



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

# The Mountain Path

V Vol. III

APRIL 1966

No. 2

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

"Does it become Thee  
thus to sleep when I am out-  
raged by others, O Aruna-  
chala ?

—*The Marital Garland of  
Letters*, verse 10.

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(A QUARTERLY)

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meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala !"

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

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## The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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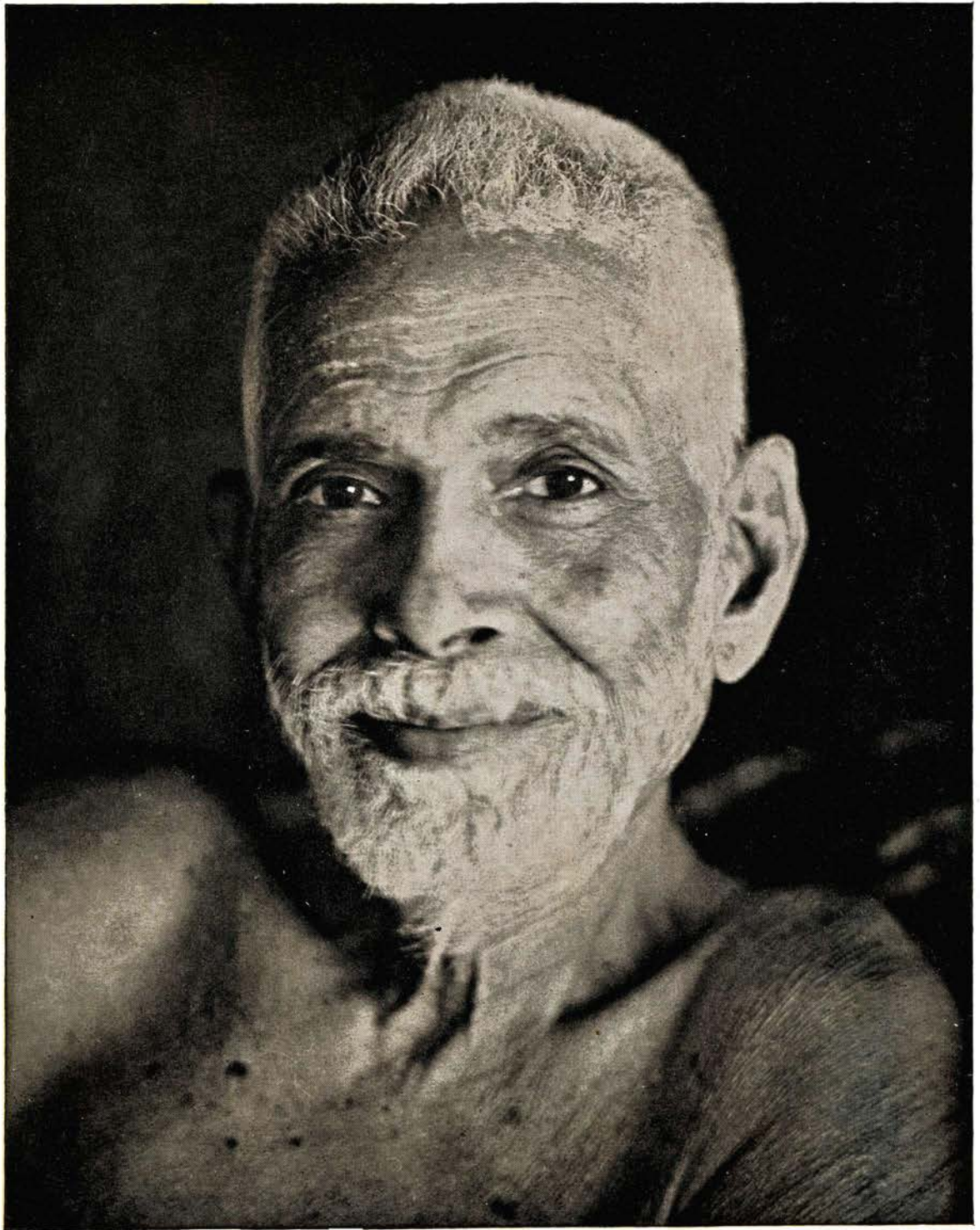
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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

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APRIL, 1966

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## HIGHER POWERS

(EDITORIAL)

It is generally agreed by anthropologists to-day that peoples called 'primitive' have or have had a conception of the Supreme Being, although in many cases this has got obscured behind an array of lesser gods, spirits and powers. An important implication of this is that, so far as religion is concerned, these peoples are not primitive but degenerate. Probably in other ways too, though that does not concern us here.

Supreme Being is as impartial as the sun. If one flower bud opens when the sun rises and another not, it is due to its own preparedness and not to any partiality of the sun. Similarly, Divine Grace flows everywhere, always; it is only man's willingness and ability to respond to it that varies. Supreme Being cannot be propitiated. Being all benevolence, it cannot be induced to become more benevolent to one than to another or in one instance than in another. All things manifest Supreme Being in its innumerable aspects; all things issue forth from it and return to it.

Man, however, develops an ego-sense, a conviction of separate individual being; and

insofar as this seeks to withstand the immutability of Supreme Being it will eventually be bruised and broken. Then Supreme Being will not appear to him benevolent but harsh and he will give It the name of Fate.

Arising from his ego-sense he has desires that he wishes to fulfil. At their best and purest these may converge in the desire to efface the ego-sense and return to conscious union with Supreme Being; however they very seldom are at their purest and best. Usually they are specific desires, although ranging over a wide area from the crudest egoism to the most exalted idealism and altruism. It is no use turning for fulfilment of these desires to Supreme Being, which does not even take cognizance of the ego that has them; therefore men seek other ways of attaining them.

One way is to pray to a single monotheistic Personal God Who is a crystalization, so to speak, of Supreme Being; but it is by no means the only way. Men also seek to harness Divine Power to their will or to propitiate gods or aspects of God through a variety of techniques. Even in Islam, the

most rigidly monotheistic of religions, people invoke specific Names of God for specific purposes, while in Christianity with its 'Three Persons in One God' they invoke the intercession of saints.

Invoking saints and angelic powers means seeking aid from the intermediate world between the human and the Divine. In most religions elaborate techniques have been framed for doing this, for propitiating benevolent powers and warding off harmful ones. When this physical world is full of such a variety of life-forms, some dangerous and others serviceable, the tiger and the lamb, the serpent and the eagle, it would be crass materialism to suppose the subtle world empty of such. The religions all recognize their existence. The New Testament speaks of angels and archangels and, on the harmful side, of devils possessing people. The Qur'an speaks of Muhammad preaching to the jinn as well as to humans. Buddha also is said to have taught in the deva-loka as well as on earth. If animism plays a large part in some modern Buddhist communities it is because they have substituted a wish to gratify their desires for Buddha's injunction to renounce them.

Spiritual degeneracy can take many forms, but two are particularly obvious. One is forgetting about Supreme Being, which, after all, is of no use to you as an individual but is eventually going to devour and re-absorb you, and concentrating on forces and beings of the subtle world and on the means of harnessing or placating them. The other is to forget all about the subtle world and believe only in a material world with or without a Personal God who made it. The former leads to animism and magic, the latter to materialism; the former is the degeneracy of the peoples called primitive, the latter of the anthropologists who study them.

Some anthropologists have held that religion grew out of magic. Religion cannot grow out of anything, being based on pure intuitional consciousness. Indeed, it does not grow or develop, but starts full grown and thereafter declines.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, true, as indi-

cated above, that magic is a degeneracy of religion. When the goal of self-purification is lost sight of and the purpose of harnessing subtle forces comes to be the acquisition of power and gratification of desires, then it comes to be magic. But that does not necessarily mean that it is ineffective; it may be both effective and dangerous. From a spiritual point of view, however, it is unworthy of consideration.

There is a similarity between the attitude of the advaitin and his direct opposite, the materialist, since both alike ignore the intermediate world with all its powers and wonders. The advaitin, seeking to realize the One Self that he is, understands that all that appears, whether earth or heaven, manifestation and dissolution of the universe, celestial beings in their splendour, the avatars and the prophets, Christ and his second coming, the Buddhas of all the ages, all manifest the One Self, because there is no other. Therefore to seek them out, however resplendent they may be, would be a distraction on the path.

The materialist also sees nothing but the physical world — but with what a difference! The powers and splendours of the intermediate world are not below but above his aspirations. He cannot even conceive of them. Whether or not he believes that some remote person called God created this physical world from outside of it, it is the physical world of things he can touch and see that he really believes in. How distressing it must be for him to be told by his own physical science that there is no such world, that things have no colour, shape or smell apart from his perception of them, that he is not sitting at a solid wooden table but before a cluster of atoms whirling about in empty space. Now that there is no longer any matter how is he going to be a materialist?

\* \* \*

Let us now pass from theory to practice and see how non-physical powers operate. They fall into three main categories which

<sup>1</sup> This theme is developed in *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism* by Arthur Osborne, ch. 3, Rider & Co.



are on the whole distinct although they merge at the edges.

The first is purely technical, through the performance of some rite; and in this, as in the working of physical science, the wisdom and purity of the operator is not a requisite, although his ability to concentrate is usually helpful and sometimes essential. A good example of this category is the yantra against scorpion stings which we published in our issue of April 1965 and which so many of our readers have found effective.

This mode of canalisation covers a vast range including most religious ritual and occult practice. It includes, for instance, the Christian practice of making the sign of the cross to avert evil influences and the Muslim use of 'Bismillah' for the same purpose. It covers the Mediaeval science of alchemy, the use of mantras and yantras, the Catholic rite of exorcism and even the efficacy of the mass. Indeed there is recognition of this in the Catholic tenet that the efficacy of the mass is not dependent on the purity and spirituality of the officiating priest — it is not he who is acting but a divinely instituted current that is acting through him. At the same time, it must be added that the more spiritual are the benefits sought from the practice of any technique the more helpful is purity and concentration on the part of the practicant. This is technically explicable because impurity, inertia and mental distraction prevent the mind being a clear channel for the flow of the power that is being invoked. And the Catholic Church does, of course, recognize the desirability of purity and devotion in the priest who celebrates mass even while holding that the lack of these qualities cannot totally invalidate it.

Incidentally, the possibility of investing powers in a person modifies to some extent what I said in my editorial of July 1965 about the impossibility if a Guru guiding others farther than he has gone himself. A Guru may invest a power such as the awakening and guidance of kundalini in a disciple who will to that extent become his succes-

sor, just as the power to great absolution is invested in a Catholic Priest.

Mediaeval alchemy was a highly technical science using physical experimentation, but since it aimed at spiritual development it insisted on purity in the practicant. "This thing for which you have sought so long is not to be acquired or accomplished by force or passion. It is only to be won by patience and humility and by a determined and most perfect love. For God bestows this divine and immaculate science on his faithful servants, namely on those on whom he resolved to bestow it from the original nature of things. . . . Nor were they able to hold anything back save through the strength granted to them by God. For God charges those of his servants whom he has purposely chosen that they keep this divine science which is hidden from men and that they keep it to themselves."<sup>2</sup>

To discuss why certain actions produce effects that are not physically accountable would take us too far afield. It would open up the whole question of spiritual forces and subtle vibrations. And if the whole apparently physical universe is reducible to energy vibrations, as nuclear scientists seem inclined to think, it would also open up the question where and by what right a boundary is to be drawn between the physical and non-physical world. However, there is one important consequence to be drawn: that is that the widespread modern rejection of ritual in religion is depriving people of powerful aids for spiritual development and for defence against evil.

A further specification seems called for in this connection. As explained by Bhagavan in his *Upadesa Saram* (Instruction in Thirty Verses) quoted in our issue of January 1965, and also in the editorial and the article 'Paths to Self-Realization' by Dr. B. V. Radhakrishnan in the same issue, action cannot lead beyond action and therefore no ritual can produce Liberation. Therefore people who seek Liberation by the path of Self-enquiry, as taught by Bhagavan, main-

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Arthur Osborne, *op. cit.* p. 91, from 'Psychology and Alchemy' p. 260, by C. G. Jung.

ly ignore ritual, and Bhagavan approved of this. But there are many who do not specifically seek Liberation but simply greater purity, greater devotion, general spiritual betterment, or who seek Liberation as the still unseen goal of a winding path; and it is for such as these that the appropriate ritual would be a powerful armament for progress and defence.

The second category is of powers that manifest themselves through some particular person. These may be spontaneous or acquired.

Spontaneous powers are not uncommon and it may be that, in accordance with the nature of our times (as explained in the editorial of our October 1965 issue and in the article 'Al Khizr' by Abdullah Qutbuddin in the same issue), they are becoming more common. There are many cases in the West where healing power manifests spontaneously. One such is G. H. Gedge whose article on 'The Modern Revival of Spiritual Healing' was published in our issue of January 1965. Another was Joel Goldsmith, a number of whose articles we have published. In India there are cases of a wider range of powers appearing at an early age before there is any question of spiritual attainment. One of these is Panrimalai Swami, about whom there is an article in this issue. Another is Sathya Sai Baba, who is regarded by his followers as a reincarnation of the original Sai Baba (about whose use of miracles there is an article in this issue). There may be various explanations for this. The most commonly applicable is probably that they are persons who had attained such a state of purity in their last incarnation as to enable power to flow through them unimpeded in this.

Acquired powers are to some extent due to a cultivation of generally available techniques and to some extent to development of an aptitude for spontaneous power that was inherent but not powerful enough to manifest without training. It is enough to say that they are not approved of by true Masters. In order to seek them, a man's mind must be directed towards them, not

towards Liberation. Therefore they cannot lead him to Liberation. Preoccupation with them is far more likely to distract him from it; and it can do this just as effectively as preoccupation with physical wealth and power. At best they exist within the phenomenal world which he should be striving to transcend and hold him down in it; at worst they degenerate into sorcery and magnify his ego by giving him power over others and winning their submission and adulation.

Midway between these two subcategories are powers which come to a man spontaneously in the course of his quest and as a by-product of it. They also can be a hindrance on the quest. Whether and how far to use them will be a matter for decision by the Guru or for sober, dispassionate judgement if there is no physical Guru.

The third category, into which the second may merge, is of those who have made themselves channels for the Divine Power by complete submission or dissolution of the ego which obstructs it.

A man feels (or, through meditation, can learn to feel) a reality or selfhood in him. It is impossible to define it and useless to give it a name. In comparison with it the world of people, things and events, including his own life and body, is felt to have only a relative reality, like a dream or like a bubble pretending to be a world. But very few are able, like the Maharshi, to remain in constant, clear awareness of this inner reality. More often there is a vague awareness, a belief, a recollection, a mental understanding, fortified by occasional flashes of clear intuitional knowledge.

There are two ways in which a man can regard this true and inner Reality. He can recognize it as the only reality of him and therefore give it the name of Self. This implies that he who recognizes it is a mere projection of it and mask over it and is acting a lie in presuming any independent reality. Alternately he can regard his body-mind complex as a real self other than this Reality, which he will then call God. Theorists try to blow this difference up into something big and argue learnedly that one attitude is right



and the other wrong, but actually it is a slight divergence, rather of emphasis than fact. Those who call the inner Reality 'God' appreciate nevertheless that it is "closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet", while those who call it 'Self' appreciate that it is other than the body-mind complex which is regarded as self by almost all in their ordinary day to day living.

There is, however, a difference in practical implication. The apparent world, being a projection or manifestation of the inner Reality, is obviously malleable, can be shaped, changed or adapted — but who by? He who recognizes the inner Reality as the Self of him thereby negates any other, any ego or contingent self who could desire one course of events rather than another or be interested to canalise power for the curing of disease or removal of hardships or any other change in the course of things. Divine Power will flow through him owing to the absence of any ego to impede it, but there will also be no ego to direct it consciously. Miracles may happen but they will not be performed. The flow of events will be witnessed like a cinema show or a waking dream, with a feeling that they are right and fitting but without involvement. If the body-mind complex of such an Awakened One has any function to perform it will perform it in full aware-

ness, with scrupulous exactitude, like an actor playing his part on the stage, but, like the actor, without confusing himself with the part he plays. If he is cast in the role of Brutus he will stab Caesar; if he has to commit a stage crime he will suffer a stage punishment, but his real self, the self that he is off the stage, will remain unaffected.

On the other hand, he who still sees his body-mind complex as a separate entity apart from and yet submitted to that Reality still has the desires and aversions of an ego, although they are no longer pernicious or rebellious ones. He it is who will work miracles. The submission of his ego enables the Divine Power to flow through him, while its survival enables him to canalise this flow to ends that he finds desirable, to the alleviation of suffering and removal of discord. To the powerful attraction he feels towards that Reality which still seems other he gives the name of 'love'. He gives the same name also to the outflowing of Grace from that Beloved which makes him tingle in every pore and dissolve in pure felicity. In place of the serene abidance of the former type he will know the rapture of union with the Beloved alternating with the sweet anguish of separation. So long as his submission remains pure, an inexhaustible reservoir of power is at his disposal.

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## DISAPPEARANCE OF THE BODY

From A Note by ALAN CHADWICK

One day Bhagavan was telling us that the Tamil Saint Manikavachagar's body disappeared in a blaze of light leaving no residue. I asked him how that happened and he explained that the body is only the solidified mind. When the mind dissolves in Jnana and consumes itself in a blaze of light the body also is burnt up in the process. He mentioned other such cases also. I referred to the story in the Bible of Elijah being car-

ried to heaven in a chariot of fire, a poetic way of saying the same thing.

