely rose  
 Open to Thy red-golden smile at dawn.

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## ABOVE ORTHODOXY AND UNORTHODOXY

By KRISHNA BIKSHU

The Maharshi was criticised by some in his lifetime for being orthodox, by others for being unorthodox. There were literalist Brahmins who would not go to his Ashram because it was not orthodox, modernists who would not go because it was. A profound explanation was given by the late Sundaresa Iyer, himself an orthodox Brahmin, whose obituary appears in our issue of April, 1965: "Bhagavan was above orthodoxy and unorthodoxy. He was higher than Manu and could not therefore be bound by Manu. He was himself the Source of orthodoxy and therefore whatever he did or said was orthodox because he did or said it, whether according to the sastras or not."

The Maharshi was establishing a spiritual path open alike to Brahmins and non-Brahmins, Hindus and non-Hindus; and he knew when and by whom and to what extent traditional orthodoxy had to be observed or dispensed with.

Krishna Bikshu, author of the article, 'A Chakra at Sri Ramanasramam', in our issue of April, 1965, elucidates the Maharshi's attitude in the following article, showing from the wealth of his observation during his long association with the Master, how both the blind defenders and the blind attackers of orthodoxy were liable to be offended by it.

An upholder of formal orthodoxy was speaking accusingly to Sambasiva Rao, late secretary of the Sri Ramanasramam Committee: "We learn that your Guru, the Maharshi, does not observe the rules prescribed by the Sastras for daily conduct or the regulations governing the life of a sannyasin."

"No, he does not," Sambasiva Rao agreed.

"We learn also that he has received no formal initiation into sannyas."

"No."

"And we hear that he chews pan, sits on a sofa with a mattress on it, drinks coffee and is accessible to untouchables."

"Yes, that is so."

"Then we can't accept his way of life. He may be a great man, but he sets a bad example and people will naturally imitate him. Thereby they incur sin which must be imputed to his leadership."

This was the view held by many orthodox pandits who could not see the Spirit for the letter. It is true that in Sri Ramanasramam many of the sastric injunctions are not followed. The Ashram is built upon a former burial ground (which in itself is irregular) and therefore no part of the

Vedas except the Sri Rudra Sukta should be recited there; and yet it contains a Veda Patasala (school for learning to chant the Vedas). Not only that, but there is also a temple in which the worship of the Siva Linga and Sri Chakra is performed with full daily ritual including Vedic mantras and other holy texts. From this one might well conclude that Bhagavan considered the sastras and all scriptural injunctions useless. But it was not always so. I have observed incidents which showed how he discriminated between one case and another according to the need.

For instance, Major Chadwick, who, not being a Hindu, was not subject to the sastras, asked Bhagavan once whether eating onions was not an impediment to spiritual progress, and Bhagavan agreed that it was. Chadwick thereupon gave up onions completely. But they still continue to be used in the Ashram kitchen.

He took meticulous care to see that the injunctions of the sastras were carried out in the building and consecration of the Ashram temple.

In the lifetime of Bhagavan there was a screen across the dining hall separating the



Brahmins from the others. Bhagavan himself sat against the wall at right angles to both and in view of both. This is important to remember for the incident that follows. The screen implied an interdict on interdining between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. One day a relative of Bhagavan (and therefore a Brahmin) demanded to eat among the non-Brahmins but the Sarvadhikari (Ashram manager) would not allow it. They were disputing about it when Bhagavan came on the scene and asked what was the matter.

"He says that he has no caste," the Sarvadhikari told him: "that all are equal in the presence of Bhagavan and that he is simply a human being not bound by the shackles of caste, creed, clime or colour."

"Oh, is that so?" Bhagavan said, looking surprised: "then in that case you are wrong to insist that he should eat with the Brahmins."

But then, turning to his cousin, Bhagavan remarked: "But you too are wrong. These people here feel that they are non-Brahmins. You have no caste feeling so how can you sit among them? There is only one person here who has the feeling of being neither Brahmin nor non-Brahmin, and that is myself. So," calling to the attendant, "place a leaf-plate for him by my side; let him sit with me." The young man was shocked by the implications of this proposal and immediately took his place at the Brahmin side.

Now let us consider the standpoint of those who condemn all orthodoxy. A visitor once said to me: "I hope your Bhagavan is not hide-bound, following all the rules of Hindu orthodoxy?"

I replied cautiously: "Let me understand you before committing myself to an answer. First of all, do you believe that Bhagavan is a realized man? And secondly, what do you mean by Hindu orthodoxy?"

"How can I say whether he is realized or not? You say he is. And as for orthodoxy, you are only pretending not to know. I mean all the rules that govern your daily conduct—eating, sleeping, bathing etc., and your social conduct among yourselves and

towards others: the rules that were made for you by the so-called Sages of ancient times, Manu and the rest."

"You are right insofar as neither you nor I can exactly evaluate the position of Bhagavan," I said: "But as for orthodoxy, have you ever investigated the purpose of the Sages in laying down these rules of life? Have you tried to understand them? Or have you tried to follow them and noted the results in a scientific spirit?"

"What!" he exclaimed: "If primitive people invented nonsensical superstitious rules and called them dharma am I to follow them without proof or logic? That's impossible."

"Then you are unscientific," I replied. "Before you condemn a law you should first follow it and find out by experiment whether its results agree with what is claimed for it. Anyway, I will explain it to you."

"The ancient Hindus recognised four aims in life, which they called purusharthas. These are: dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Dharma is the law of being; wealth (artha) has to be earned, and life enjoyed (kama) according to dharma. The final result will be Moksha, that is Liberation from bondage. He who follows this course is an integrated personality. He has harmonized his prana or vital force with his mind and characteristics or samskaras. A man acts according to his samskaras, that is his tendencies inherited from past lives. His inclinations result from the reaction of these past tendencies to present environment. They should be directed to achievement of the purusharthas culminating in Moksha. The ancient Seers or Rishis had the vision to see the implications of every word, gesture or act of a man and on this basis framed rules which would, they said, if properly followed, help him to achieve his purpose in life. He could pursue the true goal either in society or as a sannyasin outside society, but only by following the rules. His earthly life should be so conducted as to lead to the final goal of Moksha.

"Spiritual endeavour to achieve this indicated end is called sadhana and he who

dedicates his life to it is a sadhaka. It involves cultivation, control and final conquest of body, emotions, senses and the entire ego and leads to Liberation. The Seers have noted the whole discipline required to this end. Control is a hard task. Control of a running horse can only be achieved step by step, and so it is with the ego. It is the Liberation towards which it leads that is the justification of sadhana. The ancient Seers did not claim to have invented rules for it, only to have seen the result of spiritual, emotional, mental and physical disciplines on a man. They laid down the law of being and working of all aspects of the human personality. That is why the smritis that go by their names are said to be merely *suhrut sammita*, advising as a friend, not compelling as a ruler. They merely indicate the road leading to the required end. If you break the rules they adumbrate they do not punish, only you do so at your own peril, that is peril to the success of your venture.

"Take the question of food — just one among many. Modernists tell us that the food we eat has nothing to do with our spiritual progress; but the Chandogya Upanishad says that the subtlest part of the food you eat becomes your mind. Bhagavan said the same, and it is indicated in the last sentence of his 'Self-Enquiry'. And Krishna in the XIth Canto of the Bhagavata lays down the several types of purity necessary for the sadhaka, one of them being pure food. Even if we think the opinions of modern reformers outweigh the statements of the Vedic Rishis, the Maharshi and Sri Krishna, should we not be scientific and give what they say a fair trial and note the results?"

Returning to the question of the Maharshi: it is true that he did not personally follow all that is laid down in the scriptures regarding food, but he did not need to, since he was not a sadhaka but a Mukta, having already achieved the Goal. It is true also that he allowed a good deal of licence to his followers, but that does not necessarily mean that he approved of it; simply that his way was rather to influence than to command.

The true command should come from within, leading to voluntary, not enforced, right action. He never ordered Devaraja Mudaliar to become a vegetarian, but when the latter was hesitating whether to do so or not, wondering whether he would find the food sufficiently nutritious, and asked Bhagavan's advice (as he relates in his book 'My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana') Bhagavan assured him categorically that he would. Another example: once when my brother Sri Venkatesa, author of a Hindi Life of Bhagavan, came to the Ashram he was offered coffee and told that he could drink it safely as it was Bhagavan's prasada.<sup>1</sup> Like many sadhakas he did not take coffee, finding that it disturbed his equanimity, so he hesitated. Before accepting it he asked Bhagavan outright: "Am I to take this as your prasada?" Bhagavan immediately replied: "No. These people want to drink coffee and so to justify themselves they offer it first to me and then call it my prasada."

There was a still more extraordinary case in the early years of the Ashram. Some of the sadhakas used to take *bhanga* (a hallucinatory drug sometimes used by sadhus), and they also would offer it to Bhagavan first to justify themselves. Bhagavan would accept it when offered and it had no effect on his serenity of mind, since he had no mind to be disturbed. Once they offered some to Sri Kavyakantha Muni also,<sup>2</sup> thinking thereby to justify its use by sadhakas, since Bhagavan was not a sadhaka but a Mukta. Sri Ganapathi Muni saw through their trick, however, and was about to curse them for their audacity, but the motherly spirit awoke in his wife, who was present on the occasion, and she induced him to leave the scene, so that the miscreants escaped punishment.

Two things may be deduced from these examples: one that adventitious aids to sadhana, such as pure and sattvic food, are very important and not to be despised or

<sup>1</sup> Prasada or prasadam is some article, usually of food or drink, given to a spiritual man and then received back as a vehicle of his grace.

<sup>2</sup> For an article on whom see our issue of April, 1965.

neglected ; the other that Bhagavan did not adhere rigidly to the rules himself or enforce them strictly in his Ashram but approved of people who did follow them. In fact he disapproved of both extremes, of exaggerated formalism on the one hand and hedonistic laxity on the other. Indeed, on one occasion when Bhagavan was asked to define the true Brahmin he included among the qualifications the ability to cook his own food so that he would not have to break his caste dharma when wandering in search of knowledge.

In a general way his mode of life did, after all, conform with the pattern of the Sastras. He would rise with the calling of the birds, as prescribed by them. He would hear the early morning chanting of the Vedas, take his bath, etc., and then engage in his normal routine activities. The shades of evening would find him absorbed in contemplation of the Self, again as laid down by the Sastras. He neither over-ate nor starved. He followed the Gita precept about keeping to a proper diet, his waking time following a proper mode of life, sleeping properly and spending his waking time properly. The Bhagavata devotes a full canto to the daily routine followed by Sri Krishna as a model for his clansmen. When they failed to follow it and took to drunkenness a catastrophe ensued leading to their complete extermination. But all these rules of life are really advice given to one whose sincere purpose in life is the quest of Liberation. How many of us can truthfully lay our hands on our hearts and assert that this really is our goal in life ? Sadhana for many of us is no more than a hobby or a secondary interest. Times have indeed changed since the Seers laid down the rules of life. Insofar as a pleasurable worldly life is now all the purushartha we follow we can indeed call them primitives and dispense with their guidance.

The brunt of the modernist attack is against the rules of varna dharma, commonly called caste.<sup>3</sup> And to gladden the heart of modernists it must be admitted that Bhagavan did not follow the social code laid down by the Sastras, since he allowed

non-Brahmins untouchables and foreigners free access to him and sponsored the daily chanting of the Vedas with all sitting shoulder to shoulder listening to them. But he knew what he was doing. Those who came to him were his people, independent of the accident of birth. And, as I mentioned above in connection with the incident of the dining hall, he himself belonged to no caste and could not be bound by caste rules. Indeed he actually stated this once in a deposition he made to a commission that came from a lawcourt to interview him in connection with a fraudulent claim some one had made to ownership of the Ashram. Asked about caste, he asserted that he was 'atiasrami', that is outside the framework of the four varnas and the four asramas or stages of life. Indeed, one could say that there was no individual Ramana ; and it is noteworthy that he never signed his name. There was no individual to sign. The individual Ramana had become extinct and merged in the Universal. Therefore it is futile to ask whether we, as individuals, can model ourselves on his conduct.

There is a warning and a paradox in this. He was the highest model of rectitude and wisdom, and yet we cannot model our personal and social conduct entirely on him, since we are seekers and he was not, and we are therefore bound by obligations from which he had become free. He was and is the Brahman and had therefore nothing to achieve and required no discipline as an aid to achievement. This paradox is explained in the Bhagavata in a warning given by Suka Deva to Parikshit : "Transgression of the normal dharma by the spiritually perfect is an exception and they are too eminent for it to bring about their downfall. Fire devours everything but is not said to be polluted thereby. One who is not at that final eminence should not even dream of doing such things. If he is obstinate enough to try he will perish."

<sup>3</sup> 'Caste' is used to translate four Sanskrit words: Varna, jati, kula and vamsa. The four varnas are the basic classes of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra which embrace many jatis.



## HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By FRANCIS ALLEN

This is the story of how Bhagavan, whom I never met, came, I believe, into my life. During World War II, I was posted from England to Ceylon, where I became so interested in Theravada Buddhism that I determined to enter the Sangha. I was informed by monks there that they could not give me ordination without first obtaining my parents' consent.

After being demobilized in England I joined a small London group studying Theravada, another member of which was a lady who, it transpired, had been to Tiruvannamalai. I discovered this one day when I heard her telling a mutual friend how she had gone to Sri Ramanasramam with a personal problem. For the first time in my life I then heard the name Sri Ramana Maharshi. "Bhagavan" she explained, had merely smiled and indicated that she settle herself upon a mat in His hall. Whereupon, without words passing between them, the solution to her trouble had soon presented itself to her mind. This, she informed her London friend, was nothing unusual where Bhagavan was concerned.

I made up my mind there and then to break my return journey to Ceylon at Tiruvannamalai. Unfortunately, although my father had agreed to my ordination as a Buddhist monk, my mother withheld her permission, fearing it was merely a passing impulse on my part. I had returned to a good job in London, and she was reluctant to see me disappear, perhaps for ever, into a far away monastic life.

Months passed, until one evening I returned home from a particularly trying day at the office feeling tired and looking, I dare say, dejected. My mother greeted me with the words: 'I can see you are as keen as ever to go back to Ceylon. You have my permission, if you think it will make you happy.'

That day was April 14th, 1950. The very day that, miles and miles away from



London, Bhagavan left the body. It was not until I arrived in Bombay that I discovered this; and imagining that Bhagavan was no more, I went on to Colombo ...

It was another few years before I met Ethel Merston who suggested I should read Arthur Osborne's book "Ramana Maharshi". After that, with the assistance of Ronald Rose, I arrived at Sri Ramanasramam.

What, I wonder, would Bhagavan have advised me if I had visited Him en route to the Buddhist monastery? Had He warned me of what was going to come of it, I should have found it impossible to believe. At that time I had set my heart on embracing the monastic life, and any dissuasion would not have deterred me, yet would have filled me with forboding uneasiness. No; I imagine that, simply smiling, Bhagavan would have left me to go ahead and work out in my own way what was a particularly complicated part of my destiny.

## AL - KHIZR

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

There is an Arabian Nights-like story in the Qur'an of an obviously symbolical journey that Moses made under the guidance of "one of Our servitors to whom We had granted mercy and knowledge",<sup>1</sup> that is to say a realized man. Three times the guide tested Moses by performing an apparently outrageous action, and three times Moses failed to restrain his indignation. The name of the guide is not given, but he is traditionally held to be the prophet Khizr, who is nowhere mentioned by name in the Qur'an.

What is remarkable about this is that Moses is recognized in the Qur'an as a great prophet, whereas on this occasion he appears as an obtuse pupil. The explanation seems to be that Moses is the prophet most associated with the law, and this story is meant to show the law or exoteric religion or outer orthodoxy to be an inferior, a pupil and unintelligent over against esoteric or initiatic guidance.

Guenon, whose knowledge of symbolism was extensive, equated Khizr with the equally enigmatic Biblical figure of Melchisedec. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is referred to as "Called of God, a high priest after the order of Melchisedec."<sup>2</sup> Just as Khizr is represented in the Qur'an as superior to Moses, so does the author of this Epistle represent Melchisedec as superior to Abraham, stating that Abraham paid tithes to him and he conferred his blessing on Abraham. Further, he is called "King of righteousness and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace."<sup>3</sup> He is ranked higher than the Levitical priesthood, the descendants of Aaron. "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God; he abideth a priest continually."<sup>4</sup>

It is quite evident that what we have to do with here is not an individual but an esoteric order with direct spiritual realization which raises its members above human lineage and gives it higher authority than the exoteric orthodoxy of the regular priesthood. The writer of this epistle is obviously a Hebrew writing for Hebrews, and the implication for him of Christ's being "a priest after the order of Melchisedec" is Christ's authority to override Jewish law and orthodoxy. There was as yet no Christian law and orthodoxy.

After Biblical times no more is heard of Melchisedec. In Islam, however, Khizr remained an important legendary figure. Sufism, though less rigid than the shariat of exoteric Islam, developed a law and orthodoxy of its own. Every Sufi aspirant had to be duly initiated to a *tariqat* or Sufi path by the validly appointed head of the order successor to its whole chain of sheikhs. It was always recognized, however, that outside these orders there was the path of the *afrad* or solitary ones (singular *fard*) whose guide was Al-Khizr.

In our own day the spirit of guidance has almost dried up in Islam, as in the other religions, and it is wellnigh impossible to find a realized guide at the head of any *tariqat*. But the Compassionate always responds to men's aspiration, and we find to-day, in compensation, a less formal outpouring of Grace to those who seek. This is, therefore, the age of Al-Khizr. It is better to implore his guidance than to adhere to the formalities of a *tariqat* which has everything except the essential — the realization of its sheikh.

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'an, XVII, 65-82.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews, V, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., VII, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., VII, 3.

There is a Hindu story which illustrates this. Before the Battle of Kurukshetra, at which the Bhagavad Gita was enunciated, both sides, in canvassing allies, believed that they had a right to call on Krishna, the Lord of Mathura, for support. He declared that one side could have his army while he him-

self, unarmed, would support the other. The Kauravas chose his army and Arjuna chose Krishna. It was Arjuna who won. Let those who cling to formal orthodoxy without a realised guide consider which they are choosing, Krishna or his army.

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## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

By A. RAO

Where the mighty river flows  
A bleak, grey prison-castle rose  
Wherein a lady dwelt, they say,  
On whom a lifelong curse there lay :  
Not to look out, not to go free,  
Only a shadow-world to see,  
    Reflected in a glass,

Daylong a tapestry she wove,  
With fantasy but without love.  
Thus did the wise ones typify  
The life of man, whose days flow by  
In a shadow world of mundane things,  
Weaving his vain imaginings,  
    Watching the shadows pass.

Until she saw her love ride by —  
Daring to look though she should die,  
She rose, cast from her the pretence,  
Leaped toward truth, with no defence

But love. The mirror cracked. A shiver  
Split the grey walls. The broad river,  
    Sweeping all things along,

Now bore her on to her true lot  
In many-towered Camelot,  
To meet the loved one face to face  
And, dead to self, in mute embrace,  
To find the two grown one through love  
Beyond all joy for which she strove.  
    This was the ancient song.

The years flowed down upon the river,  
And wisdom and all high endeavour,  
Leaving a slum in Camelot.  
A poet came and found the plot  
And made a pretty tale of it.  
Yet still the wisdom and the wit  
Of the old sages shines in it.

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He on whose destiny God has inscribed 'My Lover' rises above all ritual and laws of formal religion. The lover ignores worship in temple or mosque, being beside himself in God-intoxication.

— Sultan Abu Said Ibn Khair.

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## THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD

By FATHER THOMAS MERTON

Father Thomas Merton is widely known as a Trappist monk who has become famous through his books as an exponent of the deeper truth of Christian teaching, the truth of the Spirit which "bloweth where it listeth" and is not necessarily confined to any one Church or creed.

The Abbey of Gethsemani, where he lives and where this article was written, is a community of contemplative monks of the Cistercian Order (Trappists), famous for its dedication to silence, manual labour, solitude, meditation and liturgical worship. The Abbey was founded in Kentucky, one of the Southern States of the U.S.A., in 1848 by monks from France. The monks observe the Rule of St. Benedict in its strict interpretation and do not engage in teaching or in preaching, though in some exceptional cases they write books. There is one monastery of the same Order in Japan, another near Hong Kong, yet another in Indonesia, as well as several convents of nuns in Japan.

Can contemplation still find a place in the world of technology and conflict which is ours? Does it belong only to the past? The answer to this is that, since the direct and pure experience of reality in its ultimate root is man's deepest need, contemplation must be possible if man is to remain human. If contemplation is no longer possible, then man's life has lost the spiritual orientation upon which everything else — order, peace, happiness, sanity — must depend. But true contemplation is an austere and exacting vocation. Those who seek it are few and those who find it fewer still. Nevertheless, their presence witnesses to the fact that contemplation remains both necessary and possible.

Man has an instinctive need for harmony and peace, for tranquillity, order and meaning. None of these seem to be the most salient characteristics of modern society. Life in a monastery where the traditions and rites of a more contemplative age are still alive and still practised, cannot help but remind men that there once existed a more leisurely and more spiritual way of life — and that this was the way of their ancestors. Thus even into the confused pattern of Western life is woven a certain memory of contemplation. It is a memory so vague and so remote that it is hardly understood, and yet it can awaken the hope of recover-

ing inner peace. In this hope, modern man can perhaps entertain, for a brief time, the dream of a contemplative life and of a higher spiritual state of quiet, of rest, of untroubled joy. But a sense of self-deception and guilt immediately awakens in Western man a reaction of despair, disgust, rejection of the dream and commitment to total activism. We must face the fact that the mere thought of contemplation is one which deeply troubles the modern person who takes it seriously. It is so contrary to the modern way of life, so apparently alien, so seemingly impossible, that the modern man who even considers it finds, at first, that his whole being rebels against it. If the ideal of inner peace remains attractive the demands of the way to peace seem to be so exacting and so extreme that they can no longer be met. We would like to be quiet, but our restlessness will not allow it. Hence we believe that for us there can be no peace except in a life filled up with movement and activity, with speech, news, communication, recreation, distraction. We seek the meaning of our life in activity for its own sake, activity without objective, efficacy without fruit, scientism, the cult of unlimited power, the service of the machine as an end in itself. And in all these a certain dynamism is imagined. The life of frantic activity is invested with the noblest of qualities, as if it were the whole end and

happiness of man : or rather as if the life of man had no inherent meaning whatever and had to be given a meaning from some external source, from a society engaged in a gigantic communal effort to raise man above himself. Man is indeed called to transcend himself. But do his own efforts suffice for this ?

The reason for this inner confusion and conflict is that our technological society has no longer any place in it for wisdom that seeks truth for its own sake, that seeks the fulness of being, that seeks to rest in an intuition of the very ground of all being. Without wisdom, the apparent opposition of action and contemplation, of work and rest, of involvement and detachment, can never be resolved. Ancient and traditional societies, whether of Asia or of the West, always specifically recognized "the way" of the wise, the way of spiritual discipline in which there was at once wisdom and method, and by which, whether in art, in philosophy, in religion, or in the monastic life, some men would attain to the inner meaning of being, they would *experience* this meaning for all their brothers, they would so to speak bring together in themselves the divisions or complications that confused the life of their fellows. By healing the divisions in themselves they would help heal the divisions of the whole world. They would realize in themselves that unity which is at the same time the highest action and the purest rest, true knowledge and self-less love, a knowledge beyond knowledge in emptiness and unknowing ; a willing beyond will in apparent non-activity. They would attain to the highest striving in the absence of striving and of contention.

This way of wisdom is no dream, no temptation and no evasion, for it is on the contrary a return to reality in its very root. It is not an escape from contradiction and confusion for it finds unity and clarity only by plunging into the very midst of contradiction, by the acceptance of emptiness and suffering, by the renunciation of the passions and obsessions with which the whole world is "on fire". It does not withdraw

from the fire. It is in the very heart of the fire, yet remains cool, because it has the gentleness and humility that come from self-abandonment, and hence does not seek to assert the illusion of the exterior self.

Once a man has set his foot on this way, there is no excuse for abandoning it, for to be actually on the way is to recognize without doubt or hesitation that only the way is fully real and that everything else is deception, except insofar as it may in some secret and hidden manner be connected with "the way".

Thus, far from wishing to abandon this way, the contemplative seeks only to travel further and further along it. This journey without maps leads him into rugged mountainous country where there are often mists and storms and where he is more and more alone. Yet at the same time, ascending the slopes in darkness, feeling more and more keenly his own emptiness, and with the winter wind blowing cruelly through his now tattered garments, he meets at times other travellers on the way, poor pilgrims as he is, and as solitary as he, belonging perhaps to other lands and other traditions. There are of course great differences between them, and yet they have much in common. Indeed, the Western contemplative can say that he feels himself much closer to the Zen monks of ancient Japan than to the busy and impatient men of the West, of his own country, who think in terms of money, power, publicity, machines, business, political advantage, military strategy—who seek, in a word, the triumphant affirmation of their own will, their own power, considered as the end for which they exist. Is not this perhaps the most foolish of all dreams, the most tenacious and damaging of illusions ?

In any event, it is certain that the way of wisdom is not an evasion. Simply to evade modern life would be a futile attempt to abdicate from its responsibilities and a renunciation of advantages — and illusions. The contemplative way requires first of all and above all renunciation of this obsession with the triumph of the individual or collective will to power. For this aggressive

and self-assertive drive to possess and to exert power implies a totally different view of reality than that which is seen when one travels the contemplative way. The aggressive and dominative view of reality places at the centre the individual self with its bodily form, its feelings and emotions, its appetites and needs, its loves and hates, its actions and reactions. All these are seen as forming together a basic and indubitable reality to which everything else must be referred, so that all other things are also estimated in their individuality, their actions and reactions, and all the ways in which they impinge upon the interests of the individual self. The world is then seen as a multiplicity of conflicting and limited beings, all enclosed in the limits of their own individuality, all therefore complete in a permanent and vulnerable incompleteness, all seeking to find a certain completeness by asserting themselves at the expense of others, dominating and using others. This world becomes, then, an immense conflict in which the only peace is that which is accorded to the victory of the strong, and in order to taste the joy of this peace, the weak must submit to the strong and join him in his adventures so that they may share in his power. Thus there arises a spurious, inconclusive unity: the unity of the massive aggregate, the unity of those thrown together without love and without understanding by the accidents of the power struggle. Seen from the point of view of "the way" this unity is nothing but a collective monstrosity because it has no real reason for existing and is not a unity at all. However insistently it may claim for itself the dignities of a truly communal and human existence, it does not elevate man by a truly communal and interpersonal co-operation. It only drives him with mad and irresistible demands, exploiting him, alienating him from reality and demanding from him a blind irrational and total subjection. The life of the collective mass is such that it destroys in man the inmost need and capacity for contemplation. It dries up the living springs of compassion and understanding. It perverts the creative genius and destroys the innocent vision that is

proper to man in communion with nature. Finally the collective mass becomes a vast aggregate of organized hatred, a huge and organized death-wish, threatening its own existence and that of the entire human race.

The mission of the contemplative in this world of massive conflict and collective unreason is to seek the true way of unity and peace, without succumbing to the illusion of withdrawal into a realm of abstraction from which unpleasant realities are simply excluded by the force of will. In facing the world with a totally different viewpoint, he maintains alive in the world the presence of a spiritual and intelligent consciousness which is the root of true peace and true unity among men. This consciousness certainly accepts the fact of our empirical and individual existence, but refuses to take this as the basic reality. The basic reality is neither the individual, empirical self nor an abstract and ideal entity which can exist only in reason. The basic reality is being itself, which is one in all concrete existents, which shares itself among them and manifests itself through them. The goal of the contemplative is, on its lowest level, the recognition of this splendor of being and unity—a splendor in which he is one with all that is. But on a higher level still, it is the transcendent ground and source of being, the not-being and the emptiness that is so called because it is absolutely beyond all definition and limitation. This ground and source is not simply an inert and passive emptiness, but for the Christian it is pure act, pure freedom, pure light. The emptiness which is "pure being" is the light of God which, as St. John's Gospel says, "gives light to every man who comes into the world." Specifically, the Gospel sees all being coming forth from the Father, God, in His Word, who is the light of the world. "In Him (the Word) was life, and this life was Light for all men, and the Light shone in darkness and the darkness could not understand it." (John 1: 4-5)

Now very often the ordinary active and ethical preoccupations of Christians make them forget this deeper and more contemplative dimension of the Christian way. So



active, in fact, has been the face presented by Christianity to the Asian world that the hidden contemplative element of Christianity is often not even suspected at all by Asians. But without the deep root of wisdom and contemplation, Christian action would have no meaning and no purpose.

The Christian is then not simply a man of good will, who commits himself to a certain set of beliefs, who has a definite dogmatic conception of the universe, of man, and of man's reason for existing. He is not simply one who follows a moral code of brotherhood and benevolence with strong emphasis on certain rewards and punishments dealt out to the individual. Underlying Christianity is not simply a set of doctrines about God considered as dwelling remotely in heaven, and man struggling on earth, far from heaven, trying to appease a distant God by means of virtuous acts. On the contrary Christians themselves too often fail to realize that the infinite God is dwelling within them, so that He is in them and they are in Him. They remain unaware of the presence of the infinite source of being right in the midst of the world and of men. True Christian wisdom is therefore oriented to the experience of the divine Light which is present in the world, the Light in whom all things are, and which is nevertheless unknown to the world because no mind can see or grasp its infinity. "He was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world did not know Him. He came into His own and His own did not receive Him." (John 1: 10-11)

Contemplative wisdom is then not simply an aesthetic extrapolation of certain intellectual or dogmatic principles, but a living contact with the Infinite Source of all being, a contact not only of minds and hearts, not only of "I and Thou", but a transcendent union of consciousness in which man and God become, according to the expression of St. Paul, "one spirit".

Though this contemplative union is an extreme intensification of conscious awareness, a kind of *total awareness*, it is not properly contained or signified in any parti-

cular vision, but rather in non-vision which attains the totality of meaning beyond all limited conceptions, by the surrender of love. God Himself is not only pure being but also pure love, and to know Him is to become one with Him in love. In this dimension of Christian experience, the Cross of Christ means more than the juridical redemption of man from the guilt of evil-doing. It means the passage from death to life and from nothingness to fullness, or to fullness in nothingness. Thus the contemplative way of ancient Christian monastic tradition is not simply a way of good works and of loving devotion, fine as these are, but also a way of emptiness and transcendence in union with the crucified Christ. The Cross signified that the sacrificial death which is indeed the destruction of the empirical bodily existence and the end of all lust for earthly power and all indulgence of passion, is in fact the liberation of those who have renounced this exterior self in order to dedicate their lives to love and to truth. Christ is not simply an object of love and contemplation whom the Christian considers with devout attention: He is also "the way, the truth and the life" so that for the Christian to be "on the way" is to be "in Christ" and to seek truth is to walk in the light of Christ. "For me to live," says St. Paul, "is Christ. I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me."

This is a summary outline of the meaning of Christian contemplation, a meaning which calls for much greater development particularly in all that concerns the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. Such is the way of contemplation.

One need not be a monk to turn this way. It is sufficient to be a child of God, a human person. It is enough that one has in oneself the instinct for truth, the desire of that freedom from limitation and from servitude to external things which St. Paul calls the "servitude of corruption" and which, in fact, holds the whole world of man in bondage by passion, greed, the lust for sensation and for individual survival, as though one could become rich enough, powerful enough and clever enough to cheat death.



Unfortunately, this passion for unreality and for the impossible fills the world today with violence, hatred, and indeed with a kind of insane and cunning fury which threatens our very existence.

Science and technology are indeed admirable in many respects and if they fulfil their promises they can do much for man.

But they can never solve his deepest problems. On the contrary, without wisdom, without the intuition and freedom that enable man to return to the root of his being, science can only precipitate him still further into the centrifugal flight that flings him, in all his compact and uncomprehending isolation, into the darkness of outer space without purpose and without objective.

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## TRANQUIL STATE

By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Vision is a virgin-fruited cloud  
 Under whose weight the tree of life is bowed,  
 Ichored with fluent lambency, no bough  
 Casteth no shadow now . . .  
 Death, a transfigured bird of glory, sings  
 Of immortality to tired things,  
 Cleaving the shades of olden night  
 With sudden wings of light.  
 Waters with their heavy brooding roll  
 Become the shining shadow of the soul  
 Athwart whose rooted solitude the boat  
 Of stillness is afloat.  
 Whatever moves yet bears within its speed  
 High immobility of movement freed  
 And all that moves not brims with consciousness  
 Of movement none may guess.  
 Shape knows itself ensconced behind its shape  
 Through my new vision, in sweet self-escape.  
 Becoming is untrammelled into being  
 Suddenly through my seeing.  
 Let men believe that I have grown of late  
 Into an idle and unfruitful state,  
 That life for me is without flower or fruit,  
 Death-stricken at the root.  
 The few, the golden few who know me know  
 That what is whispered of me is not so,  
 That I who toil not yet am constant neighbour  
 To a true life of labour,  
 Producing, all unwearied, all the time,  
 Far-reaching consequence of song and rhyme  
 Which gradually essays to fulfil  
 Part of the arcane will.  
 Yes! Lone have been the roadways I have trod  
 Bringing me face to face with God ;  
 And life, because I have become His guest,  
 Grows one long day of rest.

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## THE CONTEMPLATIVE WAY OF LIFE

By JOEL S. GOLDSMITH

This is the last of the series of articles that Joel Goldsmith sent to *The Mountain Path* prior to his regretted demise in June, 1964. It has been our pleasure as well as our privilege to publish them. A good deal of unpublished material still remains, we are told, with his editor and literary executor, Lorraine Sinkler, and it is possible that through her kindness we may still be able to publish new Joel Goldsmith articles, as he himself wished.

From the earliest days of recorded history the world has lived in turmoil. There has never been an era of peace on earth; there has never been an era of good will unto men. Such a thing has not as yet been known in the history of the world.

Throughout all centuries there have been mystics who have introduced into the world a way of life whereby there could be peace on earth and good will among men, and in a limited number of communities there have been brief periods of peace and good will. There have been such periods among the immediate followers of a few mystics, but none of this has ever touched the world at large. At no time has the world known peace or good will, and the question that is causing thought and controversy is this: "Is it possible for the world to be at peace?" Is it possible for there to be good will among men? Is it possible in this age for men and women to find an inner peace, an inner joy, and a way of life that would end the world's turmoil — a way of life that would make it possible to continue as business men, inventors, government men, professional men and women, and still know a freedom from worldly cares?

Of course it is possible. In every age it has been achieved by small groups or communities, so it *can* be achieved individually. Unless it is achieved individually it can never be attained by the masses, by the world, and therefore peace and good will must begin with an *individual*. Buddhism had to begin with Gautama the Buddha, and by his own experience flow out to his disci-

ples — and out from them to a wider circle. Christianity had to begin with one individual, Christ Jesus, and by his example attract disciples, apostles, followers — and then by their example attract their particular part of the world unto them. Likewise there have been other great mystics who, by their individual example and by their individual demonstration of the principle they taught, were able to draw unto themselves disciples, apostles, and followers.

So it is that you, by your individual example and by your individual demonstration of a way of life, attract unto yourself a few here and a few there, a dozen here and a dozen there. In some cases hundreds are attracted by an individual you. Occasionally there is an individual who draws thousands, and there are a few who draw tens of thousands by their individual experience.

The contemplative life is a way of life that brings to the individual an inner peace, an inner grace, and a goodly measure of freedom from the sins, diseases and anxieties of this world. It brings to the individual considerable freedom from economic cares, and a freedom from concern or fear as to what the next form of government may be. But this way of life, which is so practical and which has proven itself in the lives of many thousands of individuals, cannot be given to the world as a mass teaching. It cannot be given to large numbers of people. It has to be individually presented, individually taught, and individually demonstrated, because only by the degree of your individual demonstration of harmony, and

mind, can we convince this world of the rightness of this way of life.

There are major Christian countries where church attendance is less than twenty per cent. There are major Christian nations on earth where church attendance is less than twelve per cent. Major nations! The reason is this: It does no good to preach that which is not being proven, that which is not being demonstrated. If those who are doing the preaching are not proving principles in their daily lives, how then can others be expected to listen to or grasp that which is being taught? An individual can only teach that which he knows, and this is even more true spiritually than academically. One may know all the words of Truth and be unable to teach it because, without a demonstrable consciousness of spiritual Truth, that which is conveyed is meaningless.

The Infinite Way teaching is a contemplative way of life, and spiritual healing is but one of the "added things" which normally and naturally accompany spiritual consciousness. At one time there were great civilizations in the Orient, where fine examples of art and literature were products of the contemplative way of life. These particular civilizations came forth during the age of the contemplative way of life and, when that way became separated from what might be called the mundane things of life, those countries began to lose the efficacy of their teaching and the efficacy of their art, literature, and science. The reason is this: The contemplative way of life is actually a contact with the Source of life, and in order to understand this you must realize that nothing can transpire in your experience except through an activity of consciousness. What you are not conscious of is not taking place in your life. It may be taking place, but it is not taking place in *your* life.

If you look out at this world, regardless of which country you observe, you will find it difficult to believe there is a God. There is little evidence of Deity on earth unless you can lift your gaze above what is trans-

piring among men in the human scene. If you judge by what you read or by what you hear, it would be very difficult to believe there is a God functioning on earth — a God who should be caring for, protecting, and harmoniously ordering the affairs of men. But the tremendous surge one is aware of in the world today, the search for solutions to the problems of the world, bears witness to the fact that there IS a God. It is an instinctive feeling, but it is also an acknowledgement that the world has not found God and that God is not functioning in this world.

If God were functioning on earth it would certainly be true that none of these evils would come nigh thy dwelling place, but the history of the world bears witness largely to the evils that are coming nigh thy dwelling place. If God were functioning in this world, certainly it would be true that "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things,"<sup>1</sup> and "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."<sup>2</sup> But we learn that at least seventy per cent of the world is undernourished, and I have visited localities where a million or more people in a relatively small area were living on the equivalent of seventeen cents a day. That cannot be abundance in anyone's currency, nor is it the grace of God!

God is, God does care, and God is a presence and a power, so the question that must naturally arise is this: "If it is possible, how can I bring the presence and the power of God into my individual experience?" If we were to judge by the message and the mission of Christ Jesus, we would have to acknowledge that it is God's will for man to know health, because one of the Master's functions was to re-establish the health of mankind. Likewise it must be the will of God for man to have abundance, because the entire teaching of Jesus Christ was a demonstration of supply where there was no evidence of it. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew*, 6: 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Luke*, 12: 32.

The entire message and mission of the Master bears out the Truth that health, abundance, forgiveness, and life eternal represent the will of God. Therefore, when an individual or a world is suffering from sin, disease, accident, lack and death, there must inevitably be an absence of God. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.<sup>3</sup> ... In thy presence is fullness of joy."<sup>4</sup> Any absence of harmony in individual or collective experience must represent an absence of God.

Since God is infinite, God must be Omnipresence, All-presence, everywhere present. There is no absence of God and so we are faced with a dilemma, because our very mortal conditions testify to an absence of God. It was here The Infinite Way had its birth in my consciousness with an answer to the problem of how God can be present — and yet harmony, health, safety, security, abundance, and peace be absent. The answer to this dilemma became the foundation of this work, because it was revealed to me that the secret lies in the word *consciousness*.

God IS omnipresent, but without a consciousness of Omnipresence there is no God operating in your life or mine, individually or collectively. In other words there must be a *conscious* awareness of God's presence. God's presence alone will not do it. The Master revealed this when he said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."<sup>5</sup> He might have said, "Truth will make you free," but he knew that was not truth. Truth alone will not make you free. "Ye shall *know* the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Only that which becomes an activity of your consciousness can manifest, express, reveal, and demonstrate itself in your experience. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."<sup>6</sup> It will not come nigh your dwelling place if you are dwelling in the secret place of the most High — if you are living, moving, and having your being in God-Consciousness, in Truth.

—"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the

mouth of God."<sup>7</sup> The word of God could proceed out of the mouth of God all over this world but, unless you individually atune yourself to it, it would be of no value to you. The Word of God has been with us since before Abraham was, and the Word of God will be with us unto the end of the world, but we still have war, depression, murder, suicide, rape and arson.

We still have all of these and the Word of God, but they do not operate in the experience of an individual who receives the Word of God within himself, in his inner consciousness. The Word of God is not heard with the ear. It is heard within the individual, and no man can speak it. It must take place within your own consciousness, which is why the Master taught: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."<sup>8</sup> He knew giving sermons every day would not save the human race, otherwise he would still be here. No, what you hear from the lips of the mystics, and what you read in their writings, are tools to take into your consciousness and live with until the Word Itself expresses Itself within you.

Everyone who was ever born has the capacity to hear the Voice of God, but the capacity lies dormant. Were this not so, everyone on the face of the globe would be living in peace, harmony, joy, wholeness and completeness, because all it takes for wholeness and completeness is to hear the Word of God — the ability to be consciously at one with the Source of your being. You will soon discover that the entire secret of harmonious living is the contemplative way of life, which was given to us by the Master in the fifteenth chapter of John: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as branch, and is withered."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Corinthians*, 3: 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Psalms*, 16: 11.

<sup>5</sup> *John*, 8: 32.

<sup>6</sup> *Psalms*, 91: 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Matthew*, 4: 4.

<sup>8</sup> *John*, 16: 7.

<sup>9</sup> *John*, 15: 5, 6.



It does not take too much imagination to visualize in your mind's eye a branch which has been cut off from the trunk of a tree. You can almost see it dancing down the street joyously, as if it had a lot to be grateful for! But as you look further, you must say to yourself, "You poor branch. If only you knew it, you are using up an ounce of that life inside of you with every step you are taking, and within a few blocks you will drop. You will wither and die, because you are using up the very life that is in you and there is no renewal of that life. As a separate branch there is nothing feeding you that can keep you alive beyond the time it takes to use up the substance that is in you." Now let us graft that branch back on to the trunk of the tree and let us look down through the trunk into the roots, and then look down through the roots into the very earth and notice how something called food or energy is being drawn into the roots, transmuted, sent up through the trunk, out through the branches — until eventually we have green shoots, blossoms, buds, and finally fruit. Here we see the whole secret of the fifteenth chapter of John, because we now know that the branch in and of itself cannot have fruit. The branch is only the place where the tree hangs the fruit.

If you observe the tree carefully, you will find this to be true: Behind the food or energy that goes into the roots, there must be an invisible Something which draws into the tree from the earth the very qualities which that particular tree requires. It has nothing to do with the qualities which the tree next to it draws forth, but just the qualities which that particular tree draws. In other words there must be an invisible Intelligence operating in and through the tree which draws unto the tree its own. It must be operating in the ground to send forth food into the roots; it must be operating in the roots to transmute it into sap; it must be operating in the trunk to draw the sap up into the trunk and out into the branches, and again be transmuted from sap to leaves, buds, blossoms and fruit. You then begin to perceive the nature of spiritual truth.

There is an invisible Something that fills all space. There is an invisible Something which sends a seed forth into visibility. Imagine for a moment a newly planted seed, and then watch as the seed breaks open, takes root and then comes forth as a shoot. Remember that nothing was happening while the seed was in the palm of your hand. But the moment it was placed in its rightful element, Something commenced to operate in, on, and through that seed and eventually sent it forth into a redwood tree, an orange tree, or a coconut tree. You then have the secret of the activity of God. It is an invisible Something which cannot be defined, analyzed, or explained, and those who seek explanations or definitions are wasting their time in mental acrobatics because it is an impossibility for the mind of man to grasp the nature of this Infinite Invisible. We know only the effects we witness. We never witness the activity of the Invisible except by Its fruits, by Its results, by Its effects.

We now have God as an infinite Invisible, as Omnipresence, as Omnipotence, as Omniscience, as infinite Intelligence and divine Love. That is as far as we can go in knowing Its nature, and we only know Its nature by the effects. Knowing there is this Invisible, knowing Its nature and Its power, and knowing that It is closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet, our next step is: "Ye shall *know*." What you consciously know is what can take place in your experience. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."<sup>10</sup> Why? Because you demonstrate that which you know. That which you make a part of your consciousness is what you bring forth into expression.

Right here this question arises: "Am I then responsible for the evils and the ills that are, or were, in my life?" You are responsible in one way — ignorance. Through ignorance of this truth you have become an antenna for the world's beliefs. Therefore, if the world says you must catch cold

<sup>10</sup> Galatians, 6: 8.

because of the weather, some of you will catch cold. As each universal human belief flies through the air we, because of our ignorance of Truth, become victims of whatever the universal belief may be. It is for this reason we have been told: "You must know the truth ... *you* must choose this day whom you will serve ... if *you* sow to the flesh you will reap corruption, if *you* sow to the Spirit you will reap life everlasting." The action lies with *you*, and each day you are called upon to make a choice as to whether your life is to be governed by universal belief or by the activity of the infinite, invisible Spirit that is already "closer to you than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."