I then asked whether Christ's disappearance from the tomb resembled this in any way, but Bhagavan pointed out the difference that Christ's body still remained, whereas in the other type of phenomenon the body was entirely consumed. He explained that the subtle body is composed of light and sound and the gross body is only a concrete form of this.

---

## SOME CONSEQUENCES OF ANATTA

By BODHICHITTA

However much scholars may dispute what is the original form of Buddhism and what texts may go back to the time of Gautama, there is no doubt that at the very heart of it lies the doctrine of anatta, no-ego. This all the schools agree upon. And this is the essence. It is what gives its fundamental character to Buddhism. From it flow important consequences. For instance, prayer in the sense of petition becomes impossible. Prayer postulates two beings : a small one to request a boon and a great one to grant it ; if there are no beings there is no point in prayer.

Anatta has both a static and a dynamic aspect. Statically it is an assertion that there is no ego, no separate individual being ; dynamically it is a reminder to realize this by dissolving the illusion of any such being. One who is pledged to this goal cannot ask for boons for the ego whose existence he denies and to the destruction of whose apparent existence he is pledged. He cannot logically pray even for assistance in accomplishing this destruction, for who is to assist whom ? He is not in fact trying to destroy an ego but merely to perceive (what he is already convinced of mentally) that there isn't one. It is true that devotional schools have arisen for those who flinch from the austere purity of the Dharma, that in Japan, for instance, there is a school of tariki or 'outside help' as well as jiriki or 'self-help', but this can be no more than a concession to weaklings. Anatta is a truth to be realized ; it can never be a boon to be conferred.

Historically the search for outside help is negated by Buddha's famous last words to the beloved disciple Ananda : "Therefore, Ananda, be lamps unto yourselves. Be a refuge to yourself. Seek no outer refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp and a refuge.

Look not to any one outside yourself for refuge."

This does not mean that man as an individual rejects help that appears to come to him from other individuals, simply that he perceives that the battle is being waged within him. As in other religions, he follows a guru, but the guru is only activating and inspiring his own inner effort. He takes refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, but that is not renouncing the need for self-help ; it is only arming himself for it. He does not pray to any of them. As man is set on the world's stage, there are the forces of tanha or craving to bewilder him and the apparent realities of life to entice him ; and over and against these are the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha to show him the way. Set between them, it is he who has to arm himself and to make the effort. And in doing so he has to remember that he is not really fighting to destroy anything that exists but only striving to perceive clearly what does not exist.

Just as there is no place for prayer in Buddhism, so there is no place for miraculous powers. It cannot, of course, be said that in the long history of Buddhism no saints have exercised such powers or that no miracles have occurred spontaneously in the ambiance of a saint, but there is no tradition of miraculous powers. As a person becomes purified through mindfulness and strengthens his mind through the elimination of distraction and illusion such powers are quite apt to come to him, but they do not carry him forward towards the ultimate goal of Nirvana ; they do not, that is to say, help him to realize anatta, and therefore they are useless. Indeed they are dangerous insofar as they may distract him from the goal, just as physical wealth and power may ; therefore they are not to be indulged.



They can be used up to a point to help others, just as physical wealth and power can, but not to conduct others towards the goal of realized anatta, and therefore this plea also fails to justify them. In fact, just like physical wealth and power, they are more likely to be an impediment than an asset, and therefore it is better to refrain from seeking them and to renounce them if they come unsought.

Buddha, indeed, forbade his followers to cultivate or display them. There is a story of how a visitor set his bowl on the top of a high pole and challenged any of the monks to fetch it down and one of them yielded to the temptation to do so by practising levitation; when Buddha was told of it he reprimanded him, asking what good purpose had been served by this display of powers. In the Vinaya, the set of monastic rules that are said to have been framed by Buddha and are certainly characteristic of the early Sangha, one of the offences for which a monk could be expelled from a

monastery was claiming or displaying powers. It was not a question of whether the powers were genuine or not; it was not for fraud that he was expelled but for engaging in unfruitful and distracting activity.

Look at the story of the woman who brought the dead child to Buddha. To have restored it to life would have been making her an exceptional case freed in this one instance from the law of nature and would not in any way have conduced to the dissolution of her ego. On the other hand, by making her see that death and bereavement are the common lot of mankind he opened her eyes and set her on the path to freedom from suffering.

The Dharma is uncompromising in its logic, ruthless in its adherence to truth. If the ego is a fiction which creates a life of frustration ending finally in extermination, true compassion lies not in alleviating a few of the sufferings that it causes but in indicating its unreality so as to dispel suffering entirely.

---

## ODE TO ARUNACHALA

By DAVID CORRYDON

Dear Bless'd Arunachala,  
 Blessed Soul in form,  
 Reaching up through foreign soil  
 To touch the blue of heaven's space.  
 A star rests overhead.  
 Within your heart beats truth.  
 Upon your slope treads peace.  
 Your circling path brings knowing,  
 Your summit is the goal.  
 And standing there in form,  
 Challenging all who seek  
 To ever BE as Thou,  
 Serene,  
 Content,  
 And lost in all that is  
 And ever will be.

---

## WHOSE WILL BE DONE ?

By DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

Prayer, parading one's weakness before God and asking that one's will be done, is useless. Even though a man may be praying for others it is fundamentally his own happiness that he is seeking. To pray for anything is offering resistance to the free play of God's will. Nothing should be allowed to come between God and the seeker, not even a prayer. To be still and surrender oneself to God is to abide by His will. This does not mean that one should be inactive in life, only that one should learn to lead a non-volitional life. "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."<sup>1</sup>

"A true Master will not ask the seeker to do this or that. The seeker has to gain cessation of mental activities. The active mind creates and such creation destroys one's self-nature. Becoming destroys being." The aim is simply to be inwardly still and to be aware. Effort must be made to still thoughts and there is awareness of the effort and of the thoughts stilled.

"All our experiences are only thought. Pleasure and pain are thoughts. And thoughts are within us. Pleasure and pain are not in the outer world. The kingdom of heaven and this world are not two different things. When the world is seen as within you it turns into the kingdom of heaven." God's presence is not a living reality in the world as we see it because man's mind is actively arranging the things of the world. Therefore it is logically correct to say that God is absent from the world ; and where God is absent all doubts and fears are bound to be present.

That which is aware of the sorrows of the world is the contracted ego, while the world is the expanded ego. So the evil in the world is inseparable from the ego which

cognizes it and will last as long as the ego. "Until the 'I'-riddle is solved the world-riddle will remain to perplex and torment us." "When the Self is seen the world is not. Then one realizes that there never was any creation." How can there be suffering in the uncreated ? Or what is there to ask for ?

"One who says, 'I shall not strive for my own salvation till I have relieved the suffering of the whole world,' is like the compassionate dreamer who first wants to relieve the sufferings of the people in his dream before consenting to wake up." Those who want to do social work are like such an amiable philosopher.

It is the outgoing mind that entertains such apparently compassionate thoughts. The mind should not be occupied outwardly but turned inwards. Its power should be used to stop its habit of thinking. There is a state in which thoughts do not come, not even the 'I am' thought, and yet awareness remains. There are no problems for such a stilled mind. It is not necessary for the Self to be aware of the world but only to BE. Awareness of the world can be added to Self-awareness or not ; it doesn't matter. The Self, being All, loses nothing by being aware of the world or by being unaware of the world. It has abiding peace and happiness whether aware of the world or not.

One should not lose sight of his 'I' in any circumstances. So long as he clings to it there is no harm in his leading an active life or doing philanthropic work. It is only the I-am-the-doer illusion that is harmful. The main aim should be to hold the mind constantly to the 'I' thought. This is the only remedy for the ills of the world. The only way to know God in this world is to know one's Self. One should not seek for

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<sup>1</sup> Bhagavad Gita, III, 27.

God in the world but in oneself. Life's sorrows serve a purpose insofar as they spur the mind to seek God. One should turn away from the world and look inwards to meet the Divine Presence. The Upanishad puts it: "The total subsidence of the ego is the end of the world and is termed 'Siva, the Auspicious'."

Suffering is rooted in ignorance; ignorance is removed by knowledge of the Spirit. This knowledge shows that the ego and the world to which we cling are fundamentally foreign to us and therefore cause suffering. The true teaching helps us to escape from the world which is synonymous with bondage and suffering.

## THE LION'S ROAR

By DEREK SOUTHALL

We are enlightened men  
But know not that we are  
By hidden joy pervaded,  
Immortal, perfect, wise.  
Deluded by the stifling  
Smog of self, we cling  
To our quite partial view  
And suffer needlessly.  
Prejudice confusing  
The player with his part.  
As living leaves transmute  
In time to hard black coal.  
As frigid glacial ice  
Was once free-falling rain.  
So we are living fossils,  
Unhappy pachyderms.  
Our glowing essence veiled  
By countless hazy clouds  
Of seemingly trivial  
Desires and decisions  
Which hardening through habit  
Petrify as pain.

Our internal sun eclipsed  
And hypnotised by self  
We dream, yet count ourselves  
Awake, and crave for bliss.  
No longer suspecting  
Our treasure to be near,  
We ravage time and space  
In endless quest for truth.

To rouse us from our dream  
We need to meditate,  
Or practice peace of mind.  
All other ways lack life,  
Mere bones: no flesh or fire.  
From meditation springs

Morality and love;  
Perfected deeds, insight  
And lasting happiness.

True practice: inner calm  
Involves a new awareness.  
A turning round of mind  
To view its source within.  
To realise in truth  
The inexhaustible void.  
The indescribable  
Presence or Absence,  
Call it what you will  
This deathless heart of things.  
The uncontaminated,  
Lucid and luminous  
One entirety.

With self transcended, strife  
And bondage melt away  
Till naught remains but glory.  
The boundless joy of life.  
Then our illusory  
World of particulars  
Is clearly seen to be  
The nature of our Lord.

Thus we hear the Lion's roar,  
The gentle voice of stillness.  
And see our ancestral face,  
The void in all its fullness.  
We sense the supreme law;  
Serene vitality,  
And the elixir of grace;  
Self-less reality.  
We are the radiance  
Of stars, earth, mind and shell.  
Free, to enjoy the dance  
And know that all is well.



## PETITIONARY PRAYER

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

The English word 'prayer' has so much the meaning of 'petition' that it is not really apt for the ritualistic Islamic prayers that are said five times daily. Indeed, these could better be described as acts of worship or religious services. Not only do they contain no petition, except for guidance, but each one, even though performed only by a single person, is so complete and harmonious as to be comparable to a Christian Church service.

Nevertheless, petitionary prayer is practised in Islam, as it is in Christianity. It is bound to be in every theistic or dualistic religion. It was approved of by the Prophet. It is much under fire today by people who, on the basis of some theoretical understanding of Advaita, like to imagine themselves above it. Before trying to explain or defend it, let us first set out the arguments brought against it. In their extreme form they can make it appear very crude indeed. As though one were to say: "I recognize that God is wise and omnipotent, but in the immediate context of my own life I think I know best, so please God be guided by me." Even in praying for others the cynic can argue that there is a spiritual ignorance amounting to arrogance: "If I had the power to cure Aunt Anne's arthritis and give George a better job I would, so You please do."

Actually, however, it is the cynic or critic who is being crude, since he is presuming belief in an anthropomorphic God, like a bigger and more powerful man. The matter takes on a completely different tone if one thinks of spiritual power which can be directed to certain ends just as physical power can. In fact it is only a crude idea of God that makes prayer to God sound crude.

Let us first consider prayers for guidance, among which must be included prayers for greater strength, more fervent love, staun-

cher perseverance on the path. What of them? The prayer for guidance is the one petition which comes into the five ritualistic daily prayers of Islam; and it comes into every one of them. They all include a recitation of the Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Quran, which contains the words: "Guide us on the straight path, not the path of those with whom Thou art angered or those who are astray."

The critic who has a crude anthropomorphic idea of God may cavil at this too, saying: "You mean that you want to progress spiritually but it is God who has to be reminded to do his job of guiding and supporting you." Actually I may know very well that it is my own open and hidden weaknesses that are holding me back, urging me to rebellion and trying to lead me astray, and by my prayer for guidance I am ranging my conscious mind and will against them. I am praying for Grace not to associate myself with those tendencies in me which, by their ego-assertion, draw down the Divine Anger or those which wander about undisciplined and unguided. I may know, for instance, that day-dreaming weakens my will and undermines my spiritual effort, but knowing this is no help unless I take action or seek protection from it. Whether I think of the Divine Power to which I pray as the Transcendent Being who said to the world "Be! and it was" or as the Immanent who is "nearer to man than his jugular vein" (both Quranic phrases) may be largely a matter of theory to me in my present state. What is terrifically real and urgent is that the Source of guidance to which I pray is infinitely more potent than the individual self who prays. This explains the Sufi saying to the aspirant who called on the Divine Name and felt discouraged at receiving no reply: "Your calling on Me is itself My reply." The prayer for guidance is not theory or logic; it is a harnessing of the

mind and will to the quest, a reaching out from the human to the Divine. Whether it has logic or not, it has potency.

From this let us turn to other forms of petitionary prayer. Does one or does one not use one's intelligence and will power to bring about what one considers desirable? If one is sick does one make the mental effort of deciding on treatment and the physical effort of taking the treatment prescribed? If circumstances are difficult does one try to improve them or just accept what comes? If one's professional work is unsatisfactory does one take initiative in seeking promotion or a better job or appealing to influential friends? If so why should one suddenly renounce effort when it comes to spiritual means such as prayer?

What then is the position of the Advaitin who considers himself above petitionary prayer? He should renounce not only prayer but also worldly means of improving his position, whether with regard to health or wealth or anything else. Then he will not pray for health but will also not take medical treatment. Let him be logical. The Prophet's grandson, Hasan, was granted a pension by the ruling caliph. There is a story that for awhile the caliph neglected to pay it and Hasan was urged to send in a petition and remind him. He replied that he scorned to petition a fellow-creature who was as dependent on the Creator as himself. The position of the self-styled Advaitin who would seek worldly means of achieving his desires but not heavenly is the exact opposite of this. Let him be logical.

Even with regard to guidance, the Advaitin's way is to remember that the obstructions are in himself and must be removed by himself. That shows that his path is not one of passivity, as the acceptance of whatever comes might suggest; it is one of intense activity, not revolting against the Divine Will or Universal Harmony, which cannot be changed in any case, but striving to bring himself in accord with it by inner purification which will be reflected indirectly but inevitably in a harmonisation of outer circumstances. It is said in the

Quran that God does not change a people's state until they first change what is in themselves. That is a sentence worth pondering over in this connection.

Although the attitude of the Advaitin is pure submission (and therefore perfect Islam) when rightly understood and practised, there is the danger that it may desiccate into a purely mental stance, especially if misfortunes do not arise to test him. It is easy to accept acceptable conditions of life; but suppose poverty comes, or misfortune, or ill-health: will he still accept it, remembering that he is not the body to which it comes? If so all right, but it is well to remember the Quranic saying that when you have come safe to shore you forget the peril you were in and forget too that if you are smug Allah can cast you out on stormy seas again.

This shows that petitionary prayer cannot be dismissed so summarily. If the true Advaitin does not pray for the fulfilment of his wishes it is because he either has none or regards them as reprehensible symptoms of the ego and prefers to exorcise them. All honour to him. It is the desireless state that is to be aimed at; but one should examine oneself very carefully before deciding that one has reached it. If not, if one still has wishes and does seek their fulfilment, it is crude materialism to do so only by worldly means and ignore the spiritual.

Spiritual means of obtaining what one desires need not necessarily take the form of simple petitionary prayer; they may be more technical; indeed, it would not be out of place to say more scientific. The person who presses an electric light switch is using a scientific means of lighting the room whether he understands why the switch works like that or not, and the same applies to spiritual techniques. A Muslim who wishes to use spiritual means for bringing something about may turn his mind briefly in that direction and then repeat an incantation during which his mind will be on the incantation, not on the petition. Similarly, a Christian spiritual healer may take cognizance of a case and then empty his mind and

allow the healing Grace to flow through it unimpeded. A Catholic may ask for masses to be said for a certain intention. An English Buddhist, Lobzang Jivaka, tells in his book 'Imji Getsul' how the monks of a Ladhaki monastery where he was staying as a novice went to a drought afflicted area and recited a certain sutra. On studying the sutra he found that it had ostensibly nothing to do with drought and contained no prayer for rain. Nevertheless the rain came. I gather from an advertisement in 'The Mountain Path' that Hindus who have something to pray for write to ask Sri Ramanashram to perform a Sri Chakra Puja with that intention.