There are many reasons why the secret of Jesus' teachings has been kept from the world, but the time is past when it can be kept secret any longer. When you read in Scripture: "Before Abraham was, I am."<sup>11</sup> ... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.<sup>12</sup> ... Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,"<sup>13</sup> you are entitled to know what it means and what its application is in your individual life. As an heir of God you are entitled to know the whole and complete Truth of God, which is: "I AM in the midst of thee. I AM with you and I will be with you unto the end of the world." We are now speaking of that Infinite Invisible which we term God — which you may call by any name you like. God IS in the midst of you. It may be that the particular concept of God you have been entertaining is an erroneous concept, but it does not change the fact that God IS in the midst of you.

This Truth has been a secret for centuries: There is only one God. Each church, each religion, each philosophy has believed there is one God — and that only they have found It. Let us make this very clear: No one is ever going to bring the activity of God into his individual experience if he believes there is a Jewish God, a Buddhist God, a Protestant God, a Catholic God or a Vedantist God. You will never understand God or know God until you come to an

actual conscious realization of the truth that there is but one God, and it makes no difference what church you go into or what church you remain out of. There is still one God, and it is within *you*. It is with you if you mount up to heaven, it is with you if you make your bed in hell, and it is with you if you walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Even if you are the woman taken in adultery or the thief on the cross, God is with you and is closer to you than breathing — and will function at the moment of your recognition of It. It was her recognition of the presence of the Christ that brought the woman taken in adultery her forgiveness, and it was the recognition of the presence of God by the thief on the cross that enabled the Master to say to him, "I will take you with me into paradise this very night." In the moment of your recognition of the one God, though your sins were scarlet, you are white as snow.

We come now to the Master's revelation, "Call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."<sup>14</sup> It makes no difference whether you are Jew or Gentile, with or without a religion, with or without a church, you have the same Father that everyone else has! There is but one Father, and you do not have to go to holy mountains or to holy temples to find Him. "The kingdom of God is neither lo here! nor lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."<sup>15</sup> Whatever your state of being may be — purity or sin, wealth or poverty, health or disease — there is still only one Father, one God, and that one invisible, infinite Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Omniscience. And you cannot influence God!

None of the prayers that were ever formed, written, printed, or voiced, will ever move God. All of the prayers uttered throughout the world will not influence God to set the sun back one hour, or to bring it

<sup>11</sup> John, 8: 58.

<sup>12</sup> Hebrews, 13: 5.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew, 28: 20.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew, 23: 9.

<sup>15</sup> Luke, 17: 20,21.

up an hour sooner, or to establish peace on earth tomorrow. You will discover how impossible it is to influence, move, or affect God in any way, and this is good news. You cannot stop God being God. God is! "I will never leave you" nor forsake you. Never! Never! If you mount up to heaven or if you make your bed in hell, I will never leave you." The beauty of the contemplative way of life is this: You do not have to try to influence God. It is enough to receive God's Grace. It is enough to be able to relax and acknowledge, "God is."

I wish with all my heart that everyone on the face of the globe would be inspired to bring about one spiritual healing, because it would change the history of the world. A strange thing happens with spiritual healing. You find that anyone who asks for it responds to it, whether they are white or black, or whether they are Jews, Protestants, Catholics or Vedantists—and without having to go to church and without having to pray or read a certain number of pages in a book. Anyone who desires spiritual healing receives it, and you then begin to perceive that God is no respecter of persons, religions, or churches.

As you follow a contemplative way of life, you will begin to understand why it is inevitable that every sin, whether of omission or commission, brings forth a punishment. It has nothing to do with God, because God is "too pure to behold iniquity." Punishment has to do with the law of cause and effect, karmic law. In other words you set in motion that which comes back to you. If you sow to the flesh you reap corruption; if you sow to the Spirit you reap life everlasting. You do it, not God! God has nothing to do with punishment, so you do not have to fear a God who punishes in this world or the next world. All you have to be concerned about is that you are not setting in motion today some thought or thing that is going to react upon you tomorrow, because while you are living the human life you are setting into motion the law of cause and effect.

When, however, the spirit of God dwells in you, you then lose the capacity to be

good or bad. Those who have been touched by the Spirit of God can never again be either good or bad. They have no capacity of their own. They have no capacity to do or to be, they have only the capacity to show forth God's glory. They are merely instruments now, externalizations of the Invisible that is governing them.

In the contemplative way of life you begin by consciously knowing the Truth; and daily you make a decision. Upon awakening in the morning, before getting out of bed, you set the scene for the entire day: "This day is a messenger of God, and this day brings into my experience God's grace, God's law, God's life, God's presence, and God's power. I choose this day whom I will serve. My heart, my soul, my mind is filled with the conscious realization of the presence of God. I surrender myself unto God. I listen for the still, small Voice — that It may guide, lead and direct." You are then knowing the Truth, you are choosing, and you are sowing to the Spirit. Throughout the day you have brief two minute, three minute, five minute reminders: "This day is a messenger of God, for this day is bringing the presence and the power of God into my experience. This day is revealing God's glory. The heavens declare the glory of God, the earth showeth forth His handiwork. God's grace is being revealed in my experience every moment of every day."

This is the beginning of the contemplative way of life. As you progress, the form of contemplation takes a different direction. Instead of statements, declarations and affirmations, the next step is that of becoming a beholder. You now awaken in the morning and it is almost as if you had stepped an inch in back of yourself, so that you could look over your own shoulder and say: "Throughout this day I will be a beholder of God at work. I will not try to influence God to do something for me. I will merely behold that which God is doing." It might be compared to beholding a sunrise or a sunset. You cannot take any part in bringing them about; you must be detached in order to really watch God's grace at work. In other words you cannot participate in



what is taking place — you can merely behold God's grace in action — not only in your experience of the world.

And so it is that the contemplative life goes from one step to another, one experience to another, until the final stage is reached. In this stage the beholder and that which is beheld become one. There is no longer God and me. As a matter of fact there is no longer a "me". It is that stage revealed by Paul: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."<sup>16</sup> There is a Presence that goes before me to make the crooked places straight. There is a Presence always with me as protection, safety, security, peace, and harmony. In that final step it is revealed that the very I of my being is a confirmation of what the Master taught: "I will never leave me nor forsake me," and that very I at the centre of my being is then revealed to be the I that I AM, the I that will never leave me, the I that goes before me, the I that is the bread, the meat, the wine and the water of life, the very Presence Itself which is the spiritual being I AM.

What the contemplative way of life does is to graft the branch of the tree back on to the trunk, so that the branch is no longer bearing fruit of its own. The branch is no longer having a life of its own because it is no longer a branch — it is a part of a tree. When you look at a tree you do not say, "Oh! you are a branch." You look at a tree and you say, "You are a tree," and that is the final revelation. You then realize that you are the very life that animates your being, the very wisdom, intelligence and love. That is why It is "closer than breathing."

Once you are *consciously* one with God, you are no longer living your own life. Your life is being lived for you, in you, through you, by the Life Itself. The Life is your life, the infinite Life, the immortal Life, the eternal Life. That is why to "know Him aright" is life eternal. You now understand God to be the Invisible which is operating in the ground, in the branch, in the trunk, the Invisible which is operating upon a seed

and making it a tree, the Invisible which is operating upon a seed and bringing forth another human life. And once you know that the invisible Life is your life, that the Invisible is the very Being of you, the presence, the power, the wisdom, the intelligence and the love, you are then consciously one with It and It can fulfil Itself in your experience.

Imagine for a moment what would happen in your experience if you could accept this Truth: "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."<sup>17</sup> Think what that would do in your relationship with others. Think what would happen if you actually acknowledge that you and I are brothers and sisters. Jealousy, envy, malice, lust, greed and fear would disappear. As brothers and sisters what have we to fear? In the spiritual family God is the Father and we are heirs, so we have no need of anything from each other. Think what it would mean if you could fully accept the spiritual principle that there is only one Father, which is the universal Source of your supply, your life, your love, your protection — and that you never again have to look to someone else, except to share as families do. Consider its effect as the world would witness a group here and a group there, actually living in love because of the recognition that there is one Father, one Source.

As we meditate in contemplation of such truths, and find ourselves at-one with our Source, we receive inspiration that manifests itself in our business, our art, or our profession — ideas that our own education or wisdom could not have dreamed of — powers and strength that we ourselves are not capable of. We actually find ourselves the outlet for an infinite Source, which is really the ultimate object of the contemplative way of life. It is life lived not as a separate branch, but as a branch of a tree that is part of the whole and draws its all from the centre of its own being through an invisible, infinite activity of good.

<sup>16</sup> Galatians, 2: 20.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew, 23: 9.



There can be just as many religions on earth as there are to-day and just as many churches, and yet we could all live with peace on earth and good will to men once the acknowledgment is made that there is only one Father, which is your Father and my Father — and that all of this is not to be found in the books or the ceremonies or the rites of the church — but in *you*. It is within you, wherever you may be, whenever you may be, and whatever your present condition may be. We can then worship inside a church or outside a church and, better still, we can even worship in each other's church!

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## MOTHER'S LAMENT

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

From all and sundry oft my child had heard  
 Of the dear might of Ramana. Much concerned,  
 I warned her to have naught with him. But she,  
 Brushing aside my fears as fancies, sought  
 To grasp and hold, clear, firm within her heart  
 His heavenly form. The world laughs now at her,  
 For she has tasted maddening bread, glimpsed Truth,  
 The poison whose sole antidote is more  
 And more of It, till one has eaten all.

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For one who knows that all is Brahman there is nothing to meditate upon and no one who meditates.

— MAHANIRVANA TANTRA.

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## SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

By PROF. EKNATH EASWARAN

“Know God, and all fetters will be loosed,” declares the Svetasvatara Upanishad. “Ignorance will vanish. Birth, death and rebirth will be no more. Meditate upon Him and transcend physical consciousness. Thus will you reach union with the Lord of the universe. Thus will you become identified with Him who is One without a second. In Him all your desires will find fulfilment.”

What are our desires, our real desires? On the surface level of consciousness they seem to be for personal pleasure, personal profit and personal power; but the more we have of them, the more we crave for them, the more frustrated we become. This is because our driving need, in the depths of our consciousness, is not for what is finite but for what is infinite; and the only purpose that can be served by the finite is to make us know experimentally that it can never fulfil our real need, that “whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.”

Our real desire, our driving need, is for God, whether we know it or not; and we cannot have perfect peace until we find Him, until we realize Him in the depths of our consciousness. As Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

The Sacred Scriptures of ancient India declare that God is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* — Infinite Existence, Infinite Consciousness, Infinite Bliss. It is through my spiritual teacher, that I have come to understand a little of the tremendous significance of this declaration.

“What did you learn today?” asked Granny when I returned home from college in the evening, many years ago.

“Logic,” I answered airily, “Syllogism.” I rolled the word round on my tongue like a real scholar.

“Show me one,” she said with the disarming directness of those who are free from book-learning, or what Sri Ramakrishna calls rice and banana knowledge.

“All men are mortal,” I reeled off the stock syllogism. “I am a man. Therefore I am mortal. That is logic.”

“But it is not true,” smiled Granny, her eyes bright with faith. “We shed our bodies, but we do not die. We are immortal.”

“Who told you so?” I asked.

“You don’t have to take anybody’s word for that. It is of little use. You must realize it for yourself through devotion to God.”

That was many years ago. Today I would put the syllogism thus: “All men are immortal. I am a man. Therefore I am immortal.”

When you say I am mortal, you are referring not to me but to the house in which I am living at present. My body is, of course, changing, but I am changeless. As long as I identify myself with my body, senses and mind which are changing, I shall be subject to the great change that is called death. If only I can break through this obsessive identification, I shall then know experimentally that I am the Christ within, changeless, eternal. As Sri Ramana Maharshi would say, when we *disidentify* ourselves with what is changing, that which remains is changeless Reality.

There is only one way in which I can succeed in disidentifying myself with what is changing, and that is by being united with the Divine Ground of our existence. Listen to the song of Kabir, a great saint of mediaeval India:

“O Friend, hope for Him whilst you live, know whilst you live, understand whilst you live; for in life deliverance abides.

If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what hope of deliverance in death ?

It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have union with Him because it has passed from the body ;

If He is found now, He is found then ;  
If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death."

Kabir is driving home into our hearts that when we realize God in the depths of our consciousness we pass, here and now, from death to immortality. This is neither metaphorical nor metaphysical language, but a calm, clear statement of what happens to us in the tremendous experience called Samadhi (or Self-realization) when we realize God as *Sat* or Infinite Existence. "Seeing Him alone, one transcends death, there is no other way," says the Svetasvatara Upanishad.

"How can we see Him ? What are the conditions we must fulfil to see Him in the depths of our consciousness ?" Jesus answers the question in the Sermon on the Mount : "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

As long as we have the slightest taint of selfish craving in us, we cannot realize the Self. The Buddha calls this selfish craving by the expressive name of *tanha* or thirst and traces all human suffering to it.

"The thirst of a thoughtless man grows like a creeper ; he runs from life to life like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest. Whomsoever this fierce poisonous thirst overcomes in this world, his sufferings increase like the abounding Birana grass.

"But for him who overcomes this fierce thirst, difficult to be conquered in this world, sufferings fall off like water drops from a lotus leaf."

The overcoming of this fierce thirst, the purification of the human heart, cannot be brought about through the senses or the intellect. These are no doubt very useful instruments in dealing with finite objects of the phenomenal world, but they can be of very little use in bringing about the transformation of character, conduct and cons-

sciousness so that we may become pure in heart. "All that the imagination can imagine and the reason conceive and understand," points out St. John of the Cross, "cannot be a proximate means of union with God."

For this we need a higher mode of knowing, developed through meditation, which will enable us to dive deep below the surface level of consciousness so that we can transform selfish craving into selflessness, ill-will into goodwill, hatred into love. It is impossible to do this as long as our senses are rebellious, as long as our mind is restless. "When all the senses are stilled, when the mind is at rest, when the intellect wavers not, then, say the wise, is reached the highest state." — Katha Upanishad.

In other words, when we still our senses, when we still our mind, we pass then and there into a higher state of consciousness in which we are no longer separate fragments but are at one with all creation. "The rout and destruction of the passions, while it is good, is not the ultimate good ; the discovery of Wisdom is the surpassing good. When this is found, all the people will sing," says Philo.

This rout and destruction of the passions, as Philo calls it, this extinction of all selfish craving, as the Buddha terms it, is the travail of labour for a man to be born again of the Spirit. As Jesus reveals to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Meditation may rightfully be described as the most dynamic, most creative, most significant function of which man is capable because it can lead him, by bringing about the death of all that is selfish in him, to the selfless state of Christ-Consciousness, called *Chit* by the Hindu sages.

God is *Ananda* or Infinite Bliss, and He has made us in His image for infinite bliss. How then can we ever be content with the fleeting satisfactions brought by money, or pleasure, or power, or fame ? As I understand it, these have served their purpose when they have helped us to know experimentally that nothing fleeting or finite can

ever satisfy our driving, deepest need. As Ruysbroeck puts it with deep insight, "Knowledge of ourselves teaches us whence we come, where we are and whither we are going. We come from God and we are in exile; and it is because our potency of affection tends towards God that we are aware of this state of exile."

When we become aware of this state of exile, we long more and more, day by day, for God who is our home. It is this intense longing for the Lord of Love that leads to the integration of our character, to the unification of our consciousness, to the complete purification of our heart. "The Self is not to be known through study of the Scriptures, nor through the subtlety of the intellect, nor through much learning: But by him who longs for him is he known. Verily unto him does the Self reveal his true being." — *Katha Upanishad*.

We do not long for him intensely because of our selfish attachment to the passing pleasures of the world. Our modern civilization is essentially a sensate one, in which we are being conditioned, by the vast network of mass communication media around us, to believe that we get more and more satisfaction out of life as our senses are stimulated more and more. For a person who is enmeshed by the senses, it is impossible to suspect that he is being drawn by them towards increasing frustration disguised skillfully as increasing fulfilment. He is a prisoner who is clinging to the bars of his prison. As the *Bhagavad Gita* warns us,

"Thinking about sense-objects  
Will attach you to sense-objects;  
Grow attached, and you become  
addicted;  
Thwart your addiction, it turns to  
anger;  
Be angry, and you confuse your mind;  
Confuse your mind, you forget the  
lesson of experience;  
Forget experience, you lose discrimi-  
nation;  
Lose discrimination, and you miss  
Life's only purpose."

This raging thirst for sensory satisfaction, for selfish satisfaction, is rooted in the age-old, race-old fallacy that I am the body, senses and mind. This *primaevae* ignorance can be dispelled only by loving God with "all our heart and all our soul, and with all our strength and with all our mind."

"How do we come to love God?" some of my Western friends ask: "It is much easier said than done." We can do so through the practice of meditation on divine attributes using appropriate passages from the Scriptures and the repetition of the Holy Name.

With our gradual progress in meditation we begin to develop the freedom to withdraw our desires from channels which can lead only to increasing frustration, and to re-direct them to the Supreme Goal, which can lead us only to increasing fulfilment. And Jesus said unto them: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

During the first half of our pilgrimage towards the Supreme Goal of life, we have to sail under our own steam; but during the latter half we feel the irresistible pull from the Lord of Love and begin to realize that it is through His infinite grace that we are able to move closer and closer towards the One Light that gives light to all. "Thus spake Jesus again unto them, saying, 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'"

To conclude with the perfect words of St. Anselm, "Lord, teach me to seek Thee and reveal Thyself to me when I seek Thee. For I cannot seek Thee except Thou teach me, nor find Thee except Thou reveal Thyself. Let me seek Thee in longing, let me long for Thee in seeking; let me find Thee in love and love Thee in finding."

May we seek Him in longing; may we long for Him in seeking; may we find Him in love; and love Him in finding.



“BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT”

—ST. MATTHEW, V, 48.

By SAGITTARIUS

One of the hidden pearls I alluded to in my article of April, 1964, one of those sayings of Christ's which modern Christians ignore, is his injunction to his followers to be perfect as God is perfect. But it is worse than that; they do not merely ignore it but deny its possibility, thereby revealing a presumptuous disagreement with the Master they claim to follow.

There is no more fundamental injunction in the whole Bible than this, for it is the injunction to realize the Supreme Identity. For how can you be perfect without being One with the Father? Christ himself said that only God is good (St. Mark, X, 18). Furthermore he reminded his Jewish critics of the saying in their own scriptures: "I said: 'You are gods'". He referred to men as 'sons of God' and bade them address God as 'Father'; and St. Paul also told them that they were all sons of God in Christ. If, then, a man is the son of God and can be called a God and (as Christ also said) contains the kingdom of heaven within him, what is this but the Supreme Identity?

This injunction marks Christianity as a complete religion envisaging and striving after the Supreme Goal of Identity or Self-Realization, referred to in Hinduism as Moksha, in Buddhism as Nirvana, in Sufism as Fana. By denying its possibility, Christ's purblind followers have degraded their religion, which they still honour with his name, to the lower level of one that envisages only the proximate goal of a purified individuality in a formal paradise. A high goal, no doubt, but not the highest, not the perfection Christ enjoined, not real goodness, for "only God is good".

So resourceful is the human mind, however, that the blinkered theologians who have thus rejected Christ's command and

restricted his religion have managed to turn the tables and make out the inferiority thus accepted to be superiority. They admit the truth of Christ's saying 'I and my Father are One' but limit it to him alone, so that if they have only one Perfect Man, other religions have none at all.

This belief is on a painfully low level of intelligence. Divine laws are universal. Even physically this is obvious, so how much more spiritually! The true doctrine of Identity is simple and yet at the same time intellectually satisfying. Being is One; therefore you cannot be other because there is no other; therefore if you realize your true Self you realize your identity with the One, the Father, and are perfect, as He is perfect. Only the imperfections of your apparent individual nature make you appear other; therefore if you remove them and become perfect, as the One is perfect, you realize your pre-existent Identity with the One. In place of this they put a myth to be taken on faith: that some perfect but not infinite or universal Being (how can he be infinite or universal if he excludes others?) creates a lot of separate imperfect beings and among them one perfect one. Apart from that, he makes it a rule that none of them can become perfect, although this one who is tells them to. No wonder they have to ignore or reject Christ's sayings if they want to foist so crude a doctrine on people.

This impossibility of obeying Christ's injunction to be perfect has become an article of faith with many who call themselves Christians. One of them once asked Swami Ramdas whether it is possible for a man to be perfect and without sin, and when the Swami cheerfully answered, 'Yes', he looked shocked as though he had heard some blasphemy.

Have none of the Christian saints and mystics attained the perfection of conscious Identity? It is clear from the records they have left that some of them have had an intellectual understanding of it, fortified by at least occasional glimpses of Realized Identity. Eckhart certainly came near enough to be excommunicated. "Thou shalt lose thy thy-ness and dissolve in his his-ness; they thine shall be his mine, so utterly one mine that thou in him shalt know eternalwise his is-ness, free from becoming, his nameless nothingness."

The Protestant mystic Jacob Boehme said, as I quoted in my article of Oct. 1964: "God has become that which I am and has made me that which He is." The mystic

Tauler said: "When through all manner of exercises the outer man has been converted into the inward man, then the Godhead nakedly descends into the depths of the pure soul, so that the Spirit becomes one with Him." The modern Christian mystic Joel Goldsmith reiterates it constantly throughout his books.

Now is a time of crass materialism among the masses, both learned and ignorant, and of earnest seeking by the few. It is not too much to hope that some at least of Christ's followers will assume that he really meant what he said and refuse to be hobbled and blinkered any longer by those who claim to speak in his name.

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## SIMPLICITY

A Note by ALAN CHADWICK\*

It seems to me that people make sadhana dreadfully complicated. They seem to believe that the more complicated it is the better. One reads so many unnecessarily complicated modern books and meets so many seekers who come to the Ashram but seem to find the absolutely simple and straightforward teaching of the Maharshi about the One Self too simple to be true. They find its very simplicity confusing!

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\* For whom see our Ashram Bulletin of Jan. 1964.

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Leave objects to look after themselves, if any, and recognise the absence of their subject as an object.

— WEI WU WEI.

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## THE SILENCE OF THE MIND

By ROBERT LINSSEN

We publish this article by one of the most eminent Western exponents of Zen not because *The Mountain Path* is concerned with the views of modern psychology as to mental processes or accepts all its findings, but because of the author's conclusion that thought must finally be stilled and that the ego, who is the thinker, resists this process as long as it can, owing to its "instinct for self-preservation". With profound intuition and cogent reasoning, he uses psychology to undermine the conception of a psyche.

In order to know ourselves we must be able to answer a quadruple question: What do we think? Why do we think? How do we think? and finally: Who thinks?