All these are indirect spiritual means of getting one's wishes fulfilled. The anthropologist might say that they are nearer to magic than to religion, but if so that only shows that magic was originally a branch of religion. The important thing is that to a large extent they work — probably a good deal more than direct petitionary prayer. Indeed, the strong accumulation of individual will or desire in direct petitionary prayer may disturb the atmosphere and impede the action of the spiritual currents which are canalised by a more aloof approach. This is particularly felt by spiritual healers, who find that wishing actually

obstructs the process of cure. I quote from a Taoist work to this effect." ... if meditation is aimed at curing an illness, the practiser should forget all about the thought of curing it and if it is for improving health he should forget all about the idea of improvement, because when mind and objects are forgotten everything will be void and the object thus achieved will be the proper one. ... If the thoughts of curing an illness and of improving health are clung to the mind will be stirred and no result can be expected."<sup>1</sup>

This also explains why the prayers of a saint are so effective. Believers in all religions flock to a saint and ask him to pray for their desires — for health, a son, prosperity, whatever they may fancy their happiness to depend on. They have practical reasons for doing so, having seen many cases of his prayers being effective. The reason for this is surely obvious: the saint is the man who has succeeded in eliminating his ego, and he can therefore invoke the necessary spiritual force to achieve what is desired without any disturbing intrusion of self-will.

<sup>1</sup> *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*, p. 189, by Charles Luk, Rider & Co., quoting from the Taoist Master Yin Shih Tsu.

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## A GRAIN OF SAND

By CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

The simplest things reveal  
 A wonder  
 As various  
 As the stars.  
 Held in the heart  
 Of a flower  
 All heaven lies.

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## MODES OF PRAYER

By INDIRA DEVI

On page 234 of our issue of October 1964 there is a short note on Dilip Kumar Roy followed by his account of how he came to the Maharshi. We give here a letter that he wrote to two of his Western disciples (kindly sending us a copy) in which he quotes his ecstatic disciple Indira Devi's description of the three types of prayer often mentioned by Christian mystics, that is petition, adoration and contemplation.

I was speaking about the three types of prayer the Western mystics so often describe : petition, adoration and contemplation. As I was trying to explain, Indira Devi went off into a *bhav-samadhi* and spoke in a state of ecstasy, intermittently patting her own head, as she often does, to be able to retain her normal consciousness.

"You know, Dada," she said, "a devotee of Gopal (Krishna), a Gopi (cowherd maid), missed Gopal who had gone away to Mathura. She simply yearned for Him.

"One day she heard that Gopal had just returned to Brindaban. She was overjoyed and set out for His abode.

"On her way she was thinking delightedly of all that she would say to Gopal; rehearsed how she was going to greet Him; wondered what she would ask Him, how she would implore Him to write to her in future without fail and send her messages of His Grace and ... and, above all, He must play His heavenly Flute of Bliss now that He is back again and so on and so forth ..."

Indira looked at me and added succinctly : "This is petitionary prayer."

"But then," she went on, "as she draws near her destination, she feels thrilled. She crosses His courtyard and her heart is flooded with joy. A deep peace descends into her soul. She marvels what is going to happen

to her ... how will Gopal receive her ... how she will fall at His feet ... how she will react to His glance and so on ... She draws still nearer Gopal's sanctum ... approaches the door in an ecstasy of tears ... but still she has not met Him even though she hears His beloved footfall on the other side. ... Her heart would wing its way to Him, but the door is still closed. She waits, in ecstasy, adoring her heart's one Beloved whom she is yet to meet face to face". "This," added Indira, "is adoration."

"Then," she resumed in a thick voice, after a brief pause, "the door opens, at long last ... and there ... there stands her peerless Gopal, the world's Heart-charmer and lo, time stops and her thoughts are stilled. All she wanted to say dissolves ... and ... and ... how can she think of anything to say when she meets the One for whom she has lived all these days ... the only One for whom life is worth living? A bliss that passes all understanding pervades her being as He smiles at her and she ... she ... gazes at Him, self-lost. There is only communion ... the blessed fulfilment of oneness, the soul and her Swain of Brindavan locked in the last clasp of Love."

Her tremulous voice trailed off into silence. Then, she looked at me, her eyes moist with tears, and added : "This is contemplation." By which she meant, of course, *samadhi*.

## GRACE AND PRAYER

By GLADYS DE MEUTER

'I sleep, but my heart waketh,' these words emerging from the wisdom of Solomon's Song of Songs, express the joyous unfolding of the heart-lotus under the rays of the spiritual Sun.

This burgeoning manifests in an inner compulsion to embrace Truth, to be freed from vain, multitudinous cares, and to reach a knowledge of that eternal science which is beyond transient existence.

Direct apprehension of Truth is possible only through Grace under whose radiant influence the heart receives the warmth of faith and exudes the fragrance of prayer. This attar from heaven purifies the mind, renders the soul humble and penitent and leads the seeker towards the passionless state of self-mastery.

At first prayer is but a fitful flame exposed to the winds of doubt and buffeted by the beguilement of the senses, but when the mind is steadfast in remembrance of God, restlessness and inertia recede, and prayer becomes a steady light.

Throughout the ages, whenever hearts bowed in reverent homage before a Man-God, the cry has ever been : 'Lord, teach us how to pray.' And loving instruction followed according to the unfoldment and capacity of the seeker. But whatever the word-garment of the spiritual teaching, Heart has ever been of paramount importance.

In the Upanishads is written : 'Within the city of Brahman abides the lotus of the heart wherein is a tiny ākāśa. That which is within that ākāśa is to be the object of the search for knowledge.'

It was explained to the aspirant that, the body being the dwelling-place of Brahman, it is described as a royal city, and the heart, shaped like a lotus-bud, likened to the

palace. The ākāśa (space) designates Brahman as all-pervading, subtle and incorporeal, and although in the initial stages of spiritual unfoldment Brahman may be considered by the aspirant to be limited by the heart, in truth Brahman is Infinite Being immanent everywhere and the Centre from which names and forms manifest.

When the mind has been trained to dive deep into the Heart, freedom from attachment to the external world arises as dispassion, the senses are subdued and thoughts cease their restless motion so that the Blissful Self is realized.

The devotee at the feet of his Guru thus learned that true prayer is having complete trust in the Higher Power Whose Grace leads to the KNOWING that the incorporeal and all-pervading Ātman is Brahman.

To Lao-Tse, Tao is the Nameless Simplicity the glory of which may be known only when the mind is free from disturbances and the heart reflects the quietude of divine silence. Those who attain such a state give forth a wondrous glow, coolness and serenity which the venerable Sage termed Heart-Repouse.

In the Egyptian Book of the Dead the heart is weighed against the feather of Truth in the Hall of Judgment, and a prayer addressed to Osiris is couched in sincere tones : 'My heart which sitteth before Osiris hath made entreaty for me. Unto him have I given my heart's thoughts . . . Understanding has come to me through my heart over which I have gained mastery. May this heart not be taken from me !'

In the Egyptian Bible homage is paid to the Indweller of hearts, and when the neophyte kneels with his hands clasped to his breast, he prays that he may enter the Abode of Rā which is that of the Quiet-Heart.

The Christian Contemplatives taught that prayer was perfected when the mind merged into the Heart. They termed this Heart-Prayer, and stressed the need to keep the mind thought-free when it dived deep into the spiritual Heart-Centre. As an aid to meditative prayer the Holy Name was to be repeated constantly either audibly or mentally until such time as the Name became firmly established in the heart.

Practise of the Silence was enjoined, and visions whether sensory or otherwise, were to be ignored and recognized as phantasies conjured up by the mind. No matter how entrancing or beautiful the images they were not to be cherished, but meditation was to be pursued until true angelic prayer arose, free of form and colour.

Blessed Nicephorous gave instruction on how to attain concentration through breathing, which method when correctly applied served as an aid for the merging of the mind into the heart.

Those Hesychasts who approached the early Fathers for spiritual guidance were told to fight the foes of the senses from the invincible stronghold of the heart. As

thoughts arose in the mind they were to be met with the sword of the Holy Name which puts the enemy to flight. Taking refuge in God, the single eye of true discrimination was to be cast on all phenomena, realizing their transient and illusive quality. Thought and speech were to be discarded for the Bliss of Heart-Silence. Thus Truth beyond relativity was arrived at, and the mysterious duality created by the ego transcended.

Often, when the soul is touched by divine yearning tears fall from the eyes. They flow from the Fountain of Life, and serve to cleanse the soul of impurities, ushering in a melting love and tenderness for Divinity.

Only the pure in heart may see God! When angelic prayer knocks on the Portals of Heaven and they open to reveal indescribable Glory, realization dawns that all creation breathes Universal Prayer in honour of I AM.

In the quiet cathedral of a celestial grove, when the tongue is still and thought immersed in tranquility, the perfection of prayer gives birth to sacred Heart-language which is beyond expression, shining in luminous splendour as Absolute Be-ing.

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## AT INTERVALS

Translated By K. SWAMINATHAN  
from the Tamil of Muruganar

You meditate at intervals ?  
Talk not of intervals, just be the Self  
In one unbroken thread.  
Hair after itching hair of thought  
Who would pluck out,  
When what's to do  
Is shave the whole scalp clean ?

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# The Meaning and use of the Rosary in . . .

## HINDUISM

By Prof. N. R. KRISHNAMURTI

Ardent devotees of Lord Siva, especially those of the Saiva-Siddhanta school, wear a string of beads known as the rudraksha-mala, which they use for counting when saying their mantra. The number of beads on the string varies according to the way it is worn. Even today one can see sadhus wearing these beads in their earlobes, round their wrists, on the crown of the head, tight round the neck or falling like a garland on the chest.<sup>1</sup> Three beads are worn in each ear, twelve round each wrist, thirty-six over the crown of the head, thirty-two or twenty-seven tightly round the neck, and a hundred and eight when worn as a garland. It is this last form of mala which is generally used for counting the repetition of a mantra, although the 'Padma Purana' declares that the use of the mala of twenty-seven beads gives special potency to the mantra.

These beads are seeds of the rudraksha tree which grows in the Himalayas. Both the 'Skanda Purana' and the 'Padma Purana' speak highly of the efficacy of wearing them. Two Sanskrit sastras, the 'Upadesa Kandam' and the 'Suta Samhita', give extensive accounts of saints who attained Liberation through them.

The seeds can be of four colours. The most highly prized are white, then reddish, then golden and lastly dark. The first and third varieties are rare, the other two common; so their traditional order of superiority is not on a basis of rarity. It may be on a basis of assimilation to the four varnas, white being suggestive of the Brahmin, red of the Kshatriya, gold of the Vaishya and dark of the Shudra.

A seed has a soft core through which a hole is pierced for threading it. A number

of lines run over the surface from end to end of this core, dividing the surface up into a number of crescent shaped sections. Beads with five sections are the most common, but there may be any number from one up to fourteen.

According to the 'Yoga Sara', spiritual powers corresponding to the gods abide in the beads according to the number of sections or 'faces' and this, therefore, determines the type of mantra for which they are suited. A bead with one face is sacred to Siva; with two to Siva and his Shakti, Parvati; with three to Agni, the God of Fire; with four to Brahma, that is God as Creator; with five to Kala-asi, that is Siva as destroyer of Yama, the God of Death; with six to Subrahmanya or Skanda; with seven to Adisesha; with eight to Ganapati or Ganesh; with nine to Bhairava, that is Siva in his ferocious aspect; with ten to Vishnu; with eleven to Ekadasa Rudras, that is the Eleven Rudras; with twelve to Surya, the Sun; with thirteen to Kama-deva, the God of Love; and with fourteen to Nilakanta, that is Siva the Blue-Throated. A sadhaka is expected to choose his beads to suit his mantra. The most favoured rudraksha mala among devotees is that with six faces, that is the mala of Subrahmanya, who is the second son of Siva and Parvati and is the God of War.

The name 'rudraksha' is a compound of the two Sanskrit words 'Rudra' meaning Siva and 'aksha' meaning eye, so the rudraksha is the eye of Siva. This is the mythological 'third eye' implying spiritual sight or Realization.

<sup>1</sup>As on the photograph of Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath on page 186 of our issue of July 1965. (Editor)

There is a mythological story, symbolical like all such stories, describing the origin of the rudraksha. Three asura or demon brothers, Vidyumali, Tharakaksha and Kamalaksha performed such austerities that they were able thereby to extort boons from Siva. (And, in parenthesis, there are a number of such stories showing that intelligently planned and inflexibly performed austerities can produce powers even, so to speak, despite the gods, that is to say without purity or enlightenment.) Thereby they made themselves invincible and acquired three flying citadels of gold, silver and iron respectively in which they roamed the earth and conquered not only this world but the

world of the gods. That is to say that by their occult powers they were able to dominate not only this world but the subtle worlds also. But even such powers evaporate before the Face of Truth. The devas prayed to Siva in their distress and he appeared before the asuras with a terrible look and yet at the same time a smile, as Truth is terrible to him who has rebelled against it and yet at the same time is compassionate. The citadels were burnt up and the asuras destroyed. At that same moment a tear fell from the eye of the Lord and, falling to earth, became a rudraksha seed from which sprouted a tree bearing rudraksha seeds for the welfare of the world.

## CHRISTIANITY (CATHOLIC)

By EBBANA GRACE BLANCHARD

The Catholic rosary consists of 54 beads plus a pendant of two large and three small ones and a crucifix. The rosary is divided into five decades with a large bead between each two. The beads are fixed, not sliding on their strings, as in some religions.

The use of the rosary as a help to keep count of prayers said, is, of course, much older than Christianity. It is said to have been introduced into Christianity from the East, and there are many theories regarding this introduction. In the 16th century Pope Gregory XIII named the first Sunday in October 'Rosary Sunday'.

Crossing oneself, one begins the rosary with the creed said on the Crucifix. The Lord's Prayer is then said on the first large bead and again, when one gets to them, on the large bead at the beginning of each decade.

A Hail Mary (Ave Maria) is said on each of the small beads, both on the pendant and in each of the decades. The first three Hail Marys (those on the pendant) are specially dedicated to the intention of this particular saying of the rosary. For instance, if worship or devotion is the purpose they can be offered to the Father, the Son and the Holy

Spirit; if intercession, one can remember those being born now, then the living in all lands, then the dead; if the Church, then perhaps its past, present and future; if your personal spiritual life, then it may be penitence, resolution and praise.

On the large bead at the end of each decade the Gloria is said: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen."

Five decades comprise a chaplet, but it takes fifteen to make a full saying of the rosary, since there are three chaplets, the first of the Joyful Mysteries, the second of the Sorrowful, the third of the Glorious.

The introductory pendant is not used again between chaplets when a whole rosary is said at one time, nor is it used at the end, though one may say the Anima Christi on the crucifix, to close the prayer.

The Five Joyful Mysteries are: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation of the infant Christ in the temple and the Finding in the temple when Christ, at the age of 12, was lost and sought by his sorrowing parents and found discussing with the learned in the temple.

The sorrowful Mysteries are : the Agony in the Garden, the Scourging, the Mocking and Crowning with thorns, the Way of the Cross and the Crucifixion.

The Glorious Mysteries, according to the Roman Catholic version, are : the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, when the Spirit descended upon the disciples in the upper room, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and her Coronation with the glory of all the saints.

The essence of the rosary, however, is not the mechanical recitation of the formulae of prayer, but the contemplation of the 15 Mysteries of the life of Christ. This meditation or contemplation tends to be a simple mental vision of the subject matter of each Mystery.

A happy and balanced combination of three elements gives to the rosary a rich-

ness known to no other form of private devotion. The formulae used in the rosary are a most concentrated and sober expression of all aspects of Christian prayer. A deep analysis of the formulae can demonstrate it. Thus the continual, attentive recitation of these formulae sets in motion a psychological process of calming the nerves, tranquillising the whole person, keeping away distractions and disposing one for the highest contemplation. Finally it lends itself to a simple and effective form of contemplation to which it is more directly oriented than any other form of systematic meditation.

This is the bare outline of the rosary which, as will be seen, can comprise a complete religious service although performed in solitude.

## BUDDHISM (THERAVADA)

By VENERABLE PHRA MAHA VICHITR TISSADATTA

The Buddhist Rosary has 108 beads. This number represents craving in all its forms whereby every being is bound to experience some kind of suffering in every type of existence. The Buddhist Rosary itself symbolises the way of getting rid of craving, step by step.

The practice of the Rosary consists in recalling to mind the virtues of the Buddha by repeating the syllables of the Pali words used in this recollection while counting the beads of the Rosary one by one. The Pali words for the meditation with the Rosary are spoken either aloud or mentally, with the syllables in both normal and reverse order, thus :

*Ti pi so, so ti pi, bha ga vā, vā ga bha, a ra haṃ, haṃ ra a, sam mā sam bud dho, dho bud sam mā sam, vij jā ca ra na sam pan no, no pan sam na ra ca jā vij, su ga to, to ga su, lo ka vi dū, dū vi ka lo, a nut ta ro, ro ta nut a, pu ri sa dam ma sā ra thi, thi ra sā ma dam sa ri pu, sat thā, thā sat, de va ma nus sā naṃ, naṃ sā nus ma*

*va de, bud dho, dho bud, bha ga vā, vā ga bha.*

Each syllable corresponds to one bead of the Rosary ; accordingly we have 108 beads and 108 syllables.

The English translation of this recollection would be as follows :

It is for this reason that the Blessed One is so purified, perfectly enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, well-fared, a knower of (all) the worlds, peerless charioteer of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, the awakened one, the blessed one.

While practising, one should be mindful of the meaning of the syllables. If one misses even one syllable in the meditation, one must start again right from the beginning. Mindfulness and dedication are very necessary for this meditation.

The object of the practice is not only to gain concentration but to suppress and remove the 108 kinds of craving (tanha).



Craving, the root of unhappiness and suffering in life, appears in three main aspects :

- (a) Craving for sensual existence or sensation,
- (b) Craving for becoming ; that is, lack of permanent satisfaction,
- (c) Craving for annihilation, a form of escapism or aversion.

Each of these three divisions is multiplied by 6 because there are 6 'doors' through

which craving arises ; namely, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind. This gives us 18 sides to craving. As these 18 can arise from either internal or external processes, the number of possibilities for craving are increased to 36. Yet again, any of the 36 may be related to the past, the present, or the future, making a final total of 108. Because the cravings are brought to awareness by the practice of the rosary, this practice with the rosary symbolises Purification of Mind, which is the Way to Enlightenment.

## ISLAM (SUNNI)

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

The name for the rosary in Arab lands is 'wird', though in India 'tasbeeh' is more commonly used. It consists of 99 sliding beads divided into three sections of 33 each by larger beads. At the end is a still larger elongated bead making up the hundred. It is said that the 99 movable beads represent the 99 Names of Allah and the end bead the Hundredth Name. However, the wird is not used only for invoking the Names but for keeping count in any incantation. And there

is no religion in the spiritual practices of which incantations play so large a part as in Islam. Some incantations are graded in three parts to fit the three sections of the wird ; others continue right through one or more repetitions of the wird. In fact sometimes a wird is made with a tail-piece of ten small beads beyond or beside the final elongated one, on which to mark off the hundreds or complete wirds recited.

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When the *japa* becomes continuous all other thoughts cease and one is in one's real nature which is invocation or absorption. We turn our minds outwards to things of the world and are therefore not aware that our real nature is always invocation. When by conscious effort, or invocation, or meditation as we call it, we prevent our minds from thinking of other things, then what remains is our real nature, which is invocation. So long as you think you are the name and form, you can't escape name and form in invocation also. When you realize you are not name and form the name and form will drop off of themselves. No other effort is necessary. Invocation or meditation will lead to it naturally and as a matter of course. Invocation which is now regarded as the means, will then be found to be the goal. There is no difference between God and His name.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

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## CHRISTIAN HEALING

By SAGITTARIUS

When Christ sent out representatives in his lifetime, his instructions to them were to heal the sick and cast out devils as well as to teach. There is no doubt whatever that spiritual healing formed part of the legacy he bequeathed to his followers. We have evidence in the Acts of the Apostles that some of his immediate followers did indeed practise it. We have Christ's definite promise that their power would be no less than his. "He that believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father."<sup>1</sup>

And yet after the first generation of Christians this legacy seems to have been dropped. Why should it have been? This is one of the puzzles of the Early Church. It would be tempting to say that they turned instead to sterile theological arguments, accusing one another of heresy; and yet we have ample evidence that, despite the growth of intellectualism, there still were ardent Christians willing to face torture and martyrdom for their faith. And we know from what is happening today that devout Christians are capable of healing in Christ's name, just as he promised them, even without having attained to sainthood.

For it is today only that the legacy of healing that Christ left is being recovered. Throughout the centuries there have been occasional cases of saints performing miracles, but only today has the widespread practice of healing through the name of Christ by ordinary devout Christians, not themselves saints, been revived.

That 'in my name' is a peculiar wealth of Christianity. Muslims do not pray for boons or heal sickness in the name of Mohammad, or Jews in the name of Moses, or Buddhists in the name of Buddha, or Hindus in the name of Krishna, or Taoists

in the name of Lao Tsu. The potency of Christ's name is, as it were, an enormous spiritual bank deposit for Christians to draw upon, and cheques to any amount will be honoured. What a wonder that throughout the centuries they should go on believing that the deposit was there but not cash cheques on it, or not in the way Christ authorised!

In a general way, praying in the name of Christ, they certainly continued to draw on it. Indeed, the principle of intercession was still further extended and continues to be widely used, especially among the Catholics. Mary is called upon to intercede with Christ, and petitions for intercession are addressed also to the saints. Actually, some of the miracles attributed to the saints at the time of canonisation are answers to prayers of intercession made through them after their death. However, the whole body and tradition of Christian prayer continues to be in the name of Christ.

And why, reverting to the quotation given above, does Christ say "because I go to my Father"? What has that got to do with it? Tremendous as is the spiritual power brought on earth by a Master, it is increased, not diminished, by his shedding the body. Even though he already transcends the body during his lifetime it is to some extent a limitation and localisation of his power. When it falls from him his influence expands without being diluted thereby. This has been found in non-Christian circles also. So competent a witness as Sarada Devi, the wife of Sri Ramakrishna, remarked that his power had increased enormously after his death. The followers of Ramana Maharshi say the same about his power and guidance both at Tiruvannamalai and throughout the world.

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<sup>1</sup> St. John, XIV, 12.

There is no religion in which the founder's power has turned so markedly towards healing as in Christianity. Mohammad himself did not perform miracles, let alone empower others to ; and Buddha disapproved of his followers doing so. Christ enjoined it. As one sees Christian healing performed today it is quite different from either magnetic healing or faith healing. Magnetic healing, of which the modern pioneer is Mesmer, is the utilisation of the animal magnetism which some possess more abundantly than others to draw sickness out of a patient by passes and laying on of hands. Faith healing, which has much in common with the methods of Coue, is self-hypnotism or auto-suggestion, becoming healthy by believing that you are or soon will be healthy. Spiritual healing is healing by the Grace of God. The healer aims at eliminating his ego, thoughts, desires, even the desire to heal, and making himself a mere channel through which the Grace of God flows : and healing takes place. In its purest form, as taught by Joel Goldsmith and practised in the 'Infinite Way' groups, the healer does not need to lay on hands or even to be in the presence of the patient, he does not need to know the patient's name or the nature of the sickness ; it is enough for him to turn to God, as the Source of all health, and allow the healing influence to flow.<sup>2</sup> Even in less direct modes of practice, the essential thing is for the healer to feel in true humility that it is not his power but the Divine Power or, more specifically, the power of Christ flowing through him or answering his prayers, as the case may be, that effects the cure.

Is faith also necessary on the part of the patient ? It is certainly a great help, but in this case 'faith' does not mean merely a passive belief that the cure will work but an active response to it, participation in it. Even the patient, the one at the receiving end, ought not to be passive and inert and expect to be carried along. After effecting a cure Christ said : "Thy faith hath made thee whole." That means : your active res-

ponse to the healing influence enabled it to work on you. But this does not equate spiritual healing with faith healing. In faith healing whatever influence there may be is invoked by the faith itself and is often no more than auto-suggestion. In spiritual healing a powerful force is set in motion and faith, although of great importance to facilitate its working, is not essential, as may be seen by cases of healing, usually of young children, in which the patient is not informed or asked to co-operate. It will be recalled that G. H. Gedge instances such a case in his article on spiritual healing in *The Mountain Path* of January 1965.

Spiritual healing may go far deeper than the removal of physical symptoms. Christ himself indicated this when, in his lifetime, he said after effecting a cure : "The sins be forgiven thee." We know today that many ailments are psycho-somatic, that is to say are physical symptoms of disordered states of mind. In such a case temporary removal of the symptoms is no cure. They will return or be replaced by others. The only real cure is to smooth out the tangled state of mind that caused them. That is what psychiatrists try to do with varying degrees of success. If the Christian healer does it — and in a far wider range of cases than the psychiatrist can handle — that does not mean that he is a psychiatrist or that he can forgive sins but simply that he has succeeded in making himself a channel through which the Christ-power can flow. Which is more likely to heal the disordered state of mind that has caused a disease : an injection or a prayer ?

But that does not mean that prayer or spiritual healing without prayer can work only in psycho-somatic cases. The Christ-power is not limited in its applicability. There are examples enough of its effectiveness in cases as near purely physical (broken bones and so on) as anything can be : cases enough for any who will consent to look at them.

<sup>2</sup> See 'The Art of Spiritual Healing' by Joel Goldsmith, Allen & Unwin.



## THE POWER OF PRAYER

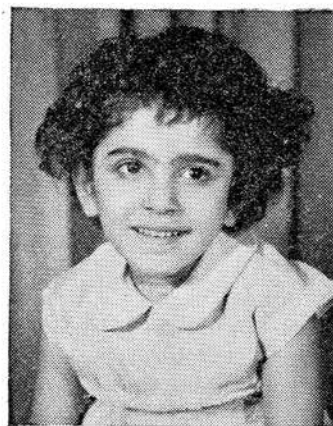
By DILIP KUMAR ROY

Dilip Kumar Roy, for a note on whom see page 234 of our issue of October 1964, has sent us the following excerpt on the healing power of prayer from his book 'The Flute Calls Still' (pp. 328-333) reviewed in that issue, together with a photograph, not included in the book, of the child who was healed.

It has been given to me, many a time, to experience and verify the marvellous power of prayer. But only during the last fourteen years (since the advent of Indira) have I prayed for others, especially those who have been desperately ill and given up by the doctors and, as you know, they have all recovered miraculously. But what happened this month can claim to take the cake and, fortunately for us, the whole Ashram has borne witness to this. It happened like this.

On the 14th of March, B's fourth birthday, she, with her mother, was returning from our temple to their house when a jeep knocked her down all of a heap; her skull was fractured in three places, the pelvis bones and the thigh bone, too, were broken. A deep wound just over the left eye made one gasp how on earth the eye could have escaped! But the worst injury was to her intestines and two operations had to be performed one after the other. Derelict with grief, R implored us to help. The surgeon had told them that there was no hope at all. Yet the stricken mother, in tears, went on imploring Indira in Hindi. "Tell me Didiji, she won't die, will she? Oh save her Didiji — —" and so on.

It was then we started praying to our Lord and Radharani (Krishna and Radha). From the nursing-home a good-hearted lady, rang up again: no hope! But we prayed on till, on the morning of the 23rd of March, Indira, while praying, suddenly saw Hanumanji. You cannot put it down to auto-suggestion or wish-fulfilment as we were calling not to him but to our Lord and Radharani. But as soon as the resplendent Lord Mahavir flashed before her, she appealed to him to save



the child. He only smiled, she said. I was deeply relieved, as Hanumanji was instrumental in saving Sri Lakshman, when the latter was mortally wounded, with a miraculous herb called vishalya-karani. Thus Hanumanji is worshipped by thousands in India as a Divine Healer as well. So, I told Indira jubilantly that the child was now saved, saved, saved! A few among the sceptics smiled wisely with raised eyebrows and they could hardly be confuted rationally, the less so as my own confidence was based only on a blind faith in the power of prayer answered by a mystic vision symbolising Divine intervention. And, would you believe it, on that very day the lovely little girl was declared "out of danger" by the amazed surgeon! God is great, great, great and so is His deputy, Lord Mahavir, the miracle-healer!

So, my friend, how can one still doubt that miracles do still happen even in this our kali yuga? Of course I know that those who have not seen what we have are unlikely to

undersign our faith in or interpretation of Indira's vision, still less to share our profound conviction, not having our experience to go by. It is not for nothing that Simon said that he must refuse to believe in Christ's resurrection till he saw the manifestation personally. Do what we will, the gulf will remain deep between the conviction of those who have seen and those who have not (which, incidentally, is the root cause of the so-called rational misunderstanding of the seer's faith and fervour the world over). I will, therefore, leave it at that and end with what is more rewarding, to wit, two excerpts from Dr. Alexis Carrel, the man of science and Nobel Laureate whose famous book, *Man the Unknown* created a stir in Europe and America three decades ago. I started reading it a few weeks ago. In Chapter IV he has much to say fully endorsing the faith of believers who claim that prayer can bring about miraculous cures of "various affections such as peritoneal tuberculosis, cold abscesses, osteitis, suppurating wounds, lupus, cancer etc. ... The miracle is chiefly characterised by an extreme acceleration of the process of repair. ... The only condition indispensable to the occurrence of the phenomenon is prayer." And although he is not a spiritual aspirant, he has recorded his experience thus: "But there is no need for the patient himself to pray, or even

to have a religious faith. It is sufficient that some one around him be in a state of prayer."

And then it so happened that I lighted on an article of his, condensed in the *Reader's Digest*, this month. The article is entitled: Prayer is Power. Let me cite a few lines:

"Prayer is not only worship; it is also an invisible emanation of man's worshipping spirit — the most powerful form of energy that one can generate. ... As a doctor, I have seen men, when all other therapy has failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer. ... When we pray we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power that spins the Universe. ... We ask that a part of this power be apportioned to our needs." And he concludes: "Today, lack of emphasis on the religious sense has brought the world to the edge of sheer annihilation. Our deepest source of power and perfection has been left miserably undeveloped. Prayer, the basic exercise of the spirit, must be actively practised by men and nations. For if the power of prayer is again released and used in the lives of common men and women there is yet hope that our prayer for a better world will be answered. ... True prayer is a way of life, and the truest life is, literally, a way of prayer."

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## POWERS

If you can walk on water  
 You are no better than a straw.  
 If you can fly in the air  
 You are no better than a fly.  
 Conquer your heart,  
 Then you may be somebody.

SHEIKH ANSARI

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## AN ANGRY PRAYER

By JEAN BUTLER

Some years ago my daughter Martha and I were living on the island of St. Croix in the Caribbean. At that time the Virgin Islands (in which group this falls) were so poverty stricken that they were spoken of as "the world's poor-house".

One evening I went into the local drug store and found the chemist, Mr. Edwards, arguing in English with a little Puerto Rican peasant who was pleading volubly with him in Spanish.

Mr. Edwards was saying: "I'm sorry I can't give you any credit. I don't own the drug store. I am only an employee and have to obey orders."

The peasant answered: "It is only until my tomatoes are harvested. Then I can pay you."

Mr. Edwards was unmoved.

"But," cried the peasant in despair, "what will my son do without the medicine?"

At that point I said rather angrily: "Give him the medicine, Mr. Edwards, and put it on my bill."

I turned to the peasant and asked what was the matter with his son. A torrent of Spanish poured forth as he explained. He had five children ranging from fourteen years to three months. His wife had died giving birth to the baby. The oldest boy had epileptic fits, as many as five a day. By law the children had to go to school, but when the eldest boy had his medicine he could stay at home in the mornings and take care of the baby while the father worked his land. If the boy did not have his medicine he could not be left with the baby. Nor could he go to school. The only thing the father could do was to tie the baby on to his back when he went to work on his land and leave the boy unattended in the house; and on one such occasion the boy had had a fit during which he broke his leg.

A wave of such intense fury, pity and sheer horror came over me that for a moment I turned dizzy — not only on account of the little peasant but also of all the others in the world who were equally suffering and equally hopeless and helpless.

I told the peasant that I knew a great specialist in New York to whom I would write for a new medicine I had been reading about. I wrote down the peasant's name and the age and weight of his son. "The medicine should come in about ten days," I said, "and I will have it sent care of Mr. Edwards for you."

I rushed out into the night blind and sick with rage against God. "Damn You!" I cried, "What are You doing? Why don't You at least help the poor and sick who can do nothing to help themselves and who have nothing?" I cried and cursed all the way up the long hill to my house, hating the world, hating God, hating the unspeakable injustice of life. All night, even in my sleep, I alternated prayers with curses and invectives and blind anger. Day and night for a week I had no peace. I directed my thoughts repeatedly to the sick boy, saying to him: "God made you in His image and likeness. God is perfect, without flaw or sickness. Be you therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect. That is what Christ said to you." This alternated with my repeating that "not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowing it." And I pointed out somewhat bitterly that the Son of God had said: "Inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of these you do it also to me."

Gradually the anger and frenzy died down, but remembrance of the peasant and his epileptic son continued day and night. One evening, about ten days after my first meeting with the peasant, I was just going into the drug-store when a bare-footed man in worn overalls and a big straw hat came



out, holding a package in one hand. On seeing me he swept off his hat, waved the package in the air and exclaimed excitedly : "This has just come, the medicine for my son. But I no longer need it. Something has happened."

It was the same peasant. I had not recognized him with his hat on. I knew what was coming and felt faint because of it. I said : "Remember, Senor, the Bible says that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. What He does is a mystery to us. Don't ask any questions. Just go to the church and give thanks to God."

"But Senora," he said, "I must tell you what has happened. Since we talked the other night my son has had no more fits. What shall I do with this ?" And he held out the box of medicine.

I had known what was coming. "Don't open it, Senor," I said. "You won't need it. Just go to the church and give thanks to God." And I turned and rushed up the hill to my house, thinking, "Excuse me, God ! Forgive me !" — consumed with humility and shame at my former rage, overflowing with love of God.

On a Sunday morning some months later, when I had completely forgotten the peasant and his son, I was leaving my house with

Martha to go to the beach when an ancient truck full of people dressed in their Sunday best came roaring up the hill and stopped outside my door. One by one they scrambled out and came on to the terrace, each one carrying something in his hand. They made quite a pile there — fruit, eggs, chickens, fish, freshly baked bread, a bottle of wine, lobsters — and then they returned to the truck, while I kept on remonstrating : "You have made a mistake ! You have come to the wrong house ! I didn't order anything !"

Just then my little Puerto Rican friend, scarcely recognizable in his Sunday clothes, came up to me shyly and said : "Senora, these are my relatives. We have brought you these gifts to show our appreciation for what you did for my son."

"But Senor," I protested, "I did nothing, nothing ! Please try to understand me. It was not I who did it !"

Then I asked him about his son, how he was now. He glowed with quiet pride. "He has gained fifteen pounds," he said. "He is quite well now. I sent him to the island of St. Thomas to work on his uncle's farm for a few weeks and now he is back here with me. He works on the land with me in the morning and we earn enough to pay a girl to look after the baby, and in the afternoons he goes to school. He has never had another fit."