In the West most of us claim to be positive and realistic. In fact we are incoherent in our inner life. As long as we are unaware of the deep motives of our thoughts and of our desires and actions we are incoherent and there is spiritual disorder.

We are well aware, as a matter of fact, that most human beings today are unable to answer the questions why or how we think. Progress made in psychology has made it clear to us how inaccurately we answer even the simplest of all questions: What do we think? We know that the conscious part of ourselves, that which we know with relative clearness, is only a small part of our total self. Beyond this peripheral and superficial consciousness there lie a series of deep layers forming the unconscious. We can consider it a huge recording of the past, full of the scorings of all incomplete actions, incomplete thoughts, incomplete emotions. It is a fact that a complete act, a complete thought, leaves no score on the mind. As Lao Tzu said: "He who walks with Tao leaves no trace."

The Zen 'unconscious' or Krishnamurti's 'unknown' are, on the contrary, absolutely new (to the mind). They are not a result. We can reach the Zen 'unconscious' only by freeing ourselves of the contents of the 'collective unconscious.' It is easy to understand that we can attain full

realization of the Present only by liberating our mind from all identification with the past.

The answer to the questions how and why we think can only be given after having solved this first question of what we think. It is far more complex and goes far beyond the field generally explored by psychoanalysis. In my works I have explained in all detail the operational process of an 'associative habit' which, from the atom to human thought, passing through molecules, cells, amoeba and all other stages, continually works by accumulation, leading to the supreme crystallisation, both psychic and psychological, of the 'me' or 'ego'. Thought is the manifestation of an 'associative habit' on the psychological level.

We associate ourselves with objects: with our bank account, our name, our body, our political, philosophical and religious ideas, with memories of our relationship with different things or of our psycho-physical environment.

The feeling of our continuity and psychological solidity is the result of rapid and complex superimpositions of thoughts. All of them converge towards the same goal: the possibility of experiencing oneself as a distinct and continuous entity. It is in this direction that we must investigate if we wish to be able to answer the double question what and how we think.

Thought may be regarded as an invaluable aid to the ego's instinct for self-preser-

vation. It is the direct result of the above-mentioned 'associative habits'. To believe that we think freely is wrong. We are thought. We do not possess our faculties but are possessed by them. We shall go on being their unconscious slaves as long as we remain unable to answer the fundamental questions here raised.

Symbols, pictures, mental clichés appear unceasingly in our mind, some seeming coherent, others totally incoherent. We sometimes wonder why an absurd idea comes into our mind, but these 'intruders', as some psychologists call them, are not really as distinct from us as we suppose. No thought that comes to us is a complete stranger. Those that we call reasonable and those that seem to us idiotic or queer all come from the same centre. Periodic pulsions bring them up ceaselessly. As soon as one thought comes to our mind another appears. We do not allow the first to come to an end to make way for the second; before the second can end its course a third appears. Why? We *must* think; we *must* think quickly ... quickly ... quickly.

Why is it that our mind brings up these ceaseless thoughts? There is one evident reason which no modern psychologist has admitted up to now, and which many would probably find it embarrassing to admit. Zen Buddhism and Krishnamurti's thought concur here in perfect agreement in their answer: "Thought must be considered a reflex or autodefence of a fundamental fear." Fear of what? Fear of being nothing, fear of a lack of continuity. Does this mean that if we were able to live one moment of perfect mental silence, perfectly relaxed, we should no longer have the conviction of personal continuity?

Yes! The experience of oneself as a continuous psychologically distinct entity results from the rapidity and complexity of the mental process. We feel consciousness as a continuous duration: from yesterday, through to-day, towards tomorrow. But *this feeling of continuity is illusory.*

There is discontinuity in matter as well as in consciousness. They are expressions

of one and the same completely discontinuous energy. The feeling of continuity of consciousness can be compared to the apparent continuity that the gesture of raising an arm seen on a cinema screen may give. We have the impression of a continuous action but this is in fact the result of a succession of disconnected pictures of the arm, each one a little higher. It is the same with thought. The mental life is not in fact continuous.

Between two thoughts there is an interval of silence. If we were to face up to this the illusory nature of our ego would immediately be revealed to us. If an instant of real silence in our mental activity were located we should immediately become aware of the vanity of the comedy we play to ourselves.

This would be Liberation. What prevents us from achieving it? A force of inertia, very deep, powerful and obscure, opposes it. In some scriptures it is characterised as the 'old man' whom we have to get rid of. In Buddhism it is the fundamental 'tanha', the greed of becoming. It is also personified as Satan, from an old Semitic root meaning 'I resist'. What do I resist? I resist awareness as impersonal Being-Knowledge-Bliss.

From the experimental point of view the problem may be stated as follows: we have to appreciate that mental activity is the expression of a fundamental fear, the fear of being nothing, fear of lack of continuity as a separate entity. In a word, we have to feel and understand that thought is the outcome of our greed to become something, of our thirst for personal duration.

This is not mere theory. When this desire for continuity and ego-duration is seen for what it is, the endless flow of thoughts ceases and mental silence becomes a reality. The ego is then seen to be an illusion. The past is washed away by a fathomless presence that our language cannot express. At this level words like 'Being', 'Love', 'Plenitude of Consciousness' (Satchitananda) might be used; too often, however, words are ill understood and become treacherous or lead to treason.



Some have asked who it is that sees in this state. One can say immediately that it is not the ego. It is 'Satchitananda'. It cannot be the ego because he is the prisoner of his conditioning. The 'me' which is conditioned cannot free the 'me'. When I spoke of the need to feel and understand, I referred to a state of complete perception in which there is no approval, no judgment, no choice, no memory, in fact nothing which is personal. Only pure impersonal awareness of the Real remains. As Chuang Tzu said: we have to be like a perfect mirror. "The perfect mirror sees everything but does not

accumulate or choose" Such is pure perception.

The important thing is to make a practical study of the process of thinking. It is not enough to read books on psychology because they generally deal only with the outermost aspects of the problem. Knowledge of Self is a constant awareness. There is no lasting happiness so long as the illusion of an ego remains with its identifications and its violence. Going beyond oneself is not a failure but Victory. The ancient Chinese Sages called it 'going home'.

#### NOTICE

Subscribers are requested to renew their subscriptions for 1966 at an early date. Their attention is invited to the circular enclosed herewith.

We sometimes receive complaints of non-receipt of copies of the journal rather very late. We send copies to our subscribers as soon as the journals are ready in the first week of January, April, July and October to the addresses registered with us and non-receipt may be due to our not being notified of change of address in time. Notifications should reach us at least one week ahead of the beginning of the months of despatch. Complaints of non-receipt of copies will not be entertained by us if made after the month of issue by subscribers in India or after three months in case of oversea subscribers.

V. GANESAN,  
Managing Editor.

## SPONTANEOUS AWAKENING

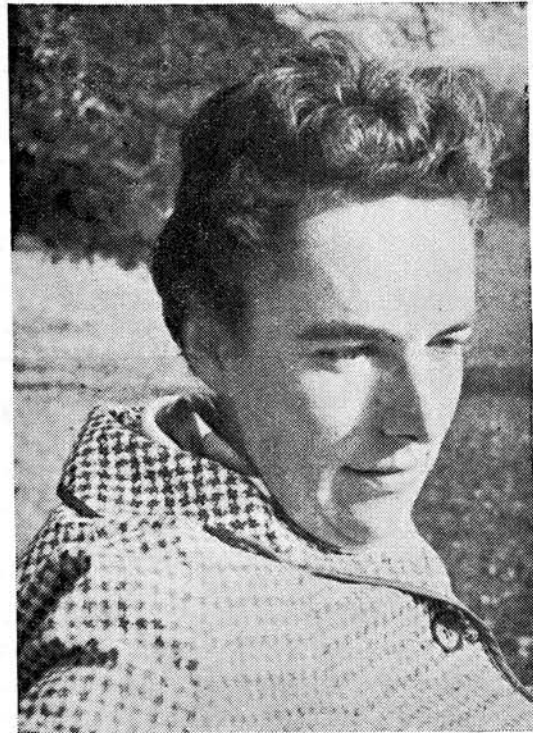
By DOUGLAS E. HARDING

Readers of *The Mountain Path* already know D. E. Harding from his article, 'Self-Enquiry, Some Objections Answered', in our issue of April, 1964. In the present article he tells a story showing how "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth," independent of forms and traditions.

This is the first article to be published about a very remarkable (yet outwardly very unremarkable) young Englishwoman. It is a brief description of how her life has, almost without warning and practically overnight, been altogether revolutionised, written by a friend who has throughout been her close companion and sole confidant. Its purpose is to encourage all serious spiritual seekers, and particularly those who imagine that true Illumination is necessarily a long way off, or almost impossibly difficult, or the preserve of some particular sect or religion, or indeed the product of any religious discipline at all. The case of Helen Day Scrutton shows that you never can tell. It brings home to us afresh, in our own time and circumstances, the tremendous reality of what Masefield calls the "glory of the lighted soul", demonstrating in the most concrete and vivid way the joy and splendour that await us all just around the corner of our life: no, press right in upon us here and now, as we read these words. We can't be too often reminded, not only of the existence of our Infinite Treasure, but also of its perfect accessibility and naturalness, its homeliness and handiness and immense practicality, and above all its aliveness. To remain satisfied with anything less than This just doesn't make sense.

It was about four years ago when I first met Helen. Since then we've worked very closely together all the while in the same organisation, seeing a great deal of each other during the day, and increasingly when off duty. I should know her fairly well.

Let me try to describe the first impression she made. (If this sounds like an employer's



*Helen*

testimonial, why that's what it is, after all — but with what a difference!) I saw Helen as a lively, healthy-minded and healthy-bodied, very intelligent but not at all intellectual woman in her late twenties. In repose, her face was on the stolid side, with splendid eyes, but what brightness when she smiled! She proved quick to learn all the complex details of her job, practical and level-headed, conscientious after her own independent fashion, humorous, tactful and easy with people as a rule, and unusually patient and self-controlled when things went wrong. In short, a Treas-

sure! No nonsense about Helen — not even powder or lipstick (that I've detected, anyway) — athletic, clear-complexioned, scrupulously turned out, good-looking in an unobtrusive way, not pretty. The ideal confidential secretary and a charming friend.

But I still felt obliged, in the end, to take Helen to task. It seemed to me that she didn't know her own value. Her job, though a responsible one, could lead nowhere, and she was clearly capable of something much more creative. Her interests — tennis, swimming, fairly wide but desultory reading (which included few religious books and certainly no mystical ones), listening to music of all kinds, some youth-club work (neglected in recent years), regular but unenthusiastic Church-of-England attendance, and the sort of superficial friendships such a cheerful and popular young person would naturally make — these seemed not to reflect her true character and potentialities. I had the cheek to tell her so, rather often. She offered no comment. But she did, eventually, make serious plans to train as a probation officer. And a wonderful one she would have made.

We were fond of each other, without seeming to make any deep contact. Inevitably she got to know about my concern with spiritual matters, but no pressure at all was exerted: I had no desire to steer her in that or any other direction. And certainly she seemed a most unlikely subject — altogether too normal and down-to-earth, not a spiritual type at all! (In a certain sense, I still think she isn't, thank God!) Besides (and how unlike so many of us, how spiritually unfashionable, almost reprehensible!) Helen solemnly assured me that she'd loved and been loved by her admirable parents, led a happy childhood, enjoyed her grammar school (she must have been a fine head prefect), and found her office work pleasant enough. Her most testing experience was the loss of her fiancé; and in fact death, or some other insuperable obstacle, has intervened to break no fewer than three engagements. (The significance of this seeming tragedy isn't lost on her, of course, and

she is now more than happy to remain single and quite unattached to any man.) No, Helen is altogether too well-balanced a young woman, lacking almost all the current credentials — no tangled complexes, no awful history of suffering, no prolonged and bitter struggle — to be what in fact she is, a most gifted mystic. (I suspect, really, that the best masters of the spiritual life were, like Ramana Maharshi, specially sane and healthy, the reverse of abnormal). Yet when she typed for me some article about mystical religion she scarcely seemed interested, and had less than usual to say. It's true that when she came to our house for an evening, or to stay for a day or two, she got into the habit of picking up one of my books on Vedanta or Sufism or Zen and reading it; and I noticed that she always finished what she'd started, however difficult or dull the author. She also read my own little book *On Having No Head* — but made nothing of it, I now learn. At the time, she was too polite to say so.

This brings me to the real beginning of the story — to May, 1964, and what we sometimes call the 'Ten Days that Shook the World'. Helen was off to Eastbourne for the Whitsun holiday, and anxious to take some of my books with her; I remember these included Aldous Huxley's *Perennial Philosophy*. Evidently she had become really interested. Something was happening.

A new Helen came back, deeply stirred and now eager to talk. "Douglas," she said (and I think I can quote almost the exact words: after all, it was only a few months ago), "I've just realised something: all this applies to me! And of course absolutely nothing else matters!" She explained how the whole thing had, after a few weeks of inward search, accompanied by increasing concern and tension, become perfectly clear to her: now it made sense, she'd taken it in, taken it to heart, and this was quite overwhelming. Those evenings that followed, when she walked alone for hours in the park, wearing dark glasses so that people shouldn't see that she was crying for joy at

the wonder of her discovery, the transformed world, the colours that positively sang, the exquisite beauty of everything (yes everything, including the 'rubbish' in those wire baskets)! Morning after morning in the office, I was to hear from Helen this kind of story. Often — indeed, usually — it was: "No sleep at all last night, Douglas: time just flashed by: again it was just joy, oneness, clarity, from the time I lay down to when I got up for breakfast, fresher than if I'd slept the whole night. The extraordinary thing is I never feel tired." I remember her explaining how she left home, and presently found herself at the office half a mile away, and the interval was just brightness, no-thinking, with no recollection of having walked at all. I remember also her trying to explain how, on other occasions, her walking was "just like taking the dog for a walk" — her legs and their movement had been like the dog's, nothing to do with her. It was a wonderfully free-and-easy feeling. Yes, Indeed!

Many other surprises were in store for us. Helen's tennis, always goodish, immediately became quite remarkably good, to the astonishment of the members of her club — and their greater astonishment and disappointment when she announced that she wasn't going to play any more, after completing the games that had already been fixed for her. Those games she won brilliantly, automatically. To me, her explanation was that she did nothing, her racquet did it all, the game played itself with a skill and ease she'd never known. Part of the secret (we agreed) must have been that whereas before she had always wanted very much to win, now she had no feelings at all one way or the other, and the resulting relaxation naturally helped her performance. But she insisted that *she* didn't do anything: again, she was the onlooker. (And, lest anyone should suppose she'd been reading Herrigel's book on Zen archery, I happen to know she still hasn't done so.)

All ambition, all other interests, had gone. The probation-officer project was dropped at once. In fact, Helen even discussed with

me the possibility of getting a routine job, such as a copy-typist's, which would interfere as little as possible with her new life. This idea, however, was soon scrapped because she found that her work, however complicated, practically did itself if she didn't interfere. More remarkably, it did itself (I noticed) even more accurately and rapidly than before. (It *had* to: we spent so much time in the office on other business, on our real business!) "Just let things happen," she said, "and they turn out perfectly. Do them deliberately, plan ahead, and they go wrong." Before, she'd generally been rather pressed for time: now, she had all the time in the world.

I'm sure everyone in the office noticed the change in her. One man who (somewhat unreasonably, I thought) she hadn't much liked, was now "quite nice really, and it was all Helen's fault." It was plain how happy she was. People asked what had come over her: she looked like a cat that had just had kittens, someone remarked. Not that she was changed beyond recognition: thank goodness the old, charmingly informal Helen, with most of her personal quirks, was still with us. There was nothing odd or unnatural or spectacular about the change in her: if anything, she was more truly normal and natural than ever. (So much so that some who don't know Helen very well, but have preconceived notions of the outward effects of Illumination, naturally doubt whether anything more than a psychological reorganisation, akin to those religious conversions which are common enough, has occurred in her. And, of course, one cannot find in Helen, or in any other, what one hasn't begun to find in oneself.) Her ego had never stuck out very far; now, it was imperceptible — except, perhaps, for occasional irritation with some particularly difficult client, or employer! "No, it comes back occasionally," she confessed to me, "but now I see clearly when it's there." (Lately, I think even this rare and trivial ego-symptom has disappeared, though she remains capable — we've just discovered — of momentary anger.) Obviously she no longer had moods, but was permanently



happy whatever happened. And she had no need to tell me about her changed feeling for people. Her heart really went out to them; she enjoyed and loved them, not equally (it's true) but far more than she'd ever done before. How many times she's walked into my office exclaiming: "What a wonderful person so-and-so is, Douglas!" — and her glowing face and shining eyes were eloquent of her feeling. At the same time she no longer saw us through the distorting spectacles of self-interest, but as we really were: and in some instances this shocked her. Unsuspected weaknesses and meannesses were now quite plain. Hidden motives showed themselves. She was no longer deceived.

And Helen had no time for the old social round, no time for idle chatter or hobbies or amusements — no time at all except for the one thing that mattered, and all her time for that alone! She somehow got out of those (always rather pointless) little lunch parties, all reading (including newspapers) except for books on *the* subject, her tennis of course, and even her swimming in the end.

It was the swimming that warned us that her tremendous spirit might be asking too much of her body. One evening in late July I drove Helen to her beach-hut, and as we parted something made me beg her to be very careful. She wasn't. Next morning at the office she told me how rough the sea had been, and how she'd got out beyond the breakers only to become mixed up with a large stinging jellyfish, and then (to cap it all) realised the strength of the current pulling away from the shore. She remained perfectly calm and content (these are roughly her own words) and just waited to see what would happen. Without any effort on her part, her body somehow took her shorewards, where a large wave just picked her up and deposited her quite gently on the beach. There she was surprised to find herself trembling and exhausted.

Helen had become much too careless of her health. She walked and walked goodness knows how far, though always with that

unhurried, loose-limbed, easy gait of hers, which is almost like the lope of some animal. She ate too little and irregularly, and rapidly lost weight. Night followed night without sleep — her new-found happiness was so great. (When, however, she did at last sleep it was, from then right up to now, always dreamlessly. This surprised her, because she had been used to dreaming a lot. It interested me, too, because, unlike her, I knew that one of the marks of the illumined is that they dream little or not at all.) After a few weeks of living like this, no wonder she went down with an attack of her old complaint of anaemia, and had to take it easy — physically. Spiritually, things continued to get better and better, though she couldn't understand how that was possible! If she then read and talked much less, this wasn't because she was tired, but so spiritually fresh that talking and reading books about It had become rather pointless. She was their Author; she was It.

The weeks following Helen's return from Eastbourne had been a time of ecstasy. Let me quote her own words, typical of that period, hastily scribbled on a scrap of paper without regard for grammar or punctuation, and only just rescued from destruction by me:

Light dazzling pure light clear brilliance  
A feeling of being carried away weight-  
lessness

11.00 — 5.30 time non-existent endless  
eternity

No physical tiredness sleep out of ques-  
tion feeling of exhilaration and  
peace. Happening for the first time  
like fog or a curtain dropped com-  
pletely away

This is all that matters for always

There must be a heaven on earth

Why explain? Words are useless and  
unnecessary. but the knowing con-  
stant.

(26th May, 1964)

I did suggest, at the time, that this phase of Helen's illumination (we called it the 'gorgeous technicolour' phase) would develop into an even profounder, more natural,

and virtually permanent state. And this soon happened, in fact. Is it possible for me to describe that state?

Perhaps it would be useful to summarise here by mentioning the four aspects — or moments, or stages — into which we have often divided (artificially, for the sake of description) the essential experience:

1. The VOID. This is the KEY, the indispensable basis. It means clearly *seeing*, at will, even all the time, that right here one is totally headless, bodiless, mindless, and in fact Nothing whatever.
2. LOVE. The result of this absolute contraction is an equal and opposite expansion, a great outward surge which leaves nobody and nothing out.
3. The ALONE. As thus all-embracing, one is the One, quite solitary, free, independent. These foolish words can give no idea of the Home-coming.
4. MYSTERY. Thus actually to be the Alone, Self-originating and Self-sufficient, is unspeakable wonder.

These four may give some slight clue to an Experience which is, of course, neither Helen's nor mine, but that of the One who is our Self; but really they won't do at all — they only import complications into what is perfect Clarity and Simplicity. Between this Clear Seeing, and the finest description of it, there must always remain an infinite gap. It isn't merely that words can't reveal It: they're what hide It.

Of course a certain amount of talk helped at the beginning. Just being with Helen, ready with encouragement and understanding when she needed them, and the occasional explanation of some puzzle, did make a good deal of difference. And I was able to put her on to those few — but very few — books which have been written out of first-hand experience, and protect her temporarily from the thousands that have not. I introduced her to Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, Rumi, the

*Upanishads*, Sankara, Ramana Maharshi, Lao-tzu, Huang-po and Hui-hai: notice I was careful not to plug any one tradition: it was imperative that Helen should find her own affinities. In fact, she was unable to pick and choose between them: each displayed for her an indispensable aspect of a single clear pattern. (Only, perhaps I should add, Ramana Maharshi has a very special appeal for us both.) Helen devoured these books, ignoring always the merely geographical and historical accidents and grasping the common essence. She had no real questions to ask me then, none at all.

A miracle it remains for us both, how suddenly and completely this wonderful thing has happened. But even miracles have some background, and obviously this one called for further investigation. How was it possible for Helen so rudely to jump the spiritual queue? We thought of the years of anxious searching, of austerities, marathons of meditation, which are traditionally reckoned the price of any real Illumination, and we marvelled. Was Helen one of those very rare exceptions to the rule? Then we discovered — not, of course, an explanation of her gift and her grace, but something of its history. She'd been a dark horse all along. Understandably, there'd been, throughout childhood and youth the flashes, the brief but lovely previews of heaven; but in addition something much more remarkable and significant. From her earliest schooldays onwards, she'd been in the habit of going off on her own, swimming, rambling, just sitting; and this solitude became more and more an essential part of her life-pattern. Latterly, her beach-hut had provided a convenient retreat where she used to sit, quite alone for hours, on summer evenings and at weekends. I asked what she had thought about. She replied — bless her! — just as if it were a stupid question to have asked: "Why, nothing! I just sat!" "Dozing?" I enquired. "Of course not. Quite wide awake, with an empty mind." Just like that! It's true the fact that there was something odd about this behaviour had already dawned upon her: her friends were inclined to regard it as self-indulgent, or

even morbid. Not that this had at all deterred Helen: the pleasure of merely sitting there was its own reward, and increasingly necessary to her well-being. But certainly it never occurred to her that this state of no-mind might have some religious or mystical significance, or was much more than an idiosyncrasy. If anyone had told her then — as I did later — that after months and years of sitting meditation a yogin would be doing well if he could avoid *all* wandering thoughts for a few minutes, whereas Helen was able to shed them\* for as long as she liked — why, if anyone had told her this she would have thought he was just teasing! I don't mean to imply, of course, that this strange accomplishment of hers was 'sitting meditation' in the full sense of that term, or spiritually mature: it was, as yet, far from Self-aware. But what better rehearsal for the Self-awareness she now enjoys could be imagined?