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So long as we think we are doing something ourselves as individual beings, we are merely struggling and achieving nothing spiritually. When we know that the divine power active in the universe is responsible for all that we do, the idea 'I am the doer' disappears. . . . . When the ego-sense rises in us the whole game is spoiled. We are caught up in the meshes of karma. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes unhappy.

— SWAMI RAMDAS

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## HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By V. KAMESWARA RAO

I had a dream one night many years back in which a saintly old man with a short white beard blessed me with his benign and radiant smile and beckoned me to him. Sunrise put an end to sleep and dream alike and I woke to find myself back in the dull routine of life. I went into the kitchen to tell my wife of my happy experience, but I could not identify the saint I had seen. Could it be Ramana Maharshi, about whom I had read in a book called 'Self-Realization'? I asked a friend of mine who often went there whether he would take me with him and he agreed. We set off that very day, arriving at Tiruvannamalai next morning.

I found the Ashram a quiet place with a few cottages and a meditation hall. We went straight into the hall and there on a couch sat the Maharshi, the saint of my dream, clad only in a loincloth. I felt that I was in the presence of a god. I fell prostrate before Bhagavan (for this was the name my friend used in addressing him). A group of silent men and women were seated on the floor on either side of him. Close to him an elderly bearded man was sitting binding a small book by hand.

Bhagavan asked me whether I had had my coffee, so I went out and had a bath and breakfast. When I got back I found that Bhagavan himself was stitching the book. I wondered why he should do it, and then I noticed how carefully he worked at it and showed the bearded man how to do it. God is all perfection. When a man realizes God-head he also attains perfection, he also pays full attention to every detail. That was the thought that came to me when I saw Bhagavan binding a book.

When we went for lunch Bhagavan sat facing two groups of devotees, Brahmins to his right and non-Brahmins and non-Hindus



to his left. I heard him tell the server that the rice was not well cooked. I was told that he himself was a good cook and had often worked in the Ashram kitchen.

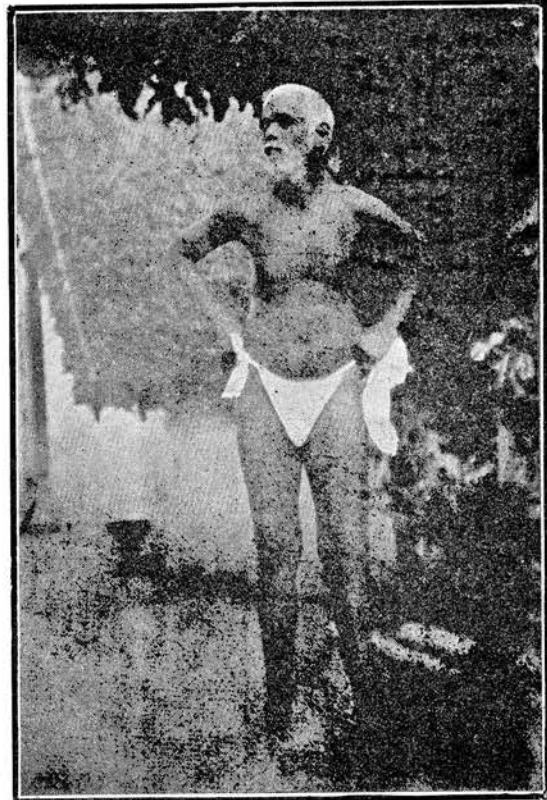
As a government servant I had to pass an examination in a second language within a prescribed period. The term was only a few months off. I decided to take it in Tamil, although I knew very little of the language. I was a bit worried about it, so I told an older devotee that I would like to have Bhagavan's blessings for my success. He took me to Bhagavan late in the evening and I prostrated and told Bhagavan my trouble and asked for his blessing. He replied '*parava illai*', 'don't worry', which made me feel very happy. He advised me to take the little book 'Nan Yar' ('Who am I') printed in English, Tamil and Telugu (my own language) and read it with the help of a Tamil tutor.

I woke early next morning and felt happy, waiting till sunrise should enable me to buy the books at the Ashram bookstall. The night

I first dreamed of Bhagavan sunrise seemed to come too soon, but now I could hardly wait for it.

Bhagavan passed outside the cottage where I was staying next morning. I went and prostrated before him and asked his permission to leave. He gave it but asked why I was in such a hurry. My friend expressed a doubt whether I should be able to go that day, in view of what Bhagavan had said; but I had to get back. So after I had bought the books we went to the station in the Ashram bullock-cart. When we got there, however, I was told that there was a two-day strike on the railway, so we went back and told Bhagavan. He smiled. Two days later I again asked for leave to go and he said 'Very well'. This time we walked to the station and a cart followed us with our baggage. When we arrived the train was already in but the cart was not yet in sight, so I thought I would surely miss the train. But Bhagavan had said 'very well' so I felt I should stop the train and indeed travel 'very well'. I therefore went to the station master and told him that this was my second attempt to leave the Ashram and asked him to detain the train for a few minutes till my baggage arrived, and he agreed.

Once I was in the train I fell to pondering. When Bhagavan had asked me why I was in a hurry to leave I couldn't leave although I tried. When he gave the all clear the train was stopped to take me. It worked both ways. He had also assured me of success in my Tamil test although I knew scarcely a word of the language and the test was to be held in a few months. I felt that it was hardly worth while engaging a tutor, but experience told me that Bhagavan was dependable. The train journey was sufficient proof. So when I got home I engaged a tutor and stayed at home during the summer recess of the lawcourts, reading 'Who am I?' in Tamil. The written test came along. I had to translate an English speech into Tamil, and somehow I passed. Then there was the more frightening oral test in Madras, but it was made very easy and I passed that too.



From one point of view this whole test seemed to me useless, since there was no likelihood of my ever serving in Tamilnad; but from another point of view it was a very necessary experience, since it confirmed my faith in Bhagavan. I could only judge him on my own level and in the light of my own experience, even if it was nothing more than a train journey or a Tamil test.

In February 1949 my eldest son had a severe attack of smallpox. After a few days the doctor warned me that many people were dying of it and the chances of recovery were slight. I sat at the boy's bedside reading religious poems so as to keep his mind on God, since he was not expected to live. Then, on February 4th, the idea suddenly came to me to ask Bhagavan for his blessings, as we were in great distress. So I wrote to him:

Beloved Bhagavan,

I pray for your blessings on the suffering child and his parents.

Ever at your feet,

V. Kameswara Rao.

Early next morning my sister, who had been taking her turn sitting by the boy during the night, told my wife and me that she had had a vision of Ammavaru (the spirit of smallpox) leaving our house and asking her to take care of the boy. She gathered from that, in accordance with popular belief, that the boy would recover and no one else in the house get the disease. A few hours later a friend came in and gave me some sacred ashes from Sri Ramanasramam. Another good omen. We all began to feel hopeful. On the 8th I received the following letter from the Ashram :

Dear Sri Kameswara Rao,

We have your letter of the 4th inst. and the same was perused by Bhagavan. Prasadam (sacred ash) is herewith sent with Sri Bhagavan's gracious blessings for your child laid up with pox.

Sri Bhagavan and bhaktas are well.

Venkataraman, for Sarvadhikari.

The letter thrilled me, but how did Bhagavan know that my son had smallpox ? Why ask ? How could I know how Bhagavan knew ? Anyway, my son survived and is in good health.

I continued to be curious how smallpox came to be mentioned in the Ashram letter. Some elderly persons suggested that the moment Bhagavan saw my letter he received a mental picture of my son bedridden with smallpox. Later, however, Sri Bhagavatula Annapurnayya Sastri of Tenali gave an explanation that appealed more to me. "Was it necessary for you to write to Bhagavan in order for him to know what was happening in your house ? Is he not all-pervading and all-knowing ? But he does not interfere unless asked to and called upon. If a man is singing in Bombay and you want to hear him you must switch on the radio. If you don't, the radio will not receive his song and

you will not hear it, although he is singing just the same. Similarly if you want Bhagavan's blessings you must establish contact with him in the right way."

My faith in Bhagavan increased enormously as a result of this, because it was a matter of life and death for my boy and he gave him life.

On 17th March 1949 a big ceremony was held at the Ashram for the consecration of the temple over the shrine of Bhagavan's mother. I decided to go and to take my family and my mother with me. I applied for two days casual leave, made all arrangements and came home at 2 p.m. A car was waiting at the door to take us to the station. Suddenly I felt that I should not go. My wife and mother naturally protested, but it was no use. Our baggage was taken out of the car. Every one was annoyed about it but I merely said : "Perhaps Bhagavan doesn't want me to see this function. I too am sorry but I can't help it."

At about nine o'clock that evening I received a telegram that the only son of my third sister was dangerously ill with meningitis. and that I should send my mother there at once. I put her on the train together with the sister who had looked after my own son when he had smallpox. On arrival this sister wrote me a frantic letter saying that the case of my nephew was hopeless and that the only chance of saving him, if at all, was to invoke the blessings of Bhagavan. So on March 30 I again wrote to him. The following reply was received with the next day's date :

Your letter of the 30th instant was received and placed before Sri Bhagavan. May Sri Bhagavan's blessings be on the child and his parents. Herewith prasadam enclosed.

My nephew recovered. We understood then why I suddenly had to cancel my journey to Tiruvannamalai. If we had gone the telegram would not have reached me, my mother and sister would not have gone in time, and I should not have written to ask Bhagavan for his blessings. Hence my erratic decision,



prompted by something unknown to me at the time.

Came the fateful year 1950 when Bhagavan left his body. Physically he is no more with us. But he remains forever in our hearts. There are thousands of humble folk like me who received from beloved Bhagavan things they could never return. Nor was any return expected. God fulfils human needs so that man may develop divine discontent. It is human nature to get and forget; it is divine nature to give and forgive.

Man is God's child. Just as a parent satisfies the childish needs of a child, even though they may be ultimately unnecessary, so does God satisfy the immediate though temporary needs of man so as to stimulate a desire for the ultimate and eternal need — the need to attain Godhead. Arthur Osborne wrote in '*The Incredible Sai Baba*' that Baba used to say :

"I give people what they want in the hope that they will begin to want what I want to give them."

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## THE SEER'S WITHIN

By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

All in the Each, a feast of Truth, a blaze,  
 Life's sorry dual separation done.  
 Something in one begins to realize  
 That it is possible to change the flesh  
 With all its cells into a heaven of eyes  
 Smiling with wise aloofness on the mesh  
 Of pale illusions wandering below,  
 There in the shadow-haunted depths clean-cloven  
 To tremulous gleams of treacherous colours woven,  
 Wide-spread to snare the soul and slowly capture  
 Its sovereign meaning and authentic rapture.  
 How wonderful thou art,  
 How crystalline, O Vision of the heart!  
 How like a high-born seer thou dost remain  
 Above the world's annoy,  
 Interpreting each weariness, each pain  
 Of life around in terms of veiled joy!  
 How automatically in thy plan  
 Each image takes a sure and equal place,  
 The cramped prison-cell, the boundless space,  
 The fleeting bird, the grass, the drop of rain,  
 Both haunted beast and man!  
 Continually I sense thee freeing  
 The outer eye into a deep and deeper seeing.

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## AUTOMATIC DIVINE ACTIVITY

By PROF. G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

On 31st October 1937 my two-year-old daughter Indira suffered two infantile fits, the second more severe than the first. Suddenly she became unconscious, all vital organs stopped functioning and she seemed practically dead. The allopathic doctor declared his helplessness and advised Ayurvedic treatment. Branding between the eyes by an old man with his tobacco pipe made the child moan feebly and slightly revived the vital functions. Still she did not rally but lay moribund. Two Ayurvedic physicians sent for, one after the other, could not be found. At this crisis my eye lighted on the picture of Sri Bhagavan and I prostrated, saying within myself, "O Bhagavan, all human aid having failed, you alone must save." Getting up, I mechanically opened the drawer, took out a telegraph form and wrote an express message praying for Sri Bhagavan's Grace upon the child. The telegraph authorities sent me word that the message would reach the Ashram at 7 p.m. Precisely at 7 p.m. both the Ayurvedic physicians arrived simultaneously and also Sri V. V. Narayanappa came, put into my hands an envelop addressed to me and said: "Here is Sri Bhagavan's prasadam for the child." It struck me then as a miraculous response of Sri Bhagavan to my prayer. Sri Narayanappa explained that it was the prasadam which I had got for him the previous year when he had been ill and which he had preserved in the same envelop. It now struck him to make use of it for the ailing child. The two doctors, consulting together, treated the child and assured me that she was out of danger. That night, sleeping beside the child, I had a marvellous dream. I was in Sri Bhagavan's hall. Sri Bhagavan reclining on his couch as usual. In front of him stood a dark, fierce-looking person of gigantic stature. Sri Bhagavan with his forefinger motioned to him

thrice to leave the hall. Accordingly the stranger left by the first entrance. Then Sri Bhagavan turned to me, called me near and enquired: "How is your child?" I replied: "Bhagavan, by Your Grace she is better." Then Sri Bhagavan said: "She will be all right, don't fear," and put his hand on my back. With his touch I thrilled and the dream melted. The next morning I received the following reply from the Ashram: "Received your wire yesterday night at 7 p.m. and it was perused by Sri Bhagavan. We assure you of Sri Bhagavan's blessings on the child that she may recover. Pray be not anxious."

In reply to my letter relating the above incident and the dream the Ashram authorities wrote: "We are very glad to note that through Sri Bhagavan's Grace your child recovered from almost a critical state."

During the ensuing Christmas holidays when I again visited the Ashram I asked Sri Bhagavan what he thought on reading my telegram. He merely said: "Yes, I read your message and also noted that the clock was then striking seven."

I again persisted: "Bhagavan, did you not think that you must do something to save the child?"

Straight came Sri Bhagavan's reply: "Even the thought of saving the child is a sankalpa (wish), and one who has any sankalpa is no Jnani (Realized Man). In fact any such thought is unnecessary. The moment the Jnani's eye falls upon a thing there starts the automatic divine activity which itself leads to the highest good. The conversation was all in Telugu except for the phrase 'automatic divine activity', which Bhagavan uttered in English.

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\* From *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* available from Sri Ramanasramam.

## A BET ON A PRAYER

By K. K. NAMBIAR

It was in the year 1944, when I was stationed at Madras as City Engineer of the Corporation of Madras. Due to the severe petrol rationing in force, I could not make as frequent visits to Sri Ramanasramam at Tiruvannamalai as I would have liked to. Even if I went by train, it was very inconvenient to be without a car at Tiruvannamalai. My sister Madhavi Amma and my wife were also very anxious to make a visit. I told them that I would pray to Sri Bhagavan to help me to take a trip soon, and I would go only if I could get a car to move about in Tiruvannamalai. A couple of days later, a friend of mine Sri Venkatarathnam, the Sub-divisional Magistrate at Tiruvannamalai called at my office and suggested that we should go to Tiruvannamalai and that he would meet us with his car at the Railway Station and also put us all up at his residence. I felt that my prayers were being answered and made arrangements to go to the Ashram with my sister, wife and children. We had comfortable first-class accommodation although we had to change trains at Villupuram Junction. When we reached Tiruvannamalai station early in the morning, Mr. Venkatarathnam was there not with one car, but with two. The second car came in handy as there were five of us in the party including the two children.

I was talking to Mr. Venkatarathnam at his residence about my implicit faith in Bhagavan looking after his devotees, when he said "let us see about your return journey to Madras; getting accommodation in the connecting train at Villupuram is always a gamble.<sup>1</sup> There are three trains all near about midnight and one has to take a chance. It is very seldom that you get seats in the first train. Besides, you are a party of five and that makes it extremely difficult." I said I had no worry as Bhagavan would take good care of us. He said, "let us

have a bet on this", and we decided to make it a crucial test.

On the return journey, Mr. Venkatarathnam saw us off at Tiruvannamalai station where comfortable accommodation in a first-class compartment was secured for us. He also sent a peon to accompany us by train to Villupuram junction with the twofold objective of rendering us any assistance necessary until we were safely berthed in the connecting train at Villupuram, as also to check up on our bet how Bhagavan would come to our rescue to solve the usual difficulty expected at Villupuram junction.

We alighted at Villupuram and waited for the first Madras-bound train to arrive. We introduced ourselves to the Ticket Examiner and he promptly promised his assistance to find suitable berths for all of us. When the train steamed in, we walked past all the upper class compartments, the Ticket Examiner keeping count of the vacant berths available. There were only two berths vacant, in two different compartments and those too were upper berths, and we were five in all. We couldn't accept those berths. All that the Ticket Collector could do was to suggest that we try our luck with the next train. But I, who was all the while praying to Sri Bhagavan, did not give up hope. I could not reconcile myself to the idea that we would be left stranded. Thus, musing within myself, I felt like walking up to the front end of the train where there were a few closed bogies adjacent to the engine. No passenger coaches are generally connected there; but on that night, there was a brand-new looking first-class bogie next to the engine nicely done up and polished, and completely shuttered and closed being towed to Madras for some special purpose. On seeing it, I ran back

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<sup>1</sup>Nowadays there is a good direct bus service and it is not necessary to travel by night—(Editor).

along the platform and spoke to the Ticket Examiner about it. The sceptical Railway Official came up with me and was surprised to find a new coach with all the doors locked and windows closed. On opening it with a key, we found an exquisite compartment with all the seats empty. With his permission, all of us boarded the compartment, six berths to ourselves — specially,

reserved. I repeated aloud 'Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya! I have won the bet'. Need I have any doubt whether Sri Bhagavan would answer the silent prayers of his devotees? My faith in Bhagavan is just the same today as it was in those days, and there have been more and more of such instances to keep my faith unflagging.