Well, that is Helen's story to date, in brief. It will be pointed out, of course, that having got off to a wonderful start, she still has a long, long way to go. In one sense, it's true: there's no end to This. But in a much deeper sense it's *the* lie. She has nowhere to go. She's where she has always been — HERE. What's more to the point, she has the nerve to see it, and to say she sees it, and to live every moment accordingly. That's all that matters.

For all genuine seekers, and particularly for us in the West, Helen should prove a huge encouragement. She doesn't want to be known — or unknown, for that matter — and is virtually indifferent to praise or ridicule.

But she agrees that others should take heart from her story — from this account of what can happen to a quite 'ordinary' person (in fact, of course, none of us — and certainly not Helen — is quite ordinary), and has happened so recently right here, under our noses, where almost everyone interested in these things suffers from a chronic spiritual inferiority complex. We all know the sort of thing: "It can't be done here. You have to go off to some cave in the Himalayas, or some Japanese monastery, and there you have to spend months just learning how to sit and breathe properly, and then you have to sit in meditation for perhaps the rest of your life, under the guidance of the right Master (and how difficult he is to find) before you can hope for Enlightenment. Even then the chances are you'll miss it. Well, at least you'll get off to a flying start in your next life, or the next but one...."

Helen is splendidly *confident*. Only once, right at the start, has she entertained the slightest doubts regarding her illumination, and then they passed very quickly. (Comparing the immense efforts of certain Zen monks to gain some glimpse of their Original Face, with her own apparently effortless and clear seeing of It, she didn't know what to think — understandably enough.) Her confidence doesn't arise from what she understands, but from What she sees — and anything, anything can be doubted except This.

How many more Helens there are I don't know. Even if there's only one who, reading her story, finds the courage to follow her over the brink of the precipice she will bless Helen, infinitely.

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## THE INNER SHRINE

By SACHAL, Sufi poet-saint of Sindh.

We have seen the Kaaba in the heart, so what need is there to go to Mecca? My mind is the mosque, so why worship in an outer shrine? In every artery is He, so why pronounce the creed?

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## SUFFERING

By DEREK SOUTHALL

(Provoked by news of the Congo massacres)

KOAN

How can one laugh at Lear or sense  
God's mercy in malevolence.

Doubt arose, yawned, stretched, fed and  
grew

Until a torrent, ruthless, sped  
To overwhelm the throbbing head.  
Most strange because a while before  
Rapture embraced the world in awe,  
Such wonder, truth and reverence.

Delight, elated, mortal, soared  
To passion's bourn and echoed back  
Transformed into a humour black.  
Now a sad, sour, desperate mood,  
A bent, uncomfortable brood  
Of indecision, greed and hate.

Well fed and warm I heard the news,  
That sobered, sickened, took the breath,  
Of mutilation unto death.  
The hatchet cleaves the living flesh,  
And all are tangled in the mesh  
To bear the torment of mankind.

I could not repudiate guilt,  
Responsibility or crime,  
For that we all commit in time.  
Violence, shrouded, septic, deep,  
Lurking, simmering, half-asleep ;  
Man's legacy, to be unleashed.

Or was an answer to be found  
Anchored deep within the pool  
Of me : secret, quiet, cool ?

Yearning to be completely free  
I then resolved simply to see  
What reality was for me.

Content within life's flowing stream  
To experience not just to dream.

Suddenly from view to vision  
The pain had passed and sanity  
Saw sorrow and humanity  
Reconciled yet not affected,  
By understanding protected :  
Faith had joined doubt in harmony.

Stronger still my attention held,  
Until from patterns in a dance,  
A fragment of significance  
Rose, lucid into brilliance.  
Reality knows no substance  
No separation, only change,

Yet separation is the sole  
Spinner of self and suffering.  
Rejoice therefore in furthering  
The view, that in a concept tied,  
With pain and self identified  
Is man, true focus of the All.

Awareness properly centered  
By mystic alchemy knows vain  
Self to be the glory and pain  
Of universal cells and stars  
Bound not at all by ego's bars  
Serene, intangible and free.

Self assimilation helps to raise  
A melody from man's malaise.



## HOW LOVE DEFIED LAW IN RAMANUJA

By T. KRISHNAJI

The great Acharya Ramanuja was as indifferent to formal orthodoxy in his day as Sri Ramana Maharshi was in ours. If the Maharshi extended his upadesa to non-Hindus, Ramanuja did to non-Brahmins. T. Krishnaji tells us the story of it here.

When already famous Ramanuja, the great founder of Visishtadvaita, was initiated by Goshti Purna into a mantra which, the latter declared, was a sure means to salvation and must therefore be carefully guarded and revealed only to those qualified. Ramanuja pledged himself to secrecy, but as soon as he had received the mantra he rushed to the great temple and proclaimed it aloud to all. Goshti Purna was furious at this sacrilege and, summoning him, asked what punishment he expected for breaking a vow made to his guru. Ramanuja replied: "Even if my punishment be hell, I will accept it gladly, since I have given so many others the means to enter heaven." Overcome by this wealth of love, the guru forgave and embraced him.

Even before this Ramanuja had shown impatience of the forms of orthodoxy. He had taken as his guru Kanchi Purna, who was a non-Brahmin, and had invited Kanchi and his wife to come and stay with him in his house. Ramanuja's wife, a strictly orthodox Brahmin, was indignant, as legalistically she had the right to be. Matters came to a head when she and the wife of the guru both went to draw water from the well at the same moment one day. Ramanuja's wife spoke insultingly to the other. Ramanuja was indignant and they had a violent quarrel. After this he sent her off to stay with her parents for a while. The arrangement was that he was to follow her, but instead he gave up the household state and went forth as a sannyasi.

It had been Yamuna (known also as Alavandar), the great bhakti acharya of Srirangam, whom Ramanuja had really wanted as his guru, but out of modesty he had delayed going to him. Yamuna had heard of

Ramanuja and envisaged him not only as a disciple but as his successor. Finally he sent a disciple to fetch him; but Ramanuja arrived at Srirangam just too late, when the master's body was already laid out for cremation. Even so the disciples wanted to elevate Ramanuja to their head; but he felt that he had not yet the necessary maturity. He



served under the above-mentioned Kanchi Purna, who was one of Yamuna's disciples, became a sannyasi, travelled up and down the country, and took initiation under Goshti Purna before eventually becoming Yamuna's successor.

It is said that on arriving at Srirangam Ramanuja noticed that three fingers on the hand of the dead master were clenched. On asking about it he was told that before dying Yamuna had expressed three desires:

that commentaries should be written from the bhakti approach he promulgated to the Brahma Sutra, the Bhagavad Gita and the Vishnu Sahasranama. Ramanuja gave a solemn undertaking to write them, and the fingers thereupon straightened out, to the astonishment of all.

It is the Hindu tradition that a teacher wishing to launch a new outlook does not write a philosophy of his own but expresses his views in commentaries on the scriptures so as to show his orthodoxy. It was this that Yamunacharya wished done and that Ramanujacharya undertook and so magnificently accomplished. But not immediately. He was in no hurry but wished first to attain full maturity. Yamunacharya died in 1040. It was about 1049 when Ramanuja donned the ochre robe, as described above. Even after that he spent years in study and travel. He went as far north as Kashmir, where he was given a rare theistic manuscript. He lost it on the way back, but his disciple Kuresa had not merely read it but memorised it, so it could be reconstructed. Throughout India he became known as the champion of theistic, devotional religion.

In order to understand the importance of his work it is necessary to indicate its place in history. The non-Vedic creeds of Jainism and Buddhism had overspread India to a large extent. In the 9th Century A.D. the great Acharya Shankara restored the Upanishadic teaching of Advaita: that Reality is non-dual, that the world of forms is a mere illusion (*maya*) without substance, seeming to be real owing to *avidya* (ignorance). It followed from this that ritual and worship were mere accessories, the one essential being Knowledge, Jnana Yoga. A great Hindu revival stemmed from this. It was, however, above the heads of the masses, and therefore religion again began to decline and lose fervour. It was reinvigorated in the South by the lives and songs of the poet-saints known as Alvars and Nayanmars, and a new wave of devotional life arose, in which miracles and acts of Divine Grace played a great part. Yamuna-

charya was one of the great focal points of this movement, and from him the leadership passed on to his still greater successor, Ramanujacharya.

The strict adherents of Advaita spoke of God as Siva; the new devotionalists worshipped Him as Vishnu, thus creating the distinction between Saivites and Vaishnavites that has continued to this day. There was not always a spirit of tolerance between the two. The Chola king (the largest kingdom of South India) had hitherto shown himself tolerant. He summoned Ramanuja to him but the latter's devoted disciple Kuresa, anticipating danger, went first, impersonating his master. The spirited replies he gave when questioned so enraged the king that the latter had him blinded. Ramanuja therefore stayed outside the Chola Kingdom until this king's death in 1118. But all the time the Vaishnavite tide was rising.

Advaita postulates the Reality of Non-Dual Brahman alone, with *achit* and *chit*, body and soul, as illusory phenomena. The dwaitic or dualistic philosophy which Madhva (1197-1271), the third of the great acharyas, was soon to enunciate is frankly pluralistic, treating nature as a distinct and separate reality, though dependent on God. Ramanuja reconciles the Upanishadic statements which identify the individual soul or atma with nature or Paramatma with those that distinguish it from Brahman. He harmonized these passages by treating the soul and nature (*prakriti*) as distinct but inseparable from God. "All values are ultimately attributable to God alone."

Ramanuja postulated that *chit* (soul), *achit* (matter) and Ishvara (Personal God) are eternal and distinct, but *chit* and *achit* are inseparable from Ishvara. They may be called the 'adjectival appendages' or 'attributes' of Ishvara. All three are real and ultimate substances, but the one really ultimate, Ishvara, has its inseparable modes and attributes both before and in creation. The Brahman is the sole Reality, notwithstanding its attributes of soul and matter.

Ramanuja's philosophy, which later came to be known as Visishtadvaita, is not merely reconciliation of Advaita and Dvaita. Giving equal validity to the *bheda* (other) and *abheda* (no-other) *srutis*, he evolves a new system of his own. He maintains the distinction between God, soul and matter, while asserting that they are not separate. "We often identify distinct things, like a rose and its redness. The rose is a thing and redness its quality and they cannot be the same, yet we speak of them together as 'rose'. This intimate relationship is called *prathak siddhi* or inseparability." Light and heat, a flower and its fragrance, fruit and its flavour, sugar and its sweetness, though inseparable are distinct ideas. In other words, to Ramanuja, "Brahman carries multiplicity within Himself." Most Christian mystics are Visishtadvaitins. W. T. Stace quotes the great Flemish mystic Ruysbroeck to this effect, speaking of God and the soul. "They always remain separate existences. Their union is like that of sunlight and air or heat and red-hot iron. The sunlight completely permeates and interpenetrates the air, yet air remains air and sunlight remains sunlight. Likewise in red-hot iron, the heat interpenetrates the iron, but heat does not become iron nor iron heat."<sup>1</sup>

"To Shankara the identity of God, soul and matter is primary and the difference is secondary. To Ramanuja their difference is primary and their identity is secondary." A critic of Ramanuja's philosophy points out that: "the attempt of Ramanuja to preserve the distinct reality of the finite spirits and insentient matter in the Being of Brahman as Its-forms of energy are logically defective as to how they remain in Brahman. Even if they remain, then they must have been absorbed into Its Being and must have lost their distinct individuality."<sup>2</sup> Another critic observes that the problem of immanence and transcendence could not be reconciled in a system where God and Its modes are eternally real and distinct. This does not really matter, however, because Ramanuja's teaching is less a system for philosophers than a foundation for faith and

devotion, and as that it was enormously successful.

The emphasis was shifted from philosophy to worship. Scripturally the system was based largely on the Agamas and Puranas. For Ramanuja "the Divine Spirit is not soulless". God possesses all the auspicious qualities, *ananta kalyāna gunas*, but is free from the reprehensible qualities. He creates and sustains. He is accessible and compassionate. He bestows his grace on his devotees. Devotion as a spiritual path is open to women as well as men and to low castes as well as high. It implies factual or emotional separation from the God one worships in order to permit of *saranāgati* or surrender. Ramanuja's great postulate is the 'Supreme Personality of God'.

Krishna in the Gita assures Moksha to all who surrender themselves to him.<sup>3</sup> God is the Saviour and Protector of His devotees. Helpless as we are, our duty lies in *prapatti* and *saranāgati*, absolute submission and surrender to God. Self-surrender is the dedication of oneself and is the climax of all religious endeavour. The Ramayana and Bhagavata refer frequently to *saranāgati*, but Ramanuja raised it to the highest religious duty and gave it importance as a spiritual path open to all. Not only did he uphold the supremacy of Vishnu as God but he maintained that the idol in the Vishnu sanctuary, called 'Archā', is no mere token but is God Himself. Lakshmi, the Divine Spouse of Vishnu, is His Mercy and her love flows out towards all His devotees as she mediates with Him for them and for the bestowal of His Grace. Here again a similarity is seen with Christian devotional worship, where the intercession of the Blessed Virgin is a powerful factor.

Thus Ramanuja bridged the gulf between philosophy and religion. Visishtadvaita maintains that, knowledge being relative, subject and object remain distinct. *Chit* and

<sup>1</sup> *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Realism and Modern Challenges*, by P. T. Raju, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII, 66.

*achit* are equally real. Whereas Maya veils the Reality according to Advaita, according to Visishtadvaita it is a Shakti co-existent with Brahman and revealing the Lila or play of the Lord. Though the differences between the two schools are emphasised by philosophers, the ultimate purpose of both is the realization of God. The philosophy of Ramanuja has influenced theistic schools and devotional practice all over India.

Ramanuja lived what is considered in Hindu teaching the full span of human life, one hundred and twenty years, and his achievements were many-sided. Stripped of all the legends that have gathered round him, we see him as a great personality with intense devotion to God and deep love for mankind. While his writing shows a keen intellect, he evinced also a practical genius

for religious organisation. And through it all we can see his deep humility. He had numerous disciples, both lay and ascetic, out of whom he chose 74 to continue his work as acharyas. When he foresaw his end he called all his disciples before him and gave them 72 injunctions. Then, with hands folded, he walked round among them saying: "If I have at any time, consciously or unconsciously, offended you in any way I beg you to forgive me before I go away from among you." This was typical of his goodness and humility. He departed this life in 1137. He is immortal and lives enshrined in the heart of every devotee of Vishnu. "He is an instrument of the Divine to spread the religion of devotion and self-surrender to Vishnu, the inner Ruler of all beings, Who gives Himself to those who abandon themselves to Him."

- JOEL. -

**YOU HAVE GONE ON TO RICHER PLAINS  
IN NOBLE GARB AND SPLENDID LIGHT  
AND NOW YOUR VOICE SEEMS CLEARER STILL  
SINCE YOU HAVE LEFT THE DENSER SIGHT.**

**NOW WHEN THE DESERT LOOMS AHEAD  
AND ITS SIROCCO STARTS TO BLOW  
YOUR SPIRIT SPANS THE ARID WASTE  
AND SPEAKS AGAIN, "BE STILL AND KNOW."**

**WE LOVED THOSE YEARS YOU TROD OUR WORLD  
WITH SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO UNFURL  
WE THANK YOU JOEL, FOR YOUR LOVE  
YOU TALKED TO SHELLS - REVEALED THE PEARL.**

**SOME DAY WE TOO SHALL ENTER THERE  
WHERE LOVE IS ALL, AND ALL IS LIGHT  
WHERE ALL CREATION SINGS YOUR SONG  
"THERE IS NO NIGHT! THERE IS NO NIGHT!"**

- TERRY SANDERS. -



## THE ACCLIMATISATION OF BUDDHISM IN THE WEST

By CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

The eminent author of this article has not so much studied the question of the acclimatisation of Buddhism in the West as lived with it. As Founder-President of the London Buddhist Society, he has had his hand on the rudder of Buddhist development in England for forty years past. His two books, *Buddhism* and *Zen Buddhism*, both of which have become paper-backs and best sellers, have added as much as any to the process that has been going on this century of bringing Buddhism out of the encyclopaedias into the purview of ordinary well read people in the West. Apart from his work for the Buddhist Society, Mr. Humphreys has an exacting professional life and we are grateful to him for taking time off to write this article for us.

Gautama the Buddha gave his message to mankind in India, and 'Buddhism', a Western term for the doctrines and practices built up about that teaching in the last 2,500 years, was also developed in the East. But in the last hundred years or so Buddhism has come West.

It came to Europe in the form in which, two thousand years earlier, it went further East, that is to say, school by school, each school bringing its own observance and form of organisation as the shrine for its essential teaching. In considering the influx of Buddhism into the West — and I am including the U.S.A. in this generic term — we must therefore look to the heart of any school and what I am pleased to call its apparatus. The terms are not synonymous for the one may well be found without the other.

The essential spirit of any school of Buddhism may be gleaned from books, whether its Scriptures or text-books based upon them, and from talks, whether formal lectures or conversation in class or otherwise. The student, whether college youth or retired business man, natural recluse or housewife, may have no inclination to look further. There are many in the West — how many we can never know — who, having acquired an understanding of basic principles which appeal to them, set to work to study them, in theory and practice, buying perhaps an occasional new book or borrowing it from a friend or library. They feel no need to join any society and, save for the

look of their bookshelves, may remain unknown as 'Buddhists' to all but their closest friends.

They may belong to any school or none. Of the schools of Buddhism it is enough here to say that the oldest to survive as such is the Theravada, the Doctrine of the Elders, to be found today in Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Cambodia. But the Mahayana, taking this as a general movement, was founded early in the history of Buddhism, and its various schools moved, seriatim, East, along the old trade routes into China, Korea and Japan; North into Tibet and Mongolia, and West into North-west India.

In the same way Buddhism became known the West school by school, first by sporadic translations of isolated scriptures and later by the planned translations of Max Mueller, Rhys Davids and the like who rapidly gave Western scholars a working knowledge of many of their doctrines. But the first organised attempt to make Buddhism known to Western minds as a moral philosophy to be lived, as distinct from being merely 'studied', was that of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland, which was founded in London in November 1907 to prepare the way for Ananda Metteyya, an Englishman who had taken the Robe by that name in Burma and wished to 'proclaim the Dhamma' to his fellow-countrymen. His Buddhism was that of the Theravada. Not until twenty years later, when Dr. D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism*

appeared in London did we know anything, save from an occasional article, about the Zen school of China and Japan, and only in the last ten years have we begun to learn anything practical about Tibetan Buddhism.

Each of these schools found their specialists, as scholars and practitioners and books have appeared to tell the West more about each school. Some writers were professional scholars; some just wrote of the teaching as it appealed to them; a few, for whom I have dared to coin the phrase 'schollowers', attempt to study and at the same time apply such principles as we glean from the translations of others, though more and more of us find the means to study the subject at first hand in the country of our predilection.

But 'authority' is a word unknown in Buddhism, and the Buddha himself is quoted in the Pali Canon as saying that we should not believe the words of even the wisest sage unless, when applied, they accorded with all that we had so far found to be true. The value, therefore, of any scripture or famous teacher depends on the student; only he can assess its value to him, at that time, in his then state of development.

In the Theravada stress has been laid in England, in my view wrongly, on the Abhidhamma, the third division of the Pali Canon, with its elaborate systems of meditation most of which are quite unsuited, in my experience, to the Western mind, to the detriment of the dozen basic principles of the Theravada which some think unrivalled as a practical moral philosophy applicable to all men in all places. In the Zen school of Japan initial training, which means training in 'sitting', a combination of mind-awareness and physical posture, is given by a chief monk. Only when the pupil has shown himself able to 'sit' does the Rōshi consider him for acceptance, the Rōshi being a Zen master who has not only achieved a high degree of enlightenment, but has received the *inka* or seal of his master as being competent to teach. In England there is as yet no resident Rōshi, and therefore, so far as I have control of the Zen class of

the Buddhist Society, no organised use of the *koan*, which I consider a most dangerous practice without the constant supervision of a master. All that is done in the Zen Class, therefore, is to learn to control the thinking mind, in meditation and at all times, and to develop the intuition for the first *kensho*, or break-through to awareness of non-duality. Results are encouraging. The rest must wait. The Tibetan school uses ritual more than either of the other two, but as yet there is no Tibetan Vihara where 'services' may be held. Only Lamas, in the sense of monks of rank equivalent to a fully ordained Bhikkhu, may conduct group practices.

This brings one to the Sangha in the West, and its many problems. The Sangha of the Theravada is the oldest religious Order extant, being founded by the Buddha, who himself laid down at least a large proportion of the 227 Rules which today bind the actions of each member. In 1908 the Sangha, in the form of the Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya came West, and the problem of obeying the Rules in London appeared at once. They include, in general terms, the possession of but five objects including the Robes. No money may be handled, and the Bhikkhu may not sleep more than three consecutive nights in the same house as a woman. More private, and therefore a little more easy to observe, the Bhikkhu must sleep on a low bed, have no meal after noon and be at all times celibate. More difficult, and no serious attempt is made to practise them in London, are Rules about dignity of position in public, none sitting higher than the Order, and one which caused acute embarrassment in London in 1908, to the effect that no member of the Order may ride behind a horse. And of course no member may eat save that which is offered to him, and for that he should beg in the village with a begging bowl. Begging in this form in London is a crime.

From these Rules there was, of course, progressive deviation. During the war the Venerable U Thittila of Burma, resident in London, removed his Robes to do voluntary

work of compassion in the 'blitz,' assuming them again to lecture or attend a Buddhist meeting. This raises at once the overall problem; if one of the Rules is modified for Western usage where does the modification stop, and who is to sanction the slightest deviation? In Buddhism there is no Pope to give orders to all Buddhists, and not even a national equivalent. The nearest is the Sangharaja in Thailand, who is backed by statutory authority. Even in Tibet before 1959, the Dalai Lama's authority over other than the Geluppa sect was only that of respect. It is a fact that no-one and no body of men, can unfrock a Bhikkhu for even the grossest misbehaviour, not even the monastery which gave him the Robe. What, then, is a Bhikkhu in England to do? The answer until recently was to make such variation as he deemed right and proper, but with the creation in 1964 of the Sabha Sangha, a standing Council of members of the Order then resident in London, his problem is solved. He will relax the Rules as agreed by that body and not otherwise.

These relaxations include the possession of books, a typewriter and the like; the handling of money for travel given for the purpose; the wearing of warm underclothing and socks and shoes in addition to his Robes, and less stringent interpretation of sleeping in the same house as a woman, as at the Summer School of the Buddhist Society.

As no begging is allowed, arrangements are made by those who run the building where the Bhikkhu lives—usually a lay committee—for the rent and other expenses to be paid from funds collected by the committee. Of Viharas, residences for Bhikkhus, there have been three in the history of Buddhism in England, but the oldest in Europe is the Buddhistisches Haus at Frohnau, near Berlin, founded by the late Dr. Paul Dahlke. In London, the Anagarika Dharmapala when founding in 1926 a British branch of the Maha Bodhi Society, bought a house near Regent's Park where Bhikkhus stayed from time to time, but this was closed in 1939. The two at present

functioning are that at Chiswick, which used to be in Knightsbridge, and is organised from Ceylon, and the English Sangha, of which the present head is the English Sthavira Sangharakshita, in Hampstead. Both are controlled by the Sangha Sabha above mentioned. The value of the Vihara system is obvious, and more are planned. The respect paid to the Robe by English Buddhists is a middle way between that of the chela to his guru in India and that to a schoolmaster by pupils at an English school. An audience will rise when the Bhikkhu enters for a class or lecture, but off the record the respect paid will accord with his personal stature as a Buddhist teacher.

In the Mahayana Sangha most of these difficulties do not arise, for many of the Theravada Rules have been modified to the point of disappearance. Robes in China and Tibet, for example, are of wool and plentiful; and a 'medicine meal' or light supper is often taken in the evening. Some monks in Japan are even married, whereas the rule of chastity in the Theravada is absolute. Among the Tibetans now coming to the West the need for a Vihara is urgent, for they need a temple or something similar for their services. A Tibetan Vihara will, we understand, be opened in England in the near future. The Japanese have no Buddhist unit in London, and there are as yet no resident Zen monks who need a monastic residence.

In all these three main schools, Theravada, Zen and Tibetan, there is much meditation, both in classes and in private. But the 'apparatus' needed is minimal. At the most a Shrine, cushions on the floor for the increasing number of those learning to sit cross-legged in either the half or full 'lotus posture,' and chairs for the remainder; these are easy to assemble.

The tendency is all for simplification and the reduction of accessories of every kind. The West is concerned with ideas, Buddhist or any other, which prove attractive. History, tradition, 'authority' of any kind, are matters of retreating interest. Even Scriptures are regarded as many merely as

the source of ideas. The emphasis now is on actual experience, which may or may not be referred to as religious or spiritual. Distinctions between the teaching and practice of the various schools are of less and less interest to the 'schollower,' who blandly chooses from the books he reads those principles which seem to him to be basic Buddhism, and help him to satisfy his spiritual needs. There are in the field of scholarship, as in practice, specialists. There will always, I believe, be the pure — his friends might call him the rabid — Theravadin, equating with the Puritan streak in the English character, and there will always be the man of Zen, developing the intuitive, irrational, merrily mystical, even happily non-sensical factor in our mind. The vast majority of Buddhists, however, are quite unconcerned with the subject of this essay. They read and listen, study and meditate, argue and apply Buddhism as it appeals to them. And their number is increasing rapidly. But what will happen to 'Buddhism' in the process, and what a 'Buddhist' will be in the West in twenty or fifty years I would not like to say. It is enough for some of us that we have striven to 'proclaim the Dhamma' to those 'whose eyes are scarcely covered with dust (of illusion)'; it is for those who have ears to hear to apply it as they will.

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Maharshi states in *Who am I?* "Everything offered to others is really an offering to oneself". This very great verity was noted by Brother Giles, one of St. Francis of Assisi's original disciples and co-founders of his Order, when he declared "Everything that a man doth, be it good or evil, he doeth it unto himself".

Pure *bakhti* perhaps, it is also pure *jnana*. But do we even enquire whether this great injunction works as well the other way round?

Should we not also enquire whether everything asked for from others, prayed for to An Other, whatever is Deified, prayed to and lauded, is not also an entirely autonomous performance?

Could it be that being congenitally or by conditioning unable to know what is our Self, unconsciously seek to approach our Self more nearly by objectifying it so that we may address it? Do we not even vicariously and ritually eat our flesh and drink our blood in this desperate attempt to attain to what we are?

— WEI WU WEI.

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## THE CH'AN SHOUT

By CH'AN MASTER CHI CH'ENG Also called CHIN YIN,

From *The Imperial Selection of Ch'an Sayings*,  
Translated by Upasaka Lu K'uan Yu (Charles Luk).

Ch'an master Chi Ch'eng and three eminent Ch'an masters, Yuan Wu, Fa Chen and Tz'u Shou, were invited to a vegetarian dinner at Governor Ch'en Liang Pi's residence where ten learned Dharma-masters and a thousand monks of the Ch'an sect and of other schools were also present. Emperor Huei Tsung of the Sung dynasty (1101-26) availed himself of the occasion to come inognito to listen to their discussions.

There was among the guests a Dharma-master who was well-versed in the Hua Yen (Avatamsaka) teaching and was regarded as a skilful interpreter of (Patriarch) Hsien Shou's doctrine. Said he to the guests: "The Buddha set up a Dharma which consists in wiping out gradually, from the stage of Hinayana to that of Perfect Teaching, all concepts of *is* and *is not* to realize true permanence for the achievement of myriads of sublime virtues and the final attainment of Buddhahood. I have heard that a mere Ch'an shout can turn worldlings into Saints; this seems to contradict the sutras and treatises. If a shout can pass through all the five stages of our Hua Yen school, I shall concede that it is right, otherwise it is just heresy."

All the Ch'an monks looked at Chi Ch'eng who said: "The Venerable Dharma-master's query does not require an answer from the three great Ch'an masters, and though I am the youngest among them, I shall be able to clear away his delusion." He then called the Dharma-master who answered: "Yes." Chi Ch'eng said: "According to the Venerable Sir's interpretation of the Hua Yen Teaching, Hinayana deals with existence; Mahayana in its primary stage, with non-

existence; Mahayana in its final stage, with the doctrine of neither existence nor non-existence; the Sudden school, with the identity of existence and non-existence; and the Perfect Teaching, with reality without existence yet existing and without non-existence yet non-existent. As to our sect's One-shout, it can pass through not only these five Hua Yen stages, but also all kinds of arts, crafts and philosophies."

He then gave a thundering shout and asked the Dharma-master: "Did you hear?" The Dharma-master replied: "Yes." Chi Ch'eng said: "As you heard it, it stands for *is* and passes through the Hinayana teaching."

A little later he asked: "Do you hear?" The Dharma-master replied: "I do not." Chi Ch'eng said: "If you do not hear, it stands for *is not* and passes through the Mahayana's primary stage."

He then looked at the Dharma-master and said: "At first, when I gave a shout, you said you heard it, and as my voice has vanished, you now say you do not hear it. When you say that it *is not* heard now, it really *was* heard before and when you said that it *was* heard before, it *is not* now. So that which neither *is* nor *is not* passes through the Mahayana's final stage.

"When I first gave a shout, its existence was not really existence for it is its (present) non-existence that reveals its (previous) existence. As I do not give a shout now, its non-existence is not really non-existence for it was its (previous) existence that revealed its (present) non-existence. This is identity of *is* and *is not* and passes through the Sudden school.

"You should know that that shout of mine is (now) not used as a shout<sup>1</sup> and is beyond both *is* and *is not*. It is above all feelings and explanation. When you speak of *is*, it does not set up a particle of dust and when you speak of *is not*, it embraces boundless space. It intermingles with hundreds, thousands and hundreds of thousands of shouts; hence its ability to pass through the Perfect Teaching."

Thereupon the Dharma-master rose from his seat to bow his thanks. Chi Ch'eng again said: "Not only can this shout pass through the five Hua Yen stages, but even speech, silence, motion and stillness, all times from the past to the present, boundless space in the ten directions, the vast variety of phenomena, the six realms of existence and four forms of birth, all Buddhas of the three times, and Saints and Sages, the 84,000 Dharma-doors to Enlightenment, hundreds and thousands of states of Samadhi and countless profound meanings accord with the noumenon and fundamental quality and are of the same substance as all phenomena in the universe; this is the Dharmakaya. As the three realms of existence come from the mind and all things are created by Consciousness, the uniformity of the four seasons and of the eight annual divisions<sup>2</sup> and the sameness of the positive and negative principles are called the nature of Dharma (Dharmata). Hence the Avatamsaka Sutra says: "The nature of Dharma is omnipresent; the material and immaterial as well as sound and form are contained in a particle of dust which comprises the four profound meanings.<sup>3</sup> The unimpeded interaction of noumenon and phenomenon obtains everywhere for they enter each other without differentiation and mix with each other without unity; all this is covered by this one-shout. But this is still an expedient set up to convert people and serves as a temporary rest, but they

have not yet arrived at the Treasure House. For you are not clear about our Patriarch's sect which aims at Transmission from Mind to Mind and Sealing of Dharma by Dharma, without setting up Scriptures, for the perception of self-nature and attainment of Buddhahood. There still is the Upward Path<sup>4</sup> which no Saints will transmit to you."

The Dharma-master asked: "What is the Upward Path?" Chi Ch'eng replied: "Look downward<sup>4</sup> to awaken to it." The Dharma-master asked: "What is the Treasure House?" Chi Ch'eng replied: "This state is beyond your reach." The Dharma-master said: "May the Venerable Master be compassionate enough to reveal it to me." Chi Ch'eng replied:

"Even the ocean may undergo a change  
But I shall never disclose it to you."

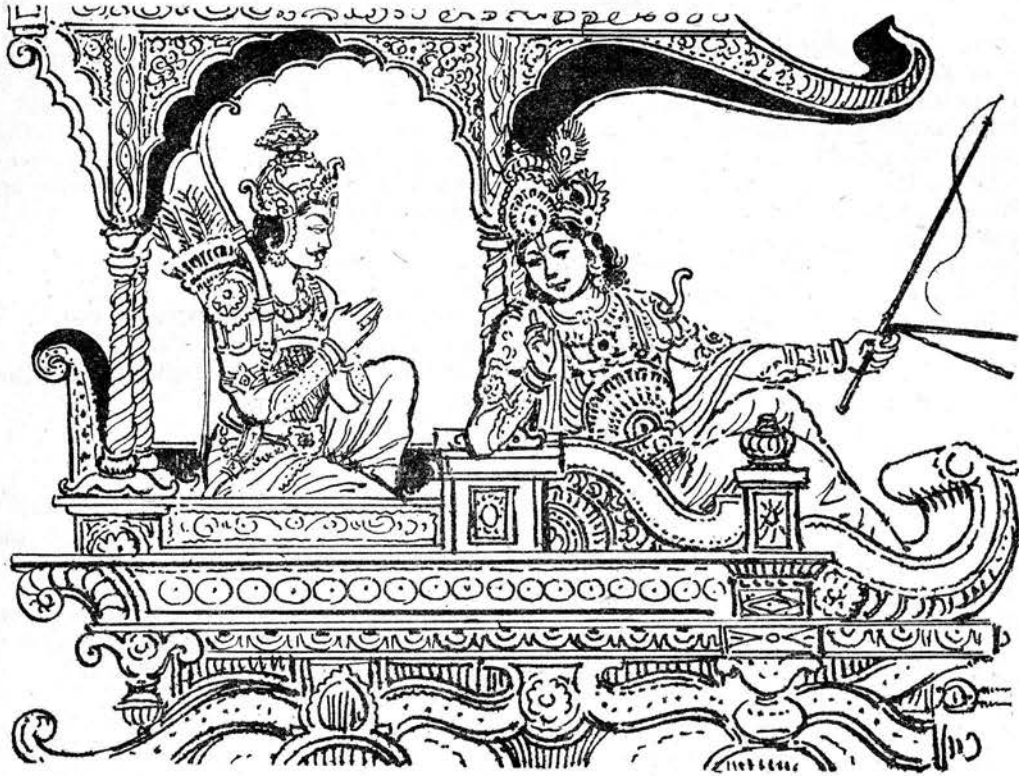
The Dharma-master was speechless and then left. The emperor was greatly pleased with Chi Ch'eng's erudition which was admired by all those present.

<sup>1</sup> See also *Ch'an and Zen Teaching*, second series, pp. 96-7 for detailed explanation of Lin Chi's four kinds of shouts.

<sup>2</sup> The four seasons, two equinoxes and two solstices.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Hua Yen doctrine, the realm of Dharma (Dharmata) comprises: (1) the phenomenal realm, with differentiation; (2) the noumenal realm, with unity; (3) the realm of both the noumenal and phenomenal which are interdependent; and (4) the realm of phenomena which are also interdependent.

<sup>4</sup> The Upward Path is the transcendental Path. To look upward or downward is a Ch'an idiom. To look downward is to look into externals which spring from the mind and trace them back to their source for the realization of self-mind and perception of self-nature. To look upward is to look into the Absolute which is inexpressible and beyond the comprehension of deluded people. It is, therefore, futile to teach the Absolute which is indescribable and can be realized only by personal experience; hence Chi Ch'eng says: "No Saints will transmit it to you" and "I shall never disclose it to you."



# The Bhagavad Gita

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

## CHAPTER THREE

1

Arjuna said :

If you consider understanding superior to action, O Scourge of the Foes, why then, You of the Beautiful Locks, do you urge me to this fearful action ?

When told that action cannot lead one to Liberation it is natural to say : "All right, then, let me renounce action and just meditate." Some one said this to the Maharshi and he replied : "Try and see. It is all right if you can but you will find that your own mind demands activity." Arjuna falls into the same mistake and in v. 5 is given the same answer. It is further explained to him that the remedy is not inactivity, which is not possible to man, but egoless activity. This

also the Maharshi used to say : as he put it, it is not doing that has to be adjured but only the illusion that you are the doer.

2

With what seems to be unclear speech you confuse my mind, as it were. Please tell me the one way by which I may attain the supreme good.

3

Sri Bhagavan said :

In this world a twofold path was taught by me of old, O Blameless One, : the path of knowledge for introverts and the path of action for extroverts.

Arjuna, as a Kshatriya, was directed to the Path of Action, but it is not to be supposed that less was therefore demanded of him. As he was told in the previous chapter, he is expected to transcend the polarities and the three gunas and thereby realize Identity. "But," as Dr. Radhakrishnan says in his commentary, "this distinction is not ultimate, for all men are in different degrees both introverts and extroverts." As the Maharshi said (as quoted in our October 1964 editorial): "The four margas, karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana, are not exclusive of one another. Each is, however, described separately in classical works only to convey an idea of the appropriate aspect of God to appeal readily to the aspirant according to his disposition."

4

Not by refraining from activity does a man attain freedom from action, nor by mere renunciation does he gain perfection.

5

Indeed, no one can remain even for a moment really inactive, for one is driven helplessly to action by the qualities of Nature.

6

The deluded person who controls his physical organs but lets his mind brood on the objects of sense is known as a hypocrite.

7

He it is who excels, Arjuna, who controls his senses with his mind and employs his physical organs in karma yoga without attachment.

8

Perform your allotted duty, for action is better than inaction. Even the preservation of life in the body is impossible without action.

9

People in this world are fettered by action unless it is performed as a sacrifice. Therefore, O Son of Kunti, let your action be sacrifice free from attachment.

It is to be remembered that the English word 'sacrifice' means etymologically 'make sacred' or 'sanctify.' The Sanskrit word is used in the Gita with a wide meaning covering 'sanctify' and 'sacrifice' in the modern meaning and even ritualistic sacrifice. It implies the dedication of one's actions to God.

10

In the beginning Prajapati (as Creator), made men together with sacrifice and said: "By this you shall propagate and it shall be your cow of plenty."

11

Nourish the gods through this and let them nourish you. Thus nourishing one another you shall attain the highest good.

Here, of course, there is no reference to God as Supreme Being but to establishing harmony with higher powers which will be reflected by harmony on earth.

12

Nourished by sacrifice, the gods will bestow on you the enjoyments you desire. He who enjoys their gifts without offering to them in return is indeed a thief.

13

The righteous who eat the food remaining from sacrifice are absolved of all sins, but the impious who cook for themselves alone eat sin.

That is that food should be offered first in sacrifice and only afterwards partaken of. Analogously with all other enjoyments of life. See also Ch. IX, v. 27 for a still more emphatic assertion of this.

14

Creatures are the product of food, food is the product of rain, rain the product of sacrifice, and sacrifice the product of action.

15

Action is the product of the Vedas, and they of the Imperishable; hence the all-pervading Brahman is ever-present in sacrifice.



16

He who does not follow the cycle thus set in motion, O Son of Pritha, is sinful and self-indulgent and lives in vain.

17

For him, however, who rejoices only in the Self, is gratified with the Self and content with the Self no action is incumbent.

18

He has nothing to gain by actions done or to lose by those undone. He is not dependent on any one for the achievement of any object.

Krishna has been speaking of the necessary harmonisation of life. In these last two verses he reminds Arjuna that this does not apply to one whose life is already harmonised by absorption in the Self.

19

Therefore without attachment perform always the actions that are incumbent, for by disinterested activity man attains the Supreme.

20

It was by action that Janaka and others attained perfection. Perform actions, therefore, you also, as an example to mankind.

Janaka is a legendary king who had attained Enlightenment, (and also the father of Sita, Lord Rama's wife).

21

For whatever a great man does others imitate; whatever standard he sets up the people emulate.

22

For me, O Son of Pritha, there is no action incumbent in the three worlds, nor anything unattained to attain, yet do I act.

23

If ever I ceased from unwearied action, O Son of Pritha, men would in all ways follow my example.

24

If I ceased from action these worlds would fall in ruin; I should cause social confusion and bring destruction on these people.

25

As the ignorant act from attachment, O Bharata, so should the wise act without attachment as an example to the people.

26

The wise man should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant who are attached to action. He also should engage in action, but as a form of yoga, and urge others to action.

27

When all actions are performed by the qualities of Nature, only he who is confused by the ego-sense imagines himself to be the actor.

28

But he, O Mighty-Armed, who discerns the qualities and their modes of action is never attached, knowing that it is the qualities that act upon the qualities.

29

Those who are deluded by the qualities of Nature become attached to the actions produced by them; but he who knows the Whole should not unsettle the ignorant who sees only a part.

30

Fight, therefore, surrendering all your actions to Me, with mind centred on the Self, without desire or egoism and from your fever (of doubt) set free.

31

Those who constantly follow this teaching of mine with firm faith and without cavilling are set free from activity.

32

But know those who despise my teaching and reject it, to be deluded as to wisdom, senselessly doomed to perdition.

33

Even an enlightened man acts according to his nature. All creatures conform to their nature ; what can restraint do ?

34

Each sense has its objects of attraction and aversion, but one should not succumb to these for they are impediments on the path.

35

Better one's own dharma, however imperfect, than that of another though well performed. Better even to die following one's own dharma, for that of another is perilous.

This is considered one of the fundamental verses of the Gita : that one should follow one's own nature or destiny and not try to emulate that of others. The word translated 'imperfect' can mean either 'imperfectly performed' or 'inferior.' It applies primarily to social position. It implies also that one should develop according to one's own nature and not emulate that of some other person one envies or admires.

36

Arjuna said :

But what is it that drives a man to sin even against his will, as though under compulsion, Krishna of the Vrishnis ?

37

Sri Bhagavan said :

It is desire and anger born of the quality rajas, utterly blinding and sinful. Know this is to be the enemy.

38

As fire is concealed by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo in the womb, so is this teaching concealed by it.

39

Knowledge is darkened, O Son of Kunti, by this eternal foe of the knower in the form of desire, an insatiable conflagration.

40

Senses, mind (manas) and intellect (budhi) are said to be its abode. Obscuring wisdom through them, it deludes the embodied.

41

Therefore, Prince of the Bharatas, control your senses first ; thus shall you destroy this destroyer of knowledge and discrimination.

42

Mighty, they say, are the senses, mightier than these the mind, mightier than that the intellect, but mightier still is He.

The 'He' is ambiguous : it may refer to the Spirit or, as a warning, to desire. The following verse suggests that it is the former meaning that is intended.

43

Thus knowing Him who is beyond the intellect, O Mighty in Arms, control yourself by the Self and slay the enemy in the form of desire, hard though it may be.

Here ends the third chapter, entitled  
The Yoga of Action

## FROM THE WELL OF MEDITATION

By DOROTHY C. DONATH

Dead names and personal attributes  
Belong neither to Action nor to Reality ;  
The perfect name is No-name,  
And the perfect action is without motive.

Be relaxed in deep things  
And quiet in little things,  
Like a pond those shallow water  
Pictures the still bottom as a glass admits  
    light,  
And whose deep water  
Moves not with the ruffling wind.  
Have no thought but to let the answer  
Rise to the surface  
As bubbles rise  
From the lake-bottom springs.

The awakened mind  
Neither thinks nor speculates —  
The awakened mind  
Knows.  
Silver and gold are kindred metals,  
But who can strike a light from them ?  
The answer is given in an instant —  
Without thought.

Understand without effort  
And move without struggle ;  
Thus does the mind manifest itself  
And no thing is there to be manifested.

The awakened mind  
Neither thinks nor speculates.  
Void is it,  
And without form ;  
Void it is,  
And no attribute is there.

The wind blows,  
But no hand catches it ;  
The thunder rolls,  
But whither goes the sound ?

Pride and ego mask the inner light,  
And no cloud of earth can equal them ;  
Rain falls from these clouds,  
And the hours know but tears.

Who is it that weeps  
And cannot move the barrier ?  
Find that one — if you can.  
Heaven and Hell are not his hiding place,  
Nor does the earth harbour him ;  
Only the shadows cover him,  
And nothing is there.

The ball is tossed,  
And the player catches it ;  
But no hand catches  
The answer to vain desires.

Under the mantle of Maya  
Who can see the stars ?  
Under the ego-shadow  
Who can find the light ?  
Silver and gold are kindred metals,  
But who can strike a light from them ?

Regard a woven garment --  
Never can it clothe the mind.  
Regard a valued trinket --  
Never can it pay for wasted days.

The hand holds a key,  
But the fingers close upon it  
And it vanishes ;  
The mind holds an answer,  
But thought grasps it  
And there is nothing there.

Pay the price of silence  
And a thousand voices answer ;  
Speak,  
And silence alone replies.

Great Space without  
At first seems to be Voidness ;  
But Voidness is within —  
And only the mind can compass it.

This song is no-song —  
Why seek for a meaning ?  
The questions were answered  
Before ever a word was spoken

— By Courtesy, 'Golden Light',  
Penang.