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## THE GRACE OF SAI BABA

By KHUSHMUN ELAVIA

It was a day of great sorrow and yet ended up by being one of the happiest days of my life — the day on which the glory and grace of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi first shone upon our family. I was only eleven at the time. My grandfather, whom I loved and idolised, was in the last stage of cancer. There was profuse internal bleeding and the doctors had given him up. The family were sitting around in grief, expecting the end within a few hours. As for me, I was sobbing aloud and wishing that I could die too. My grandfather was the person I most loved. I worshipped the very ground he trod on. While sobbing I kept on praying to God to have mercy on me and save him.

As I stood by the window in the evening, disconsolate and calling on God and all the saints to help us, I heard some one singing outside in a strangely powerful and moving way. The man who was singing stopped and continued his songs just under the window at which I stood, though I am sure he did not see me. His songs were all about the numerous miracles of the resplendent Sai Baba and how he never failed to come to the aid of those who sincerely turned to him and implored his help.

I had never heard of Sai Baba and this singer had never before come to our house,

but as I listened a ray of hope penetrated my mind. I eagerly began praying to this great one to show mercy on me too and not to abandon me at this time of tragedy. Within two hours the haemorrhage stopped and my grandfather took a turn for the better. When the doctors came next morning they were flabbergasted to see the change in him and sat there scratching their heads and discussing what could possibly have caused their prognostications to go wrong and how he could have recovered from such a hopeless condition. I smiled to myself because only I knew. Within a few days my grandfather was quite all right again and the cancer never troubled him again.

Many times after that I experienced the grace and favours of Sai Baba and I am eternally grateful to him, but it was that first miracle that won my undying gratitude. I found afterwards that I had often seen his picture, for it is in so many Bombay shops, but I had not known who it was. Of course, he had long since left his physical body — as far back as 1918, long before I was born — when this miracle occurred, but that did not matter. His grace and mercy are still showered on those who turn to him, and often on people like me who had never before heard of him.

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## THE MAHARSHI AND HIS BLESSINGS

By K. RAMACHANDRA,

Editor of 'The Religious Digest', Ceylon.

There are some events which cannot be explained by physical causation. They simply have to be put down to Divine Omnipotence. There is the case, for instance, of Harry Edwards, the doyen of England's psychic healers, who was miraculously saved from a tragic motor accident when he was about thirty years old.

He stepped off a tram in the middle of the road and started to cross over to the pavement without looking for oncoming traffic. A lorry was approaching at high speed. He had no time to jump out of its way, nor had the driver time to swerve or apply the brake. He seemed certain to be crushed to death but suddenly an unseen hand raised him up and hurled him across the gap to the pavement to the astonishment of the lorry driver and the spectators. It was this miraculous saving of his life which prompted him to utilise the healing power latent in him for the service of mankind.

There have been many such cases of miraculous delivery from approaching death. I wish now to record two which occurred at places 700 miles apart at almost the identical moment on 14 April, 1950, the date of the Mahasamadhi of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Vallimalai Swami of Madras, an old and ardent devotee of Bhagavan, had received news of the latter's failing health and wished to be at his side for the Mahasamadhi. So he hurried to Egmore Station, Madras, to catch the first available train. Seeing it already at the platform, ready to start, and fearing that he would miss it if he crossed the overbridge, he dashed straight across the rail track. A shunting engine was coming towards him at high speed. In a fraction of a second an unseen hand lifted him over to the next track, which was unoccu-

pied. From there he climbed into a carriage just as the train was moving out. That was exactly at 7-45 p.m.

At the same time another miracle took place in front of our own house at Colpetty, Colombo. My wife and I had gone to Tiruvannamalai to have darshan of Bhagavan. The apparent reason for this was that Elizabeth, an English friend, who was then in Ceylon, was eager to have his darshan before taking her ship home on 25 April, but it was really through his Grace so that we should be there at the time of his Mahasamadhi. We arrived at Sri Ramanasramam on the 11th. On the first night of our stay there I had a vivid vision of Bhagavan's Mahasamadhi taking place at 7-45 p.m. on the 14th. On the strength of this I wrote to our son in Colombo that Bhagavan's condition was critical and that he should observe Ramana Day at our home shrine before 7-45 p.m. on Friday the 14th, notifying all Colombo devotees of its significance. After posting the letter I went to the hall where I received the glad news that Bhagavan's condition was greatly improved. I therefore rushed back to the post office to retrieve the letter, but the mail bag had already left. With renewed faith in my vision, I refrained from writing to cancel it.

As requested by me, our children organized a puja meeting at 6 p.m. on the 14th with the arati at 7-30. Many devotees attended in spite of the short notice, among them our neighbours Mr. and Mrs. A. and their little daughter of three. When the puja was finished this family were leaving our house to go home when their little daughter ran out into the road and a speeding car ran right over her. Before the horrified parents had time to cry out the child got up and ran to her mother quite uninjured, only her

clothes being soiled from the dust of the road. This was at exactly 7-45 p.m.

I will now describe a miraculous cure that happened in my own case after an accident at Tiruvannamalai. This was in January 1946 when I had gone there on pilgrimage with my family. We had a small cottage there but the Ashram authorities considered it too small for five persons and put us in a larger house. We went there after having darshan of Bhagavan. Leaving my family and the luggage on the verandah, I went round to the well at the back of the house to fetch some water. It was evening, already dark, and I did not know that the well had run dry and was about forty feet deep, with a rock bottom. As I was drawing the bucket up my foot slipped and I was about to fall in but some unseen power pulled me out and I was flung backwards into a ditch close to the wall. The force of the fall was such that I injured my spine and fell unconscious. Just then a friend who had heard of our arrival came with a torch and, finding me missing, joined my family in searching for me. They picked me up, still unconscious, and carried me into the house.

I came to in a few minutes but could neither stand erect nor lie flat on my back owing to the spinal injury. The pain was excruciating. Siddha, Ayurvedic, allopathic and homoeopathic treatments were all tried in turn but without effect. After I had been given electric treatment for three days, also without effect, my friends decided that I should be taken to hospital in Madras or Vellore but I refused. I replied that the greatest physician for me was Lord Arunachala in the human form of Sri Ramana and that I was not prepared to go anywhere else for treatment. I said that I preferred to die in the atmosphere of his sacred Presence. For five long weeks I remained day and night in a wicker easy chair, always in the same position, with my spine bent to reduce the pain. My power of endurance was getting exhausted and despair overcame me. My wife was taken to Bhagavan's hall to pray for me and also to the local temple for a special puja. On her return she fell asleep

exhausted and dreamed that a dark man waylaid her and was trying to snatch away her marriage thali with the gold chain when suddenly Bhagavan appeared and pushed him away, rescuing her from his clutches. This revived our hopes because it seemed that the dark man symbolised Death trying to make her a widow by snatching away her marriage token.

The following night my state became critical and, still in my coiled up position, I experienced death agony. Mrs. Osborne and an Indian lady were helping my wife look after me. Mrs. Osborne was sitting meditating. After a while she told the other lady to go to the Ashram and fetch the Parsi doctor who was treating me. He had come on a pilgrimage from Indore and was staying in a cottage in the Ashram precincts. No ladies were allowed in the Ashram after dark, so the lady, Ammani Ammal, was reluctant to go, but Mrs. Osborne induced her to. As she approached the meditation hall, where Bhagavan used to sleep at night she saw that there was a light there. This was remarkable as it was already half past one in the morning, so she approached the window and peeped in. To her amazement she saw two attendants applying ointment and massaging the back of the Maharshi. She at once perceived the connection between this and my suffering. Without being seen by any one at the Ashram, she rushed back to our house and reported what she had seen. She was in a state of great joy and excitement with tears streaming down her face. All three of us were caught up in her mood. I rose from my chair and stood erect. I felt the straightening of my spine. The three ladies helped me to my bed which had been unused for five weeks, and for the first time since the accident I slept.

The following day I was able to walk with assistance to Bhagavan's presence and make my grateful salutations to him. It was something like a rebirth and I have had no serious illness since then. His blessings continue to flow although we are denied his physical presence.

A few years later I came across the writings of Sri Yogananda Paramahansa and his exposition of 'metaphysically induced illness' gave me a clearer understanding of such wonderful happenings. I quote a passage below.

"The metaphysical method of physical transfer of disease is known to highly advanced Yogis. A strong man can assist a weaker one by helping him to carry his heavy load; a spiritual superman is able to minimise his disciples' physical or mental bur-

dens by sharing the karma of their past actions. Just as a rich man loses some money when he pays off a large debt for a prodigal son, who is thus saved from the dire consequences of his folly, so a Master willingly sacrifices a portion of his bodily wealth to lighten the misery of his disciples."

Since my own experience, which I have just told, I have also been privileged to witness the case of an esteemed friend helped by the Grace of his own Master, to whom I too was devoted.

## THE BEGINNING OF A RAMANA MANTRA

By T. K. S.

Bhagavan never gave a mantra unsolicited; when asked he sometimes approved of the use of one. He sometimes allowed the name 'Ramana' to be used as a mantra, sometimes the single syllable 'I'; however he was insistent that the question: "Who am I?" is not a mantra.

The mantra 'Om namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya' fascinated me greatly in my early days. It so delighted me that I constantly saw Sri Krishna (Vasudeva) in my mind's eye. I had a premonition<sup>1</sup> that this body of mine would pass away in its fortieth year and I wanted to have a vision of the Lord before that time. I fasted and practised devotion to Krishna Vasudeva incessantly. I took great delight in reading the Bhagavad Gita and the Bhagavata. Then when I read in the Gita "I regard the Jnani as my own Self" I was overjoyed. I reflected: "When I have here Bhagavan Sri Ramana who is Vasudeva's own Self, why should I worship Vasudeva separately?"

All this was in my early days before settling down at Sri Bhagavan's Ashram. I wanted one mantra, one scripture and one form of worship, so that there might be no conflict of loyalties. Sri Ramana Paramatma was obviously the God to worship; his

writings were the gospel, and as for the mantra, it struck me that 'Om namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya' was an exact parallel of the one I had used formerly. I counted the letters and found that it also contained twelve Sanskrit letters. I told Bhagavan and he gave his approval.

Intellectuals may laugh at this and ask why I needed a mantra when the Ocean of Bliss was there before me. I confess that I was drawn to the traditional method of bhakti practice. Bhagavan has revealed his true nature as the All-Witness, yet there is also the saying that Advaita must be only in the attitude of mind and never in outer action.

That is how this mantra first came to be approved.

<sup>1</sup> which proved unjustified. He passed away at the age of 68. See 'Ashram Bulletin' of our April, 1965 issue.

## CLIMBING ARUNACHALA

By SATYANARAYAN TANDON

When I was at the Ashram in April 1964 a desire to climb to the top of Arunachala arose in me ; but as my wife was suffering from arthritis and taking injections every second day it did not seem possible. I could not leave her alone for the day, especially as she spoke neither Tamil nor English. However the following night Bhagavan appeared to me in a dream and reminded me to climb to the top.

I still could not decide, but a few days later my wife herself urged me to, saying that she would wait at the Ashram till I got back. I told Sundaresh Iyer and, with the help of the postmaster, Raja Aiyar, he arranged for two people to go with me early next morning.

We set out at about 5 on the morning of April 7th and reached Skandashram by about 5.30. It was about 8.30 when we got to the peak after climbing over rocks, stony paths and dry water courses. At several places I had to sit and rest for some minutes, as the climb had exhausted me. Though I had climbed mountains of ten and twelve thousand feet in my youth, at 63 I found even Arunachala's two thousand feet tiring. Once or twice I felt tempted to bow down respectfully to the Lord at the summit from where I stood and return ; but when I gazed up in reverence I saw Bhagavan standing on the summit, smiling as if to encourage me not to lose heart but to climb. The last bit was especially exhausting and when I at last reached the peak I was gasping like a buffalo yoked to a heavy load. All through the climb I had been inwardly chanting Arunachala-Siva, but at that moment the chanting spontaneously stopped.

The oval shaped rock by the side of which I stood was stained black from the melted ghee of the beacon fire lit there annually on Kartikai Deepam Day. Although the sun was by now well up in the sky, a cool and pleasant breeze was blowing.

Merged in the bliss of sacred Arunachala, I suddenly felt that a crevice had opened before me and I sank down into it, how far I did not know. After some time I found myself back on the summit with nothing on but a loincloth, and before me stood Bhagavan. He turned and walked westward, and I after him. How he could walk from summit to summit as though over a smooth surface and I follow him was a mystery to me and yet so it was.

While thus walking I suddenly saw, instead of Bhagavan, a huge column of some milky-white substance rising up before me. I walked up to it and became merged in it, losing my identity.

When the sun had risen higher and the guides were anxious to return we started back. The return was more tiring than the ascent. I could not walk barefoot as the stones had now become too hot in the fierce sun, and with shoes on I slipped on the smooth rocks. I got back to Skandashram at about noon but was too exhausted to undertake the further short walk to the Ashram, so I rested there for about three hours, arriving back at the Ashram at about four in the afternoon ; and there I found my wife and Sri Sundaresh Iyer waiting anxiously for me.

I treasure this experience as a wonderful manifestation of Bhagavan's Grace.

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## THE POWER OF SHAKTIPATA

By SWAMI MUKTANANDA

We already carried an article about Swami Nityananda in our issue of April 1965; however the following article, by a Swami whom many regard as his successor, is so much in keeping with the theme of the present issue that we offer no apologies for including this also.

This world, this universe, this Brahmanda, described variedly as real and existent, unreal and non-existent, and even paradoxically as both real and unreal, existent and non-existent, teases man out of thought and remains a question of questions. What indeed is this macrocosm? The six systems of Indian philosophy expound it differently. The Vedanta designates it as an unsubstantial pageant and an optical illusion on the analogy of a rope mistaken for a serpent. Modern science takes it as materially composed of atoms and electrons. Each one thus perceives the world from his own circumscribed view and projects its image to suit his limited perception.

Whatever it is, the world is undoubtedly a miracle of a phenomenon. However incomprehensible it may appear, there is no gainsaying the truth that its Creator has fashioned it with flawless artistry and indescribable efficiency. It needs no more than a modicum of thought to ask whence there could have been light and heat without the sun; coolness of the night without the moon; life without wind; quenching of thirst without water; the very existence of beings without the earth's fertility sprouting into corn, fruits, flowers, vegetation and medicinal plants. Where would beauty be found if not in the majestic mountains, sparkling streams, ever-flowing rivers, shady trees, lovely creepers, fragrant flowers, and the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of colours over earth and heaven? Birds and beasts add as much to this beauty as the landscape. All this lends its peculiar charm, strikes terror and evokes a sense of unspeakable awe and grandeur in its totality. This world of satva, rajas, tamas, instinct



*Swami Nityananda*

with sat, chit, ananda, though one, stands exposed in a bewildering variety of forms. Even as an artist with a flourish of brush conjures up his visions on a canvas, God the Supreme Artist brought into being this universe, which strikes one as strange, variegated, friendly and unfriendly at the same time, though it is nothing but a multiple projection of His divinity.

Even among men there is an intriguing and surprising variety. There is nothing wasted in the economy of heaven. Everything that is has a part to play in the day to day world. The business of the world goes on. Time and again, however, saints

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Articles about Swamis and Gurus are written for us by their disciples. We do not presume to pass judgment on the opinions of the author.

and enlightened ones appear in our midst to give a new sense of direction and purposefulness. The tenor of their life is apparently outlandish, but they are the embodiment of the divine, from whom the sick in body and mind derive a full measure of peace, solace and content. Such a divine embodiment descended on Ganeshpuri to fulfil an extraordinary mission of mercy. Innumerable devotees know him as Bhagavan Sri Nityananda.

There is nothing on record to show where Gurudeva was born or brought up or where he realized the Self. There is no clue to his geneology or family background. Nor is this strictly necessary. What is material is not the source of rivers or the geneology of saints, but their impact and achievement. The dear to the Lord, according to Shrimad Bhagavata, are above the mundane distinctions of birth, caste or community. Gurudeva belonged to this category. Beyond doubt, he was a self-realized one from birth, whose impact transcended his physical presence and has continued unabated even today after his physical demise.

Sri Gurudeva was always in a state of unruffled perennial bliss and his face was ever adorned with a beatific smile. His luminous loud laughter in this state still rings in the ears of those who were privileged to hear it. Bhagavan Sri Nityananda was literally ever-joyful, which induced people to address him as such. From his childhood, it is reported, he used to have his skull clean-shaven and sometimes donned the orange-tinted robes of a sannyasin till he came to Vajreshwari, which probably suggests that he was a spiritually ordained sannyasin of the 'nandapadma' category.