## REVIEWS

**YOUR GOD IS MY GOD:** By Gladys de Meuter.  
(Spearman, pp. 160, 15s.)

There are two great pitfalls in the study of different religions. One is to see them all from the viewpoint of one's own (which necessarily makes all others look inferior to it); the other is to make them appear identical in substance whereas they are so only in essence. Mrs. de Meuter avoids both. She does not compare religions but devotes a separate chapter to each, expounding each from its own viewpoint. The book is not academic in tone but devotional, almost ecstatic, couched in the form of dialogues between the Soul of the World and the Nameless. Nevertheless it is far more scholarly than one expects such a book to be, each chapter being based on translations or paraphrases of its scriptures.

In a concluding chapter she represents the universal essence of religion as Sufism: "a Sufi may be in outward appearance a Muslim, Hindu, Christian or Jew." (p. 145). But in this she is mistaken. A Sufi, unlike an exoteric Muslim, recognizes the essential truth of all religions but his approach to this Essence is nevertheless Islamic, using an Islamic technique and terminology. The Vedantist (or Buddhist or Christian) may recognise the Sufi approach, as the Sufi does his, but he will use a different technique and terminology and cannot therefore be called a Sufi. Nor does he call himself one.

Despite this error, however, and despite certain small inaccuracies, this is both a wise and a beautiful book and can be strongly recommended.

**PATHS TO INNER CALM:** By Marie B. Byles.  
(Allen & Unwin, pp. 207, Price 28s.)

In her delightful book 'Journey into Burmese Silence' Miss Byles described a meditation centre, open to lay meditators also, where the technique practised was concentration on the constant atomic 'going-coming' evanescence of the body-mind complex. People of a theoretical turn of mind will marvel how this ancient wisdom is corroborated by modern atomic physics. Practical readers will see it as a beautifully straight path to anatta, 'no-ego'. Writing with obvious understanding and experience, Miss Byles shows how effective it can be when practised under an able guide.

The first part of her new book describes a return to the same meditation centre and again conjures up a delightful picture of Burmese life and people. Passing from Burma to Japan, she has a masterly link-chapter on the difference, rather of approach than dogma, between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

As she has already indicated in her article in *The Mountain Path* of July 1964, she was not attracted by Zen. She found the life in the meditation centres too austere, the discipline too harsh, the practices too ritualistic, the roshis too inaccessible, the vaunted spontaneity of Zen almost wholly lacking, as also the basic Buddhist quality of meta or loving-kindness.

What attracted her in Japan was the new group of Ittoen, drawn from various religions, which specialises in loving service. She found and appreciated a strong Gandhian influence on it. While staying there she was able to join a latrine-cleaning expedition to a neighbouring village.



Miss Byles not only writes with considerable understanding but also with keen observation, ready wit and lively sympathies. As a result, her book is as readable as it is instructive, an attractive travel book as well as a sensitive account of different Buddhist approaches.

**THE BOOK OF CHANGE:** By John Blofeld. (Allen & Unwin, pp. 228, 35s.)

The I Ching (pronounced, Mr. Blofeld tells us, Yee Jing) is the oldest Chinese book, being already ancient in the time of Confucius. Basically it consists of hexagrams or groups of six parallel horizontal lines, whole and broken, arranged in their 64 possible combinations. To these a written text was added. Confucius added a commentary to the text and countless others have since.

The whole line is yang, which is fundamentally equivalent to Purusha, and the broken yin, fundamentally equivalent to Prakriti. Therefore the hexagrams show the possible combinations of Purusha-Prakriti, positive-negative, male-female, active-passive, light-dark. They have profound metaphysical and cosmological implications, but Mr. Blofeld is concerned here only with their use in divination.

He is completely convincing in arguing the validity of this use and the correctness of the replies received, if and only if, the work is approached with integrity and in a spirit of reverence. Indeed, he insists that questions as to the right course of action to be pursued are more in order than simple questions as to what will happen.

The book is likely to have a wide sale owing to the interest people take in divination. It deserves it in view of the serious moral tone with which the subject is approached and the clear and workmanlike nature of the exposition.

**THE UNKNOWN CHRIST OF HINDUISM:** By Raymond Panikkar. (Darton, Longman and Todd, paperback, pp. 163, 12s. 6d.)

Fr. Panikkar, a Catholic priest whose father was Hindu and mother Catholic, declares that Christ as Logos or Son of God is the Principle that inspired the formulation of Hinduism, as of all other religions. From this he argues that Hindus should acknowledge the unique and ultimate position among religions of the doctrine taught by Christ as Jesus of Nazareth. But this is a *non sequitur* and is either unintelligent or disingenuous. Sri Krishna declared that whenever righteousness is eclipsed and unrighteousness prevails he manifests himself and that those who worship other Gods really worship him; but

Hindus do not argue from this that all followers of other religions should take the Gita as their Gospel. They can equally well worship some other Incarnation of the One—for instance, that of Jesus of Nazareth. It is Christian refusal or inability to see this that led to so much persecution in the past and that lies behind tendentious calls for 'dialogue' to-day.

**YOGIRAJ SHRI SHRI LAHIRI MAHASAYA:** By J. C. Bhattacharya. (Yogada Satsanga, 166 Belilios Rd., Howrah, Calcutta, pp. 74, Rs. 2.25.)

Religion is a path from darkness to light, from death to immortality; therefore its vitality is indicated by its continued ability to guide men on this path, that is to produce saints and sages. It is a sign of the spiritual vitality of Hinduism that a constant succession of these spiritual champions, these vanquishers of the ego, has continued right up to modern times. Many of them have been little known because a non-proselytising religion does not normally advertise; but they have existed and still do.

Sri Lahiri Mahasaya (1828-1895) was the great promulgator of Kriya Yoga. He is fairly widely known through the disciple of his disciple, that is his spiritual grandson, Swami Yogananda, whose 'Self-Realization Fellowship' has spread in the West; but he has had a number of successors in his native Bengal also. This is the first biography of him in English. It shows him already in the 19th Century exemplifying the tendency to the simplification of ritual technicalities remarked upon in the editorial to this issue. He simplified the technique of Kriya Yoga so as to make it accessible to householders also; and indeed Sri Mahasaya himself was married and a wage-earner. He even opened it to non-Hindus and had Muslims also among his disciples.

This is not a biography written with literary skill, but it is useful and informative for readers interested in the less widely known Indian saints

**GEMS FROM BHAGAVAN:** By A. Devaraja Mudaliar. (Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, pp. 55, Re. 1.)

With remarkable lucidity Devaraja Mudaliar (author of *Day by Day with Bhagavan* and *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana*) has strung together Bhagavan's pronouncements on fundamental questions. The subjects dealt with include enquiry and surrender, grace and effort, Self and mind, reincarnation, predestination, Realization. For those who want clear statements free from philosophical complexities this will be a very valuable little book. ARTHUR OSBORNE.

## Swami Omkar

'Cosmic Flashes', 'Cosmic Fast', 'In the Hours of Silence', 'Self-Realization Now and Here', are simply collections of observations and reflections of Swami Omkar, mostly written as the fruit of lengthy periods of fasting. They are not on sale but are donated free to those who write for them to his ashram: Sri Shanti Ashram, via Sankhavararam, East Godavari Dt., A.P.

Swami Omkar is perhaps best known for his peace propaganda; but it is not the usual rather insipid variety, since he always insists that peace must be found within oneself before it can be spread abroad. As he says in 'Cosmic Flashes': "Peace is the birthright of every soul, nay, the Soul is Peace. Santoyam Atma, says the Upanishad. With every inhalation of yours try to take in Peace, and try to give out Peace only with every exhalation. Your very life should become Peace. He who thus realizes Peace realizes God, for verily the two are one."

He is not a guru in the usual sense of giving initiation and upadesha, but many who visit him revere him as such. He worships God in all he sees: in the ocean, comparing it to "the ocean of Reality, the Atman;" in the breath that is the Source of all breath, the Infinite that is manifesting itself, in life as "a process of silent, slow and steady growth towards the goal." He is even capable of seeing God in the ugly and sinful; he sees everywhere the Face of God, in health and in sickness, in good fortune and ill. He has a delightful little fragment on the mosquito that stings him as a Divine reminder. He speaks of cosmic consciousness as "something not to be acquired anew but that is possessed by every soul eternally." He exclaims: "Impossible to forget God! How glorious! Every sound expresses Him. Every manifestation springs from Him." He longs to communicate his experience "that God is here and everywhere, that He is eternally one with us, and that all we have to

do is to be aware of His all-pervasive Presence." That is the golden thread running through his book: that we have to feel the interpenetrating Presence of the Absolute, that "religion is to come face to face with God that is within and without, that real happiness is only in union with God, the Indwelling Light."

He speaks also of the power of thought. What we are is the result of our thinking. Therefore it can be said that we form our own destiny by our thoughts. By being master of one's thoughts one becomes master of one's destiny.

In 'Cosmic Fast' the Swami has much to say about "The conscious realization and recognition of the Infinite and Eternal Light, Omnipresent and Interpenetrating Truth." He speaks of "The boundless Love of God, a perennial flow of the Living Water of Life, Light and Love" and pleads: "Let us be worthy channels to receive His never ending floods of power and blessings." Fasting has led him to ecstasy which, he declares, is more than purifying the body; it is purifying our inmost being in the stillness of our own soul, in the sanctuary of our heart, feeling Divinity within by centering on the Most High, Overcome by the Presence, he prays:

"Lord, as I am feeling Thy Presence now, in all inspired intensity, let me continue to feel It thus for ever. Let me not forget Thee even for a single moment, Thou art my life, my soul and my all-in-all. With Thee I am complete! I need nothing else beside Thee for in having Thee who art in all things I am having everything!"

I. G. SCHULTZ.



Swami Omkar

TULSIDAS: By Chandra Kumari Handoo. (Orient Longmans, Bombay, pp. 300, Price Rs. 18.)

Tulsidas is a household name throughout the Hindi-knowing regions of India, where his famous Hindi work *Ramacharitamanasa* — popularly known as *Ramayana* — is perhaps the most widely read book in Hindu households.

In this book, Srimati Chandra Kumari Handoo has taken pains to collect a rich variety of data which throw fresh light on the man Tulsidas, his influence on contemporary life, his spiritual sadhana, and some of the miracles wrought by his faith in his lord, Sri Rama. His works were extensive—he was the author of about a dozen books—and are acclaimed by scholars as works of the highest art.

The *Ramayana*—the most well-known of his works, his *magnum opus*—is largely cast in the form of dialogues, which contain numerous gems of love and wisdom: revealing peaks of devotion as well as of knowledge and service, and also harmonising various pathways to God. In the actual story narrated in the *Ramayana*, Tulsidas depicts Rama, as well as many other characters associated around him, as upholding the highest *dharma* (righteous conduct)—the very beautiful ideals of a son, a brother, a wife, a friend, a teacher, a king, a servant, etc. etc.—thus bringing out in bold relief the spiritual and moral values inherent in Indian culture. Among the great men of recent times who have borne testimony to the inspiration they derived in their early lives from the *Ramayana* have been Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mahatma Gandhi. Rightly has the learned authoress observed that the *Ramacaritamansa* has entered the life and soul of millions of the people of India. The secret of this would appear to lie (besides the inspired nature of the work) in the simple language and style used by the poet, which could be understood by the learned and the common folk alike at their own levels. Tulsidas was indeed a pioneer in the use of simple Hindi instead of Sanskrit for religious literature.

A valuable feature of the book is an excellent selection of beautiful and significant quotations from Tulsidas' works rendered into English, which enrich the book and add to its usefulness to the English-reading public.

MADAN MOHAN VARMA.

THE DIVINE VOICE OF SRI SRI THAKUR HARANATH OR UPADESAMRITA—PART II: By A. Ramakrishna Sastri. (Published by the author, 3/19-A, Innespet, Rajahmundry-2, A.P., pp. 316. Rs. 4.)

Sri Thakur Haranath, whose birth centenary was celebrated on July 2nd this year, was one of the galaxy of great saints with whom modern India has been blessed. Unfortunately, however, he was little known outside the three provinces of Bengal, Bombay and Andhra. He had no philo-

sophy to propound but taught the creed of divine love and practised it in his own life without stint and with no restriction as to religion or caste or saint or sinner. He was an ecstatic and worked an extraordinary profusion of miracles. He followed Lord Gauranga (Chaitanya) of Bengal in propagating the creed of love, and indeed his followers regard him as an Avatar of Sri Gauranga, or rather both of them as Avatars of Sri Krishna.

This book is not a biography of the saint. Indeed it does not fall into any regular category of literature. It could rather be described as a source book or the raw material from which a book on Sri Haranath could be compiled. His teachings, published and unpublished, have been gathered from various sources. His messages, discourses, precepts, sayings and letters have been brought together, commented on and arranged under various headings. A valuable and extensive introduction has been added bringing out salient points in the saint's life and his attitude towards devotees and others.

It is to be regretted that the English style and grammar and the printing and get-up of the book are not worthy of the love and devotion with which it has been produced.

KRISHNA BIKSHU.

KAIVALYA NAVANEETA (THE CREAM OF EMANCIPATION): Translated into English by Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi from the Tamil original of Sri Tandavaraya Swami. (Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, pp. 74, Price Re. 1.)

Pursuant to the very laudable desire to bring to the notice of the discriminating public all the world over, the classics of the Vedanta Philosophy that India is justly famous for, Sri Ramanasramam has now published *Kaivalya Navaneeta* in English. This famous Tamil classic, comparable in its greatness to the *Viveka Chudamani* of Sri Shankara in Sanskrit, was originally composed in Tamil by Sri Tandavaraya Swami and although well known and often referred to by Tamil scholars, lacks a current translation in English to draw the attention of readers not familiar with the original classical Tamil. In bringing out this English edition and thus making the precious wisdom of this classical work available to a wide public, Sri Ramanasramam has rendered a distinct service to the world now eager to drink from the fount of Vedanta.

Sri Bhagavan has, amongst other classics of Vedanta that he used to refer to, often cited



from this work, *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, as may be gleaned from the record of his 'TALKS' published by the Asramam and it is indeed fortunate that the translator\* happens to be the compiler of the 'TALKS', steeped in Vedantic tradition and terminology and therefore in a position to do justice to the original. The spirit of the original can well be glimpsed in his translation although, as in every case, opinion may differ on the choice of a word here and there. It is no mean tribute to the scholarship of the translator that whatever differences there may be on the choice of particular words the spirit of the original has been ably reproduced in the translation.

The merit of this work, *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, has been well brought out by Professor V. A. Devasenapathi of Madras University in his Introduction "From the vast ocean of milk (the Upanishads etc.) the great teachers have drawn the milk of wisdom and filled it in pots (ancient texts). Tandavaraya Swami, the author of *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, says that he has extracted the butter from the milk. Those who have obtained this (being fed on the butter of divine wisdom — *Brahmajñānam* — and being eternally satisfied) will not roam about feeding on dust (non-real objects of sense)."

More words from a reviewer are needless — may an impertinence — to commend this inestimable work to the seeker of Truth — East or West.

*Sein.*

**THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI:** By Charles Johnston. (J. M. Watkins, pp. 117. Price 12s. 6d.)

The book is a translation and interpretation of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

The different *padas* have been well interpreted: the author has tried to show lucidly the growth of the realisation of the spiritual being of man. Indeed, it is a valuable contribution to yoga literature.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA.

**THREE MUSLIM SAGES, AVICENNA, SUHRAWARDI, IBN ARABI:** By Seyyed Hossein Nasr. (Harvard University Press in America, and Oxford University Press in England and India. Pp. 185, Price \$3.95, Rs. 19.75.)

Actually only the third of the three great Muslim writers dealt with in the three Harvard University guest lectures out of which this book arose merits the title of Sage.

Abu Ali Sinha, known to the West as Avicenna (980-1037 A.D.), was a great master of science and in particular medicine. He was also the

principle introducer of Aristotelian philosophy into the Islamic world.

Suhrawardi (1153-1191) — not to be confused with the Sufi Saint who founded the Order of that name which is still widespread in the Eastern part of the Islamic world — stood midway between the philosophers and the Sufis. To Aristotelian or rational philosophy he opposed inspirational or illuminist teaching, putting intuitive above rational knowledge.

It was Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) who was the true Sage, that is the man of Divine Knowledge and Experience. He it was more than any other who formulated the intellectual expression of Sufism both on the purely metaphysical plane and in derived sciences such as cosmology and psychology. Apart from this he also practised and expounded the technique of spiritual training, being not only a writer but a Sufi Sheikh whose Order still survives.

His teaching reached the ultimate simplicity of pointing out (as did Ramana Maharshi) that it is not a matter of killing the ego but of realizing that it never existed: "Most of those who know God make a ceasing of existence and a ceasing of that ceasing a condition of attaining the knowledge of God, and that is an error and a clear oversight. For the knowledge of God does not presuppose the ceasing of existence nor the ceasing of that ceasing. For things have no existence and what does not exist cannot cease to exist... Then if thou knowest thyself without either being or ceasing to be, then thou knowest God; but if not then not." (p. 115).

His intuitive inner knowledge led him, as it did some of the great Persian and Indian Sufis, to a perception of the equal validity of all religions, which so many modern exponents of Sufism have lost sight of:

"My heart has become capable of every form; it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks, And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the tables of the Torah and the Book of the Koran. I follow the religion of Love; whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

The author gives a vivid account of the life and teachings of these three great Islamic writers. He also sketches in their intellectual background and ancestry, making this an attractive and informative book.

\* For a note on whom see our Ashram Bulletin of Jan. 1964.—*Editor.*



**THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM:** By Ameer Ali. (University Paperbacks, Methuen, pp. XXII and 514, Price 21s.)

Islam can stand on its own merits; it has no need to run down other religions in order to shine by comparison. This unfortunately is what the present author does in his introductory chapter and wherever the text allows. The same treatment has been meted out to Islam by so many Christian writers that his learned and sympathetic account of its rise and spread comes as a welcome contrast. However it spoils a good case by overstating it. The effect would have been greater if the presentation had been less partisan. For instance, outrageous casuistry is used to try to prove that the wars by which Islam spread were defensive. Of course they were not. They were jihad. The early Muslims were convinced that they had a better religion and way of life than their neighbours and had no compunction in imposing it on them. Nor did any stigma attach to aggressive wars in those days.

What will most interest **THE MOUNTAIN PATH** readers is the concluding chapter, written specially for the present edition (the bulk of the book having been first published in 1922), for in this the author deals with the spiritual traditions and history of Sufis. Unfortunately he shows little understanding or appreciation of it.

A. QUTBUDDIN.

**CHRIST APPEARS:** By Mildred Hayward (Jnana Devi). (Sri Shanti Ashram, via Sankhavaram, East Godavari Dt., A.P., pp. 125, free on request.)

Christian reflections and exhortations are apt to evince rather an insipid piety. Mildred Hayward's are an exception. There is real understanding and strong purpose in them. Apart from Swami Omkar of Shanti Ashram, where this third edition is published, they seem, at least to this reviewer, to show the influence of Joel Goldsmith. Two very healthy influences.

SAGITTARIUS.

**ANCIENT BELIEFS AND MODERN SUPERSTITIONS:** By Martin Lings. Perennial Books. pp. 76. Price 12s. 6d.

In only 76 small pages, Martin Lings ranges convincingly through the ages and over the continents, comparing ancient wisdom with modern ignorance, the inner riches of old with our profane poverty which completely ignores the spiritual reality in which we live and move and have our being. Tilting against the much

vaunted theories of evolution and progress, he offers instead that of devolution based on the four deteriorating ages of Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron (the equivalent of the Hindu yugas), the last being our present, spiritually dark age. He writes mainly in a Christian context but gathers in support widely from other sources. Perhaps Hindu quotations predominate, but he includes also Islamic, Taoist, Buddhist, Jewish and scientific as well as statements by the Christian mystics, old and new, to support the validity of his book. One wonders, however, what claim the Ave Maria has to be quoted (on p. 67) as the typical Christian prayer when obviously the Pater Noster holds that position. Mr. Lings also runs counter to modern tendencies in praising the Hindu caste system, in the sense of varnashrama, on the grounds that in its original and ideal form it provides a necessary hierarchy.

E. G. BLANCHARD.

#### BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

The new fare the Buddhist Publication Society has to offer includes a lecture on Buddhism in the United States by the Venerable Vinitha, a booklet on 'The Buddha's Practical Teaching' by John D. Ireland and a reprint of a translation of the Kandarika and Potaliya Suttas with introduction and notes. Its most interesting item is 'Dialogues on the Dhamma', a double number (80-81) of 'The Wheel' by Francis Story, dispelling common misunderstandings of Buddhism in a clear and cogent way.

This last contains the significant sentence: "Buddhism does not claim to have the monopoly of knowledge regarding other states of samsaric experience. What it does claim is to have the sole means of gaining release from the samsaric planes." That is just the trouble with the proselytising religions — Buddhism, Christianity, Islam: each of them claims to be the only valid way. How can there be peace, and what use is dialogue, when each of them demands unconditional surrender? Why can't their followers concentrate on their own path and leave others to follow theirs?

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#### Correction:

In our last issue the publisher of 'Essays on Samkhya and Other Systems of Indian Philosophy' by Dr. Anima Sen Gupta was mistakenly given as Patna University Press. Actually it was published by M. Sen, 65/64, Motimahal, Kanpur, U. P.

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# Ashram Bulletin

## MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

Our next issue, that for January 1966, will be dedicated to 'Ramana Sat-Guru.' It will be a special number of large size and on superior paper. No additional charge will be made from subscribers but the cost of a single copy will be Rs. 2.50; 5 sh.; \$ 0.75.

Contributions for this issue are invited and should reach us early as possible, since we shall have to go to press early with it.

The issue for April 1966 will be on 'Prayers and Powers.'

## OUR SUBSCRIPTION RATE

From the very beginning the hand of Bhagavan has been felt guiding *The Mountain Path*. When it was still a project, in September 1963, we were discussing what the annual subscription should be when a letter was received containing a five rupee note as a subscription to whatever journal the Ashram might be publishing. We took this as a sign from Bhagavan, and indeed it was, because later H. R. Chadha of Calcutta wrote: "One night Bhagavan appeared to me with some magazines so, feeling this to mean that there was an Ashram magazine, I sent five rupees to the Ashram President next morning, asking him to make me a subscriber. The reply came back 'We don't publish one yet but are planning one and were just discussing the subscription rate when your letter arrived and gave us the hint, so you are subscriber No. 1.'"

## THE HOLY HILL

By ARLETTE HANS

I was sitting on Arunachala, not actually meditating but relaxing and seeing myself objectively, as though from outside, when I became aware (I cannot say exactly how) that this was Mt. Sinai on which I was sitting.