It is believed that Sri Gurudeva, having revealed himself in his youth some fifty years ago in the South, travelled through Kerala, Bantwal, Mangalore, Kaup, Mulki, Udipi, Pudubidri, Kanhangad, Gokarn, on foot, relieving incidentally a variety of people of their illness, misery, anxiety and poverty. His field of peregrination also extended over forests and valleys through which he travelled with lightning speed. He never stayed

anywhere for long and accepted food and water only, if offered, since he never felt their want. Sometimes pestered by crowds clamouring for miracles, he shunned them by swiftly moving to a different spot, sometimes even perching himself on a tree and casually throwing down leaves which served as panacea to the ailing.

Once, mistaken as a vagrant, Sri Gurudeva, it is said, was put behind the bars of a prison by a hot-headed Government official who was then amazed at seeing his prisoner both inside and outside the jail at the same time. The erring official's repentance followed and so did the immediate release of his extraordinary prisoner! Sri Gurudeva sometimes travelled by railroad. When asked to show a ticket, he could produce thousands of them from his loin-cloth. A story which has gained wide currency, being applied to many sadhus, actually happened with him. A stern railway guard put him off a train for having no ticket. He sat quietly by the side of the line, but the engine refused to start up. A murmuring arose among the passengers that it was because the guard had committed sacrilege. Time passed. Nothing could be done. Finally, to appease the people, the guard reinstated the sadhu and immediately the engine started up. When he willed, he distributed sweets to thousands and no one had the faintest notion where they came from. Certain people have testified to their having seen him walking on the waters of the Pavanje river. Sri Gurudeva had his mortal share of ignorant people's calumny, jealousy and harassment. A necromancer named Appaya once offered Gurudeva tobacco surreptitiously mixed with poison. Gurudeva swallowed it and it so happened that the necromancer began writhing with abdominal pain and paid the penalty of sacrilege with his immediate death. On another occasion, a certain Malabari caught hold of Gurudeva, tied his hands and legs, sprinkled rock oil on him and set him on fire. Once again, it was the malicious Malabari who began to burn and died.

These miracles happened and yet Sri Gurudeva was no miracle-monger. This was the period when he had achieved complete

identity with Brahman. He visualized the Supreme in himself as in all others without any distinction. Having merged himself with the omnipotent Supreme, anything was at his command and so it was that miracles, big and small, spontaneously issued from him without a taint of self-interest. The learned seers have listed three types of siddhis—(1) unclean siddhi, (2) mantra-siddhi and (3) yogasiddhi. The first, whose power is acquired through unholy rites, mantras or substance, is rendered ineffective when the possessor of that power is purified and cleansed, since his efficacy depends on his uncleanness. This power, which is malevolent and destructive, is incapable of doing good to anyone. The second is acquired through incantations addressed to a chosen deity. Those who have acquired this power can produce at will any object — fruits, flowers, articles of gold and silver on the palm of their hands, or move objects from one place to another. Such conjurations and miracles impress people, but degenerate into ephemeral exhibitionism when they are consciously manoeuvred. The third is acquired through a rigorous discipline of eightfold Yoga and full self-control and is scientifically valid (as well as actually feasible). There is however another called Mahasiddhi which stands head and shoulders above the aforesaid three, and is derived through a complete identification with the Supreme. One merged with God becomes God, even as a drop of water merged with the ocean acquires the qualities of the ocean through its identification. To quote "Shivashakti", one merged with God acquires all the omnipotence of God when the full-realization of integration dawns upon him, leaving then no need for incantations, austerities, rites or efforts for the acquisition of this supreme power. Those who are endowed with this power are not even conscious that they possess it and yet it has a strong impact. Such supreme power was with Bhagavan Nityananda.

After some years' stay in the South, Sri Gurudeva set out on a pilgrimage and covered practically the entire length and breadth of India on foot. He himself sometimes used

to give vivid descriptions of the places he had visited. Sri Gurudeva practised stern austerities in the Himalayas, even staying in a tree for six years. Sri Gurudeva was an embodiment of the highest bliss and divine consciousness and nothing is impossible to such souls.

When, after years of peregrination, Sri Gurudeva finally settled down at Ganeshpuri near Vajreshwari outside Bombay, the question naturally arises why, of all the places, he selected this one. Possibly the reason was that Ganeshpuri had been a sanctified spot for centuries and Sri Gurudeva chose it as Lord Vishnu chose Vaikuntha and Lord Shiva did Kailas. Here in this sanctified spot is the Mandagni mountain, the sacred river Tejasa, the ancient temple of goddess Vajreshwari as also the woods filled with fruits and flowers, an oasis of natural beauty, and the famous hot springs. Here Vashistha had once performed a big sacrifice and the saints practised penance. So Gurudeva settled down in Ganeshpuri and put it on the map of the spiritual world.

The physical features of Sri Gurudeva had the sheen of a dusky jewel. His forehead was high and broad with thick arched eye-brows over his big round eyes, from which flowed an incessant stream of pure love. He was generally seated in a spacious armchair with a quiescent mind and a gently smiling face—a sight once seen, always indelibly impressed on his visitors' mind.

Sri Gurudeva loved solitude. He was eminently free from desire of any sort related to himself. Sri Gurudeva came to Vajreshwari with only a loin-cloth and lived with it to the end of his earthly days. His life was extremely simple. He took his bath before dawn and ate very little. Indeed to be simple is to be great and this simplicity of Sri Gurudeva was one more indication of his greatness.

Sri Gurudeva rarely spoke, but on being questioned, he would sometimes expound the most abstruse philosophy in a few simple words that went home. He had a good working knowledge of several languages such as

English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam, even throwing in an occasional Sanskrit quotation in the course of his conversation. He was a wideawake picture of perfect peace through the day and never slept through the night. Such exalted souls, on scriptural authority, neither sleep nor dream, being always in a state of highest bliss, freed from desires and fears, illusions and expectations of every sort. The Mandukya Upanishad describes this supraconscious state as indescribable, intangible, undemonstrable, beyond thought and reason — peaceful, blissful and unique. This is being one with Atma, which alone is worth knowing and striving for.

Sri Gurudeva was one with God. To be in his presence was to be aware of God. All the miseries and cares of the world were imperceptibly liquidated at his sight. The devotees addressed him lovingly as "Baba" and they were never tired of standing in an almost interminable queue for hours in heat or shower for the privilege of having his darshan. Whoever had a glimpse of him had a feeling that Baba was his and knew all his difficulties. Baba was to the devotees what Sri Krishna was to the gopis, each gopi feeling that the Lord was having the Rasalila only with her. Ganeshpuri had come to be a shrine of which Sri Gurudeva was the Lord. His presence here was solely for the good of his loving devotees. He was the healer of all their wounds. He protected in every way his devotees who flocked to him with simple love and faith. All doubts were resolved, all knots untied and a deep-seated sense of peace settled down on his devotees at a glance. As the Mundakopanishad affirms, all doubts and conflicts disappear, all consequences of actions — good or bad — are wiped out at the realization of the Supreme.

Those who had questions to ask were rendered mute in Gurudeva's august presence. Sometimes the question was answered even before it was asked through a symbolic gesture or a word from Gurudeva. Gurudeva spoke little, but whatever little he said was charged with a deep significance, which served the listener as food for deepest

thought. Gurudeva mostly preferred to communicate with his eyes. Sometimes however he made loving inquiries after the devotees' comforts and they were touched by this solicitude. Gurudeva sometimes used to give sweets or fruits to his devotees, who considered themselves the most blessed on earth for being considered worthy of such gifts. Sri Sukhadeva in Shrimad Bhagavat said that it is very difficult to have a glimpse of great souls and to receive tokens of favour from them. Such 'prasada' does away with all difficulties and miseries. The devotees from cities forgot all their worldly cares and worries on arriving at Ganeshpuri. They generally arrived here on weekends and returned to their work with Grace enough to sustain them for the next week. Though always residing in his quarters at "Kailas Nivas", Gurudeva's presence was felt all over. He himself used to say, "Be calm; I am everywhere". Sri Gurudeva always thought of his devotees far and near. The poor natives of Ganeshpuri and its surroundings never lacked food or clothing in his (Baba's) spiritual regime. Sometimes Gurudeva used to move among the children and talk to them joyously. He loved children, whom he considered representatives of God and offered them sweets and other gifts.

Innumerable people came to Gurudeva with all sorts of offerings. The scriptures have said that a god, guru, king and child should never be approached without offerings. There were heaps of gifts and offerings — sweets, fruits, biscuits, bales of cloth, clothes, rugs, blankets and a thousand things — around Gurudeva. Did Gurudeva need them? He was contented only with his loincloth and distributed these gifts among the needy.

Whoever came to Gurudeva sat down after obeisance in his own way. Men of modern sophistication sometimes eye this ritual critically, which is symptomatic of their ignorance and immaturity. As a matter of fact there is nothing humiliating or derogatory to one's self-esteem in bowing down before the Gurus. The seers have seen that there flows a divine spiritual energy from



the great souls which is transmitted through contact. Even the great Lord Rama touched the feet of sages and preceptors. The great ones bowing to the great only add to their own greatness. Greeting one another is more than a formality; it is a means of establishing a mutual rapport. When someone told Gurudeva, "I bow to you", Gurudeva used to retort that he was bowing not to him but only to Brahman, whose manifestations we all are.

The direct realization of spiritual and philosophical truths has the effect of tranquilizing the whole being of a man. The whole material world is then nothing for him and there is nothing left for him to do in a worldly way. To talk about the meaningless is doubly meaningless. It was for this that Gurudeva had long spells of silence, but even his silence was more eloquent than words. It was the irresistible charm of this silence and self-possession that quietened even the most garrulous. The Rig Veda maintains that those who obey earn the right to command. Accordingly, Sri Gurudeva instructed others to be what he was in a state of mind devoid of word or thought. There is the well-known story of Kakabhushandi, who constantly iterated the name of Rama, which in the process generated such an atmosphere around him that all who approached it came within its magnetic field. There was such an atmosphere around Sri Gurudeva, who was perpetually in a state of perennial bliss, which had an immediate impact on all those who approached him.

There are no words to describe Sri Gurudeva's powerful impact. He could be described only if taken as one of us, which he was not. He was an embodied pure soul integrated with the Supreme mover of all that moves. The self-realized seers declare this universe full of infinite variety to be merely the play of the Supreme Lord. The poets have likened God to an actor playing many parts, since He reveals himself in a diversity of forms, though one in reality. The permutations and combinations of Maya and the Maya itself are of His making. He is visible though invisible, active though

apparently inactive. He receives gifts though He is the giver of all gifts. The whole universe is permeated by Him. Through Him is the creation and evolution of this entire universe. Sri Gurudeva always said that he was present everywhere. Once, when a photographer sought his permission to photograph him, Sri Gurudeva told him rather to photograph the universe, since his identification was so complete that there was nothing unrelated with him in the whole universe. At all hours and in all conditions he was in a state of supreme bliss. He conducted himself in such a way as to suggest that the whole world was the object of his love and the theatre of his operation. Being above likes and dislikes, he rejected nothing because it was bad nor accepted anything because it was good. So completely detached was he that he saw not though he saw; he heard not though he heard; he spoke not though he spoke. He was neither a doer nor an enjoyer; neither a receiver nor a giver.

The ways of saints are inscrutable. Tukaram has said that one has to live like a fish in water to know how a fish could sleep in water. Likewise, one has to be something of a Mahatma to understand the Mahatma. The attempt to explain or pass a verdict on them is childish, indicative of neither experience nor erudition, like the attempt to describe the Taj Mahal with the help of a picture post-card. Some people have wondered why Sri Gurudeva did not set out to serve the poor and the ignorant instead of confining himself within the four walls of his Ashram. This is sheer misunderstanding. The sun and the moon and the holy Ganges do not go out of their way to serve anybody, and yet who could question the amount of good they do, settled in their own place? The impact of Sri Gurudeva's benevolence on the exterior world was both direct and indirect. It is testified to by those who have felt a deep calm and had all their knots untied at his mere glance. Some came to scoff and remained to pray. Others left infinitely more fortified than ever with inner strength. As the sun peeps out of the East, birds begin to warble, but the owl goes

blind; holy men come to offer their morning ablutions, but thieves and prowlers take to their heels; the snow begins to melt but the clay gets hardened.

Sri Gurudeva was apparently no different from the rest of mankind. There was visibly no give and take between him and his devotees, since for him there was nothing to give in material terms. Yet, he had one thing to give without stint or measure — namely, his grace followed by a deep sense of peace. He was himself a fountain of peace and joy. He was the 'Paramananda' of the Upanishads; the dear Lord of the devout Vaishnavas; the object of the meditation of the Yogis; the Brahmananda of the philosophers and the Chidananda of the Vedas. His unperturbed soul encased in a mortal frame flowed out in a ceaseless stream of joy, love and peace. "The whole world", said Gurudeva, "is my home."

There are yogis and yogis and yet their work is largely identical despite differences. Sri Gurudeva mostly preferred not to talk. He did not preach or lecture and yet his few words or speechless communication were more effective than long-winded perorations.

The inexorable law of Karma works itself out in poverty, disease, ignorance with some and otherwise with others. Bhartruhari has described this world as insufferable. Every man has his tale of woe to tell, no matter how healthy and wealthy he is. Man is ever in quest of happiness, which eludes him, and each renewed attempt at happiness only adds to his unhappiness. Sri Gurudeva was a source of strength and solace to these men, whom he urged to know themselves and realize God as the only royal road to lasting happiness.

Each soul in this world is an inalienable part of the Supreme Soul and is forever seeking reunion with God. All arts and sciences are a means of realizing this eventuality. Happiness and joy are dear as life to everyone. The scriptures describe the world as full of insatiable cravings and longings. Marriage, wife, children, social status, means of recreation are all attempts to gra-

tify them. The all-knowing Rishis have maintained that no lasting peace can ensue from the pursuit of worldly happiness. The Bhagavad Gita has said that this world is a vast abode of suffering, where a fleeting sense of happiness is at best a brief interlude. In the state of things as they are there is no gratification. The Vedas see all misery rooted in ignorance. Man is miserable because he does not know his own self fully. If men were to look within themselves, they would soon discover that there is within them a source of perennial happiness known as *Atmasukha* which is absolute and infinite. All other joys of the world are contained in that supreme happiness. God in his mercy reveals Himself time and again in the form of self-realized Mahatmas to lead men towards the true goal of this happiness. The holy Bhagavata says that men are rewarded with a glimpse of such self-luminous souls only after an accumulated store of merit through a series of births. Such self-realized souls are indeed difficult to come by. But when the world is sorely afflicted with sin and misery, such self-realized souls descend on the earth and effectively rehabilitate man's confidence in truth and righteousness. Bhagavan Shri Nityananda descended on Ganeshpuri with such a mission and led men towards truth and righteousness.

The three channels of experience and enjoyment in the day to day world are wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. But there is a fourth one, called "Turiya" which is extremely rare. In this state there is an indefinable experience of supreme bliss than which there is no higher state of happiness. The scriptures designate this state variedly as *Vaikuntha*, *Kailas*, *Vishnupada* and *Paramapada*. The highest objective for which man has been striving since birth is realized here. The dormant capacity to reach this goal is awakened and activated through Guru's grace. As the "Shivasutra" says, God comes down in the form of a guru to lead men to this elevated state through the guru, who transforms a 'jiva' into 'Shiva' and a 'nara' into *Narayana*. Sri Gurudeva Nityananda belonged to this category.

Sri Gurudeva had the divine power of performing 'Shaktipata' or transmission of spiritual energy. The right type of recipient then began to feel differently and started muttering "I am Brahma", "I am Shiva", "I am He" the moment his static or dormant Kundalini was aroused. Without guru's grace, there is no 'Shaktipata', which is a wonderful and mysterious process wherein the Guru communicates his own spiritual energy to the disciple. 'Shaktipata' is a great science. In 'Shivagama' and 'Shaivatantra' there is an elaborate description of this spiritual process. A perfect guru awakens the Kundalini Shakti through 'Shaktipata'. This Kundalini Shakti which is no different from Divine Consciousness or 'Chiti Shakti' is another name for the divine power which is operating universally. 'Chiti' is an independent power which is unity manifested as diversity and diversity as unity. Though one in essence, it projects itself in different forms. The highest attainments of Yogis, Jnanis, devotees, poets, princes, warriors are varied manifestations and projections of Kundalini or Chiti Shakti, which is omnipotent and invincible. One of its names is 'Shiva', the other is 'Shakti' the difference in nomenclature being merely nominal. Sri Gurudeva Nityananda had with him, beyond question, infinite wonders of this divine 'Chiti Shakti'.

Things began to happen to the disciple whose Kundalini was awakened and activated by Gurudeva. Leaving all details

aside, it is enough at the moment to say that the Kundalini Shakti lies within the human body at the base of the spinal column in the Muladhar Chakra, coiled in three circles and a half in serpentine fashion. No sooner is it awakened than there is a new efflorescence or effluence of vitality all through the body and the process of inner purification sets in. At the outset, there is an overwhelming feeling of sleepiness, tremor, perspiration and something resembling electric shocks. A state of mental poise comes over the disciple and he also sees visions of saints, deities and heavens. Different kinds of lights are seen, many kinds of sounds heard in the state of deep meditation. In the Sushumna nerve from the Muladhar at the base of the spinal column to the Sahasrara in the crown of the head are situated the six chakras or nerve centres, which begin to be cleansed as the Kundalini is awakened. Everything then appears in a new light and the breathing in and out is balanced in a perfect equilibrium. With this comes untying of all inner knots and the end of all illusions. All doubts and conflicts are set at rest and the spirit is in tune with eternity. With the end of all desires comes the supreme sense of release from all bondages. All this awakening comes only through Guru's grace. Guru's gifts are endless and imperishable. Of such divine power was our Gurudeva Nityanandaji. A thousand salutations to him — our immortal Gurudeva!