What did it mean? That Arunachala-Siva Arunachala-Ramana, is the same as the Mountain where God reveals Himself to Moses and makes known the law? That in coming to a new centre I had not abandoned the old?

## A LECTURE

Swami Poornananda Tirtha of Jnana Ashram, Parlikad, in Kerala, editor of the monthly journal *Kaivalya Sudha*, which valiantly and learnedly upholds Hindu traditional lore, paid us a visit in August, during which he gave a lecture on the Maharshi's teaching.

The lecture was delivered in the Old Hall and was well attended. The Swami began by pointing out that the Maharshi adumbrated no new philosophy but presented afresh the traditional Hindu wisdom. He explained that whereas the ordinary man of religion asks about the origin of the world and postulates a God who created it, the Vedantin asks what the world is and finds it to be a mere conglomeration of sense-impressions. From this comes the enquiry to whom the sense-impressions come. Who am I?

The aspect of Self-enquiry as taught by Sri Maharshi on which the Swami dwelt was the attempt to quell thoughts by asking: to whom do these thoughts come? Who am I?

A still youthful Swami, he is rapidly coming into prominence and has already a considerable following. He did not have the opportunity of coming to Sri Maharshi in his lifetime but makes Sri Maharshi's teaching, especially as expressed in Upadesa Saram and Ulladu Narpadu, the foundation of his own. In his lecture here also he quoted extensively from these two works.

## NEW YORK

The following announcement of the founding of an Arunachala Ashram in New York reached

us too late for inclusion in our July Bulletin, so we are including it here.

The 15th anniversary of the Mahanirvana of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated on 30 April in Carnegie Hall, New York, under the presidency of Prof. Bernard Tobacman. The principal speaker, Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata; (*whose address is given in our correspondence network in this issue*) told how Bhagavan came to him in a dream one night while he was in America. He spoke of the wisdom of Bhagavan in which the essential teachings of all religions merge, telling how seekers and devotees from all over the world used to flock to his lotus feet and how, since he left the body, his influence has been radiating through the world even more powerfully. At the end of the meeting Prof. Tobacman announced the formation of a group which would meet regularly for meditation, discussion and study of Bhagavan's teaching. The meeting ended with chanting of Arunachala-Shiva-OM.

#### VISITORS

Prominent among our visitors during this period was Dr. Das Gupta, Principal of David Hare Training College at Calcutta, who came with his wife and sister and left a convinced devotee.

We also had a visit from Dr. Chandra Sharma, an eminent homoeopathic doctor from London, who came first in Bhagavan's lifetime and has been a number of times since. This time he brought with him his aged parents from Gujerat and his wife and two sons from England.

An interesting visitor was Myrta de Barvie from Argentina who has spent several years in India learning Indian classical dancing. She was accompanied by her mother, Argelia de Barvie, who has long been a devotee of Bhagavan and who told us that there is great hunger for spiritual sustenance in Argentina. From indications that reach us, this applies to all the Latin American countries.

Dr. H. Mahadeva Iyer, Scientific Officer, Atomic Energy Establishment, Bombay, and his American wife, Cynthia Iyer, paid their second visit in nine months. Mrs. Iyer first learned of Sri Bhagavan in 1962 while in England from books by Paul Brunton and Arthur Osborne. While in India during 1963-'4 she became an earnest devo-

tee and obtained most of the English publications of the Ashram. As soon as *The Mountain Path* was started she became a subscriber.

The Iyers spent a week at the Ashram last November and were so enchanted by the atmosphere of peace and the pervading presence of Bhagavan that, after their recent trip to the U.S.A., they decided to come for a second visit to Tiruvannamalai before taking up their Bombay life again, and have stayed for a few days.

Dr. Rafael Lozada Carmona came from Venezuela with a letter of introduction from Irma de Valera. He brought us the names of a few new subscribers and told us of an Arunachala Centre already existing in Venezuela. He already practises Self-enquiry. He plans to stay in our Ashram about six months. He is the professor of Oriental Philosophy in the University of Caracas, Venezuela.



Dr. Lozada

#### OBITUARY

Sri A. Sivarama Reddiar first came to the Ashram in 1931 and remained there ever since, a continuous service of 34 years. Even as a boy he was inspired by the (Tamil) advaitic songs of Sri Achuthaswami of Polur. After the death of his wife, quite early in life, he turned his attention entirely to the spiritual path. He was initiated by a disciple of Sri Achuthaswami and spent three years wandering about India on foot visiting Swamis and holy places. In the course of his wanderings he came to Sri Ramanasramam, and Bhagavan's powerful gaze dispelled all remaining doubts and captivated him completely. He gave up wandering and decided to remain here, and through Bhagavan's Grace the Sarvadhikari put him in charge of the Ashram book depot, a charge which he retained to within a few days of his passing. His grave manner and complete devotion to Bhagavan won him the respect of other devotees. After a short illness he passed away at the age of 70 in his village of Uttaramerur, where he was taken by his daughter. His absence in the Ashram will long be felt. May he rest in peace at the feet of Sri Bhagavan.

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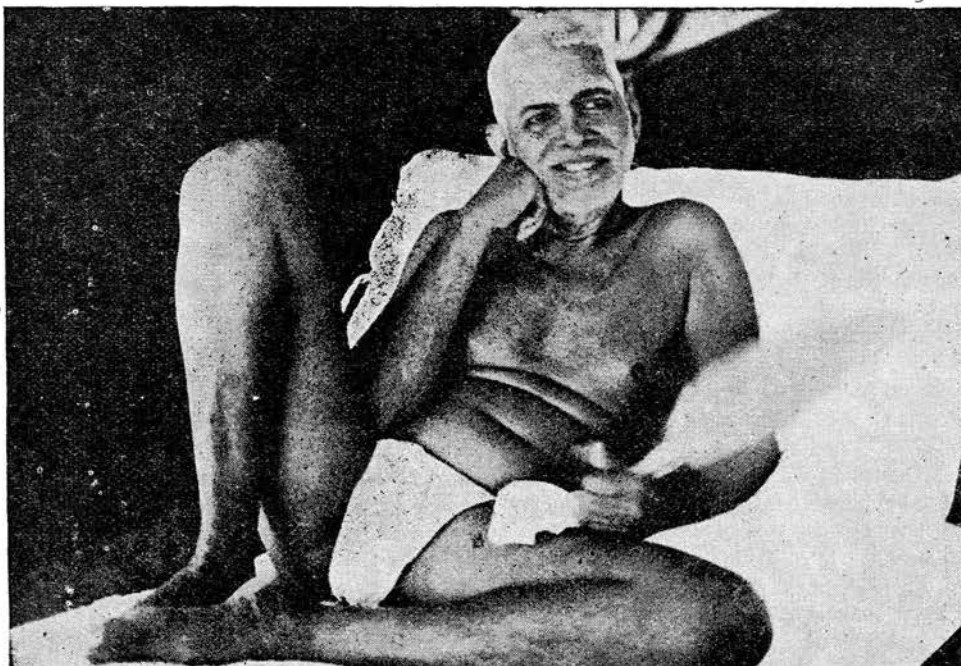
## INTRODUCING...

K. K. Nambiar first came to Bhagavan as long ago as 1933. He could only stay for an hour on this first occasion but was captivated from the very start. Much as he would have liked to stay on at the Ashram, he was unable to do so, being a professional engineer. Instead, he exemplified the pattern which Bhagavan always recommended of a man living and working in the world but remembering and making sadhana simultaneously. He has since risen to the very top of his profession, both in government service and in industry, but has remained no less a devotee throughout.

After his first meeting with Bhagavan he prayed silently but fervently to Bhagavan for more opportunities to see him. This prayer was answered by apparent coincidence. The District Board of North Arcot was sub-divided and K. K. Nambiar was appointed Board Engineer for the new district, with headquarters at Tiruvannamalai. He was now able to visit the Ashram almost daily. In this also he conformed to a pattern that was often seen, by choice or destiny, among Bhagavan's disciples: that is for a new

devotee to be kept in close physical proximity to Bhagavan for some time and then to be sent out into the world to cope with life and apply the spiritual viewpoint that had been acquired. K. K. Nambiar was one of those who came through the test valiantly. However far between his visits to the Ashram might be, he remained centred on Bhagavan. Since Bhagavan left the body he has also remained a staunch supporter of the Ashram.

K. K. Nambiar was from the beginning peculiarly receptive to influences from Bhagavan. The following incident related by him in the GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR of 1949 is an example of this. "One evening in the year 1936 when I visited the Ashram I decided to ask an important question of Sri Bhagavan concerning certain spiritual practices. But amidst the solemn hours of Veda parayana in the evening and during meditation that followed I could not make up my mind to ask the question and returned home somewhat disappointed. Early next morning, when I was lying half awake, Sri Bhagavan appeared before me in a dream and answered the very question which I had failed to put to him the previous evening. And before he vanished he also told me that he wanted a note-book. I





said that I had only one readily available and that it was of octavo pocket-size. He said that would do. I woke up with a pleasant thrill. The dream or vision, whichever one may call it, had made such a deep impression on my mind that I could not delay carrying out the behest, however strange it might seem. After an early bath and ablutions I traced out the note-book and hurried to the Ashram. Prostrating myself before Bhagavan as usual, I handed over the note-book to him. He received it with a smile and asked me why I had brought it to him, so I told him in a whisper all about my dream. He immediately called his personal attendant, the late Madhavaswami, and remarked to him: "Didn't I ask you yesterday evening to get a good note-book to write out a Malayalam translation of the Sanskrit text of the Sri Ramana Gita in? You didn't bring one. Well, here is Nambiar who has brought it for me. It seems he had a dream in which I asked for the note-book and he has brought it."

In the same article he records another dream which is of great interest not only in itself but as an illustration of how Bhagavan would sometimes instruct one devotee through another. "On another occasion in the same year I dreamt of the Maharshi seated on his couch with a number of devotees seated on the floor and in meditation. Among them I recognised a young devotee from Goa seated in padmasana and doing pranayama (breath-control). I think his name was Sridhar. While he was doing pranayama I saw sparks rising from the base of his spine up to his head. Bhagavan, who was watching him, said: 'There is no need for all this gymnastics with breath-control. It is easier and safer to follow the method of Self-enquiry as enunciated by me.' Next morning when I went to the Ashram I sought out this young Goanese Swami. I had no previous acquaintance with him and had had no occasion to speak to him before. I gave him a full account of the dream I had had. He was



K. K. Nambiar

visibly moved and, somewhat to my embarrassment, embraced me with delight in the North Indian fashion. He said: 'Brother, I was all the while waiting for an opportunity to ask Bhagavan whether I should continue or give up this practice of pranayama which I have been steadily carrying on for several years past. Indeed, last night, while sitting in the presence of Bhagavan, I was eagerly waiting for an opportunity to put the question to him but couldn't find a suitable occasion. Now there is no need to ask him about it, since he has answered me through you.'

At present K. K. Nambiar is living in Bombay but he remains in close touch with the Ashram and with other devotees.

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"You have no need to seek deliverance, since you are not bound".

Hui-hai speaking. Maharshi also.

— W. W. W.

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# Letters TO THE EDITOR

I was very interested in your July editorial explaining the difficult question of Realization. But apart from the two possibilities you mention is there not a third: that of the devotee who, without either the perfect Self-Realization of the Advaitin or the technical expertise of the Hermetist, attains through sheer goodness and devotion to a state of sanctity in which miraculous powers may manifest in him? You seem to admit this possibility in your reference to Christian saints.

WILFRED JONES,  
London.

*There is indeed this third possibility. In fact it is probably the most common of the three in actual practice. I omitted it because I was dealing with the more specific or 'scientific' meanings of realization.*

Editor.

Re. 'I and my Father are One' by Sagittarius: There is no Horatio Gubbins, never has been, never could be. There is no 'H. G.' to experience anything, nor any 'thing' to be experienced. He believes that he is a sentient being, but his only being is the sentience whereby his identity is mistaken. All that he has to do is to cease mistaking the reflection of the moon in a puddle for the moon itself, which he is.

W. W. W.

Exactly: that is what I meant to convey.

SAGITTARIUS.

I particularly appreciate the articles on saints in *The Mountain Path*. Such a relief from the sort of magazine that only praises its own Swami and keeps mum about all others. In the July issue for the first time you have an article about one who is still living and can be contacted. I

would like very much to know if there are any more such.

BARBARA CLIFF,  
London.

*Yes. Actually there is an appreciation of one in the book review section of our issue of January '1965, another in that of the present issue. If everything goes according to plan two others will appear in our issues of April and July 1966. Others on occasion.*

Editor.

I am reading your fine journal with the greatest appreciation and benefit — its broadness, embracing the tenets of all faiths, is a wonderful thing — and I envy all who have had the close contact with Bhagavan which gave rise to its inception and inspiration.

Your poem 'Be Still' in the January issue is beautiful. The inexpressible Truth is best revealed, I believe, in dedicated art, whatever the medium, if the recipient is to some degree attuned to it.

"... there is no other way

But to be still. In stillness then to find..." expresses the same thought as "Pay the price of silence and a thousand voices answer", and in a better way.

DOROTHY C. DONATH,  
Washington D.C., U.S.A.

One day a fellow student of Joel Goldsmith's Infinite Way group handed me a copy of *The Mountain Path* and your editorial and poems were like a stream of light pouring through me. The issues I now have, and specifically the poem 'Be Still', have touched me deeply. The poem is magnificent. Your pen was aflame in writing

this and it has inspired so many. As for me, I have it constantly in sight, deeply breathing its message.

MRS. TERRY SANDERS,  
New Jersey, U.S.A.

\* \* \*

It was with sincere pleasure that my husband and myself read the journals which you so kindly forwarded to us. Especially welcome was the beautiful photograph of Sri Bhagavan in every copy. When the eyes behold the Grace so radiantly shining from the Maharshi's physical frame the heart sings at the knowledge that the Light which so gloriously animated flesh and bone remains ever the same. *The Mountain Path* contains spiritual instruction which will serve as 'daily bread' to those hearts yearning for wisdom. Accept our sincere gratitude for making available such knowledge. May all learn of the Holy Beacon ever shining within the sacred tabernacle of their hearts.

GLADYS DE MEUTER,  
Johannesburg.

\* \* \*

In one of your issues last year you promised to write about the Ashram becoming a residential ashram in the January issue of this year. No news has since appeared in any of the issues of the current year. Has that idea been dropped?

S. V. RAMAN,  
Madras.

What I wrote (in the *Ashram Bulletin* of July 1964, p. 186-7) was: "During the lifetime of Bhagavan, as will be explained in our editorial of January 1965, devotees were not encouraged to make a long stay here. Recently the tendency to lengthier visits and to settling down here has increased and it has begun to be felt in the Ashram that the growth of a residential colony of devotees and aspirants has now become appropriate." So what I promised to explain in the January editorial was why devotees were not encouraged to make a lengthy stay during the lifetime of Bhagavan; and the editorial does explain that. Actually, it is not fully a residential ashram even now, though more so than formerly, since there is no organization of the work, life and activities of the devotees. All this the editorial explains.

Editor.

\* \* \*

In the July Number Dr. Krishnan asked about the proper approach to the enquiry 'Who am I?' It is interesting in that connection to recall how the Buddha showed his disciples the voidness of the five aggregates. The *Anatya Lakkhana Sutta* says: "What do you think, bhikkhus, is the form permanent or impermanent?"

"It is impermanent, O Lord."

"And that which is impermanent, is it painful or joyful?"

"Painful, O Lord."

"And should one consider of that which is painful, impermanent and subject to change: 'This is mine, This I am, This is my self'?"

"One should not, O Lord."

The same is then repeated of feeling, perception, tendencies, consciousness.

BHIKSHU GNANARAMITA,  
Dodanduwa, Ceylon.

*This illustrates beautifully the theoretical discarding of the impermanent, but you must remember that Self-enquiry was taught by Bhagavan not as doctrine or theory but as a spiritual exercise.*

Editor.

\* \* \*

The July issue of *The Mountain Path* is really a splendid number with its invaluable articles — most inspiring to me.

DR. CRISNA M. P. VERNENCAR,  
Goa.

\* \* \*

*The Mountain Path* is by far the best of spiritual magazines and your efforts for its publication are praiseworthy. May it enlighten many a seeker of truth towards life's fulfilment.

A. V. RAMACHANDRA,  
Bombay.

\* \* \*

Thank you very much for sending our Buddhist group through me your very interesting quarterly *The Mountain Path*: it has been read with appreciation and interest. You are to be congratulated both on the subject matter, which is of inestimable value to all who seek, and also on the general high standard and size of your magazine. To all who know and love the life and message of the Maharshi it must come as a boon to have so many aspects of the life and teaching brought before them; while there is also so much of value and interest for those who, like our group, seek in the footsteps of another teacher: indeed, reading your quarterly, one reader at

least felt that on 'the mountain path' when in sight at last of the peak there is but one way, one teaching, one goal.

So thank you once again for bringing your quarterly to our notice and may your venture prove a strong link for all who tread 'the Mountain Path' as pilgrims, by whatever names we call ourselves.

W. B. PICARD,  
Mousehole, Cornwall, England.

G. Madhava Rao of Somwarpet, an advocate, has cured some sixteen patients of scorpion bite by the yantra contained in the April issue of *The Mountain Path* and has asked me to convey his thanks. He practises spiritual healing and formerly used to cure them in that way, but some pain remained for a while at the point of the sting, whereas with the yantra no pain remains at all.

M. M. DAVE,  
Raichur.

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## CORRESPONDENCE NETWORK

In continuation of our previous list

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Ceylon.

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## FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

SARASWATHI POOJA	..	Sunday	..	3-10-1965
VIJAYADASAMI	..	Monday	..	4-10-1965
DEEPAVALI	..	Friday	..	22-10-1965
SKANDASASHTI	..	Saturday	..	30-10-1965
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (commences on)	..	Sunday	..	28-11-1965
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM	..	Tuesday	..	7-12-1965
JAYANTHI OF SRI MAHARSHI (86th Birthday)	..	Friday	..	7-1-1966
PONGAL	..	Friday	..	14-1-1966
CHINNASWAMI ARADHANA	..	Saturday	..	5-2-1966

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## KAIVALYA NAVANEETA

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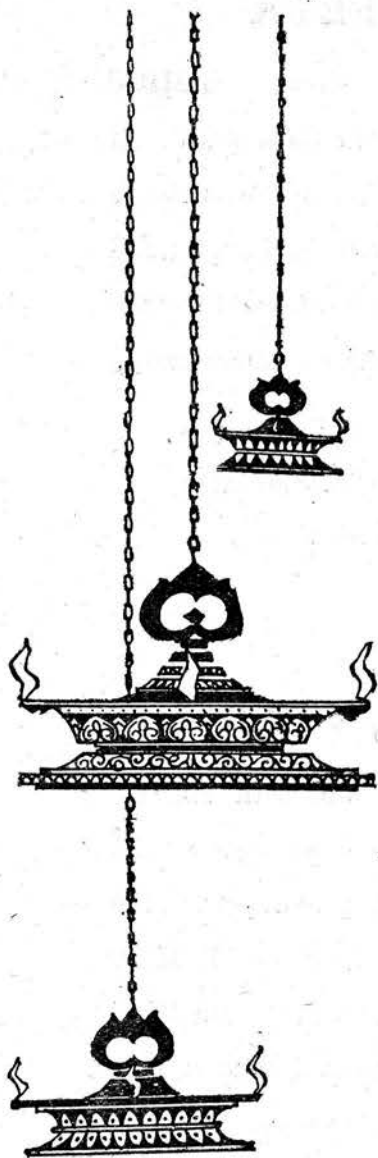
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## COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION OVER THE SHRINE OF SRI MAHARSHI



### AN APPEAL



The construction over the samadhi shrine of Sri Maharshi, which was started in 1952 and inaugurated by H. H. Sri Sri Ananda Mayee of Banaras and later graced by H. H. Sri Rama Devi of Mangalore in 1962, has been progressing rather slowly, much to the disappointment of Ramana bhaktas. Though the causes for the delay need not be analysed or discussed, it was mainly, due to lack of funds. In the Ashram Bulletin of July, 1964, we published an account of how the work had progressed with photos.

Collections \* are made in the name of Bhagavan for other causes. These may be noble and necessary, yet real Ramana bhaktas are pained to see the construction over Sri Maharshi's shrine still standing uncompleted. In response to them the management is making all possible efforts to complete the Mantap within a few months. All the materials have already been gathered and we are happy to announce that very soon the devotees will have the pleasure and privilege of taking part in the Kumbhabhishekam on the tower over the shrine of Sri Maharshi.

**Some Rs. 25,000/- or more will be needed to fulfil this pledge of ours and we appeal to Ramana bhaktas and philanthropists, scattered over the globe, to take this opportunity of contributing to this noble cause.**

Contributions may kindly be sent to : To President, Sri Ramana Mantapa Nidhi, Sri Ramana-sramam, Tiruvannamalai, S. India.

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*\* The Ashram management is in no way responsible for or connected with, such collections made by individuals.*

**SPECIAL BUMPER ISSUE**

*Jayanti Number - 1966*

OF

**THE MOUNTAIN PATH**

(January, 1966)

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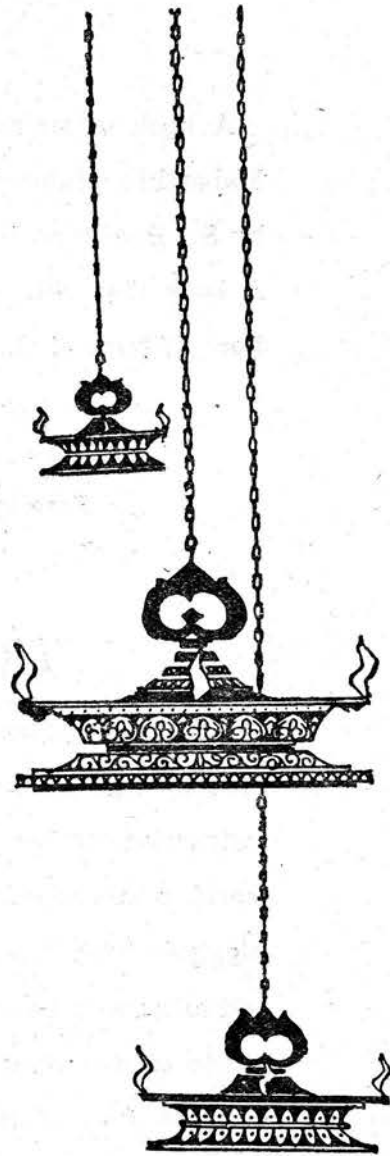
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(A QUARTERLY)

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