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#### PRESENCE

People searching for "the Self" are usually looking for "an entity that isn't an entity"—instead of quite simply looking for what is looking. What is looking is what "they" are looking for all the time.

Neither could ever be "found", but the latter at least is present.

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# The Miracles of . . .

## . . . . TIRUPATI VENKATARAMANA

(Sri Venkateswara, Lord of the Seven Hills)

By N. N. RAJAN

This Kali-yuga or spiritually dark age is noted for disregard of dharma and for every kind of sin and delinquency. The necessity for divine intervention to rescue men from the abyss is more than ever felt at this time. This holy land of Bharata abounds in places of pilgrimage sanctified by God in one or another form, and there is no more effective way of winning the Grace of God than by visiting them and worshipping the Lord. A pilgrimage to a holy place symbolises the union of the soul with God, which is the ultimate aim of man.

Tirupati is one of the most famous of all such holy places. What Jerusalem is to the Christians, Tirupati is to the Hindus. There is a mass of significant legend woven around it. The Lord Venkateswara (known also as Balaji to north Indians) in his infinite mercy took up his abode there for the salvation of men. Stationed on this hill-shrine he summons men to seek refuge at his feet. Many saints and devotees have been drawn here in the past, and on reaching the shrine have danced in ecstasy and poured forth their praises in extempore hymns.

Legend has it that the Lord Vishnu, taking the form of a white boar during the cosmic dissolution, dived into the waters and rescued the submerged earth from the wicked demon Hiranyaksha, whom he slew. Having reinstated the earth, he decided to abide at this place on it to establish dharma. The sacred water in which he appeared, near to the temple on the hill, is called Swami Pushkarani. Pilgrims bathe there before entering the temple, thereby washing away their sins and gaining merit. The image of Vishnu as

a White Boar is still to be seen in the Audi Varahasami temple near the tank.

Lord Venkateswara is appropriately known as "Kaliyuga Varadan", the Giver of Boons in Kali Yuga. Before this yuga started he declared to his Consort Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, "In the Dark Age people will not hesitate to commit all manner of sins. As a result they will fall victim to all kinds of sickness and will suffer greatly. This will turn them to God and make them long for Him. So I will appear to them in dreams and summon them to these hills with votive offerings of money and jewellery and other precious things. If they fail to make the pilgrimage here and to surrender the offerings I shall collect these from them with interest and distribute the wealth among virtuous devotees and among the needy. Even a trivial offering at this place will be immensely productive in wealth and good fortune. All boons will be granted to those who worship us at this place with true devotion." And indeed, pious Hindus have found from long experience that prayers made to Sri Venkateswara at this place are answered. They have found also that retribution overtakes those who do not honour their vows, and therefore the Lord is known as Vatti-Kadavul, the collector of interest.

Such is the concourse of devotees that offerings pour in to the measure of ten or fifteen lakhs of rupees a month — more than in any other shrine in India. The Devasthanam or administration is the richest of its kind in India and maintains a university, oriental college, high schools, hospitals, poor homes and other institutions.



We have to cross six hills before coming to the seventh, on which the temple stands. These hills have the form of a serpent and are identified by legend with the Divine Serpent Audishesha. The more orthodox pilgrims make the journey on foot, ending with the seven mile path up to the crest of the hill, which is 2,800 feet high. It is a truly moving sight to see the never-ending multitude of pilgrims moving slowly along this path, chanting and calling on the Name of God as they go. Although it is a Vaishnavite shrine Saivites are no less in evidence there.

No pilgrimage to Sri Venkateswara is wasted. Even the accumulated sins of many years are wiped out by a visit here. People suffering from longstanding chronic diseases or who have been given up as incurable by the doctors are miraculously cured here when they take the vows and have darshan of the Lord. Only they must have unswerving faith and true sincerity. On the other hand people who make their offerings grudgingly are often penalised by unexpected loss of money and valuables or by some new misfortune. Especially does this happen with people who donate a smaller amount than they had vowed. Cases are not lack-

ing where amounts that they have vowed and kept back have simply disappeared. Devotion and sincerity are essential.

Many people don the saffron robe of a sannyasin for making this pilgrimage. Many also, men, women and children, make the symbolical vow of shaving their heads, renouncing the hair which symbolises their worldly attributes. Indeed, if one sees a party of villagers with shaven heads travelling in South India one can be pretty sure that they are returning from this pilgrimage.

Once I heard a long-standing devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi who had just returned from Tirupati to Sri Ramanashram speaking in glowing terms of his darshan of Lord Venkataramana and the Prasadam he had received, and Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said: "How could it be otherwise when the Lord Himself has chosen to remain in that lofty abode?" What more is needed to confirm the greatness of this holy place when Bhagavan, the Sage without a peer, has himself endorsed it?

<sup>1</sup> Lord Venkataramana is the family deity of Bhagavan's ancestors. In fact, Bhagavan was named after the Lord. (Editor)

## . . . SPIRITUAL HEALING

By IRMGARD GEORGE SCHULTZ

Even today people ask whether they can believe the miracles of healing recorded in the Bible. Why shouldn't they, when similar ones are performed now also. For centuries Christ's legacy of spiritual healing was lost. One of the pioneers of its recovery in the 19th Century was Franz Mesmer, although it was probably rather magnetic than spiritual healing that he was using. Then a simple man of the name of Quimby made history by healing that very remarkable American woman Mary Baker Eddy. She it was who developed a system of spiritual healing with a philosophical basis and so became the founder of Christian Science. She taught that, since man was made in the likeness of God, sickness must be an error or illu-

sion. Also, quite uncompromisingly, she declared that: "Matter is unreal and temporary; Spirit is real and eternal." Illness was to be cured (or the illusion of illness dissipated) by refusing to admit its reality. Christian Science was much ridiculed but it spread widely for the simple reason that its cures were so often successful.

In our times it is already far more easy to hold that the material world is an illusion; in fact it might even be called scientific orthodoxy. What appears to be matter has been discovered to be mere energy. As Brown Landone writes in 'Unknown Powers': we look at railway lines and they seem to converge in the distance — an illusion of our senses. The sky seems to touch the

horizon — another illusion. Colours too: they have no reality. Light is only vibration transformed into colour by the retina of our eye. Red is the lowest vibration to be perceived by the human eye and violet the fastest. We can only see in the range of 400 to 700 trillion vibrations per second, that is from red to violet, but there are others lower than red and faster than violet that we can't see, the infra-red and ultra-violet. It is similar with our hearing. The highest tone that we can hear vibrates only 26,000 times a second, but bats can hear vibrations of up to 50,000 and ants up to 500,000.

So our limited senses lead us from illusion to illusion. Christian Science teaches that if we can regard our bodily infirmities also as an illusion they disappear. It is not easy but with the help of a guide it can be done; and it has often been found to work.

Spiritual healing has spread enormously today and there are few of its practitioners, who go to the full theoretical limits of Christian Science. Perhaps most of them leave aside the theoretical question of reality and concentrate simply on the healing power of thought or prayer. They simply demonstrate that, whatever one may think of the reality or otherwise of the physical body, psychic or spiritual force, whichever they may use, can in fact heal its ailments.

But the highest art of healing is the transformation of the mind of the patient so that he can heal himself by surrendering to the one healing power, which is what we call God. The two most uncompromising modern healers, both in theory and practice, in their insistence on the One Reality of God are the late Joel Goldsmith and Dr. Taniguchi of Japan. Both of them have healed thousands of patients and have published their teachings and experiences in books. Dr. Taniguchi says in one of these: "We have to recognize the reality behind the world of illusion. When we meditate on Truth, the consequences of our inner progress appear in our outer life, as the outer world is but the shadow of our inner world. All outer appearance is but the reflected image of the

inner being. Only God and His manifestation is reality. Man is the child of God — not a perishable material being but a perfect spiritual one."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore our physical condition can be influenced and transformed by the Spirit. That means that spiritual healing is a natural process. The method is meditation. Man can master his life by awakening to absolute Reality, overcoming the illusion of his senses and gaining thereby harmony, health and abundance. On this basis Dr. Taniguchi founded the movement Seicho-No-Le, meaning 'Home of Infinite Life, Love, Wisdom and Abundance'. This movement differs from those that look upon evil as a reality to be fought, rising instead to the level of pure Spirit, the One Power, above the polarity of good and evil.

This same insistence that evil has no reality is to be found in the teaching of Joel Goldsmith and the 'Infinite Way' groups that he founded. He insisted always on the One Power, the One Reality, above the apparent conflict of the two powers of good and evil. By rising to the level of the One Power, he asserted, we find both evil and the need to fight it to be an illusion, and sickness disappears like a mirage.

"Never try to cut away rheumatism, cancer or consumption like branches of a tree, nor old age. Do not try to transform the world of appearances. Go back! Recognize that in reality God is your being and that suffering is caused by your belief in two powers. If you fight against one error and overcome it, ten others arise and take its place. The cause of human discord has to be extinguished. And, what is the cause? This formation of a nothingness, this so-called mortal mind that has no power but for those that constantly fight against evil."<sup>2</sup>

How can one overcome evil or sickness without recognizing or fighting it? Goldsmith explains: "The arm against error — our attack and our defence — is something neither physical nor psychical, neither deeds nor words nor thoughts — it is but the

<sup>1</sup> *Truth of Life* by Dr. Taniguchi.

awareness of God." Divine harmony will unfold itself in the degree of our ability to be a silent spectator without any desire or activity, with no wish but the Presence of God, the One Power. "Our meditation has only to do with the realization of a spiritual presence." He explains that "Only the recognition of God's Grace is necessary to restore harmony, only the knowledge of the One Power."<sup>2</sup>

As I have said above, not all healers take this uncompromising attitude. There are those who recognize the existence of sickness and use the power of prayer or the power of Christ's Name to remove it. Perhaps indeed they are the majority. A description of this kind of healing was given by G. H. Gedge, himself an eminent spiritual healer, in his article in the January 1964 issue of *The Mountain Path*.

But we hear of failures too. Why? Whose fault is it? An example will make this clear. Can we enter a room fastened from within? The person inside has to open it for us. In the same way the patient has to open his consciousness to the healing

power. One who is always thinking of his illness, wallowing in it, opposing the Truth, even though unconsciously, keeps his mind closed. It is the task of the healer to help him open his consciousness to the liberating force of God's realized presence. Healing in this sense, the sense that Goldsmith means, is more than a mere restoration of physical health. Sometimes it is more important to bring the patient to a spiritual awakening than to heal him physically. Whichever comes first, in a perfect healing the two go together. The attitude of the perfect healer is thus defined by Goldsmith: "I can do nothing of myself, but as the Father and I are one the abundance of the Father is revealed through me. Where I am the splendour of the Father goes before me. We are God's instruments, we are His servants. We stay in the world as servants of the Most High; we stay in it as a blessing."

Few can maintain their consciousness permanently on this level, but many can pray and their prayers can have effect.

<sup>2</sup> *The Art of Spiritual Healing* by Joel Goldsmith.

## . . . LOURDES

By I. JESUDASAN, S.J.

LOURDES! What a picture it evokes in the mind! There it stands, 1,300 feet above sea level, among the foothills of the lofty Pyrenean chain, only 26 miles from the Spanish border, in the south-west corner of France — a pleasant Arcadian scene of lush green fields and meadows made melodious with the music of the chirping birds, the swaying willows, the silver streams and the ring of the cowbells. In the dazzling sky of a radiant dawn, a slender spire rises sharply against the rounded hills. Underneath is a grotto — Massabielle — with its natural niche. A vast Esplanade separates 'the Domaine', the Fief of The Lady, from the commercial town.

With a local population of only 20,000, Lourdes is one of the world's most beautiful and famous towns and perhaps its best

known healing centre. Over 2,000,000 visitors and 30,000 sick of all faiths pour into it annually from every quarter of the globe. In 1953 there were 515 special trains to Lourdes, not to speak of chartered planes, buses and private cars. During the summer months, four or five special trains arrive on certain days. And, despite its tourist importance, Lourdes still retains the same century-old rustic, pastoral look which it had when Bernadette went about grazing her sheep.

Its attraction however is due not to the beauty of its landscape, but to this peasant girl, to whom, as the report went, the Blessed Virgin appeared 18 times at Massabielle. Once the news was noised abroad, there was a crowd at the grotto. But the Virgin spoke only to Bernadette. "You will pray to God for sinners . . . Penance! Pen-

ance! Penance! . . . Go drink at the spring and wash yourself in it. . . . You will tell the priests to have a chapel built here. . . . I wish people to come here in procession". But who was she to ask for such things? The answer came on March 25, 1858, "I am the Immaculate Conception".

From the start, ecclesiastical and civil authorities were as sceptical as the populace was enthusiastic. But the trickle of muddy water from which Bernadette had drunk and washed, continued to flow into a stream and then into a mighty torrent.<sup>1</sup> People prayed and burned candles at the grotto. And then there were the miracles! A blind man who washed at the stream regained sight. A mother dipped her dying child in the stream, and he revived. Naturally, popular enthusiasm mounted. But the local police barricaded the stream and the grotto under pretext of hygiene and illegal worship. Then came the cure of Emperor Napoleon's son by application of the Lourdes water; and, by command of the same Emperor, the grotto was declared open to the public (5th October 1858).

An ecclesiastical commission duly set up by the bishop of Tarbes vindicated the cause of Bernadette after four years of investigation, and the bishop issued a decree authenticating the apparitions and the miracles. A chapel was at last built in 1871.

The Church had capitulated; but the "intellectuals" did not. Controversy raged in the press for three quarters of a century. In 1905, Alexis Carrel, the future Nobel Prize winner (1912) was dismissed from the university of Lyons for saying that a case of T.B. in which he had been interested, was miraculously cured at Lourdes. Auto-suggestion, sheer popularisation, pious propaganda, such were the cries bandied at Lourdes. It was a fashion to speak of it in this vein. Carrel himself was only one of the outstanding examples of men who from a systematic scepticism of everything suprasensible, came to a re-discovery of supernatural certainty at Lourdes.<sup>2</sup>

Some people attributed the cures at Lourdes to some special medical properties in the

Lourdes water. And, quite early in its history, profiteers sought to make capital out of this spring. But the chemical and bacteriological analyses of the water demonstrated that its ingredients were no way different from those of any other mountain spring, and thus foiled their greedy purpose.<sup>3</sup> Besides, not all the cures take place at the baths. A larger proportion of them occur either at the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament or before the grotto.

The cures include both functional and organic diseases such as advanced cases of cancer, diabetes, T.B., paralysis etc. Madame Biré seeing with dead optic nerves, Colonel Pellegrin cured of abscess of the liver and Madame Pillot cured of a tumor of the brain are only a few out of a host of astounding cures effected at Lourdes.

Thousands go to Lourdes every year in the hope of a cure. But most return uncured. And they no longer want to be cured. They are cured of the desire to be cured. No complaints, no resentment. Instead, they accept suffering willingly and cheerfully as a gift from God, as penance for their own and others' sins. In 1935 for instance, the famous iron-lunged American millionaire, Fred Snite's going to Lourdes created quite a sensation. Newsmen and photographers followed him every step of the journey. What a moment for a cure! But that is not the way of Lourdes. He was not cured. His only reaction was, "God's will be done . . . here life is a prayer. . . . We are in a place apart from the world — a place halfway to heaven."<sup>4</sup> Few indeed they are who leave Lourdes unaffected. The most important thing that happens at Lourdes is the cure of souls. A number of priests are kept busy at the confessional all day and night. Can

<sup>1</sup>For the capacity of the stream, see page 127 of Mgr. Deery's *Our Lady of Lourdes*. (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, U.S.A. 1958.)

<sup>2</sup>See *Journey to Lourdes* by Alexis Carrel, (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1965.)

<sup>3</sup>For the findings of these analyses see p. 37-8 of Ruth Cranston's *The Miracle of Lourdes*, (McGraw-Hill Book Coy., Inc., N.Y., 1955.)

<sup>4</sup>*The Miracles of Lourdes*, p. 144.



you guess how many there are among those who confess who for years never approached a church or the sacraments? Now at last, at Lourdes they make their reconciliation to God.

If the uncured go mentally transformed, the cures themselves are not effected before this spiritual metamorphosis. Everyone begins by praying for himself. Then he opens his eyes to the sufferings of others. Now his prayer is for his neighbour rather than for himself. If ever he thinks of himself, it is no longer to be rid of pain, but to be strengthened to endure it. Then comes a third and final stage where he forgets both himself and his neighbour, to think only of the Virgin and her wish — sinners, penance. It is generally at this stage that many cures are reported.

A special atmosphere pervades these cures of Lourdes — one of prayer and service. Prayer from early in the morning till late into the night. All day long there are people before the grotto with extended arms. Hour after hour snatches of "Ave" are ringing from the three churches.<sup>5</sup> Even a casual visitor cannot help getting into this rhythm of prayer. Then there are the processions — of the Blessed Sacrament in the afternoon and the candle-light procession at night — the latter perhaps the most impressive and never-to-be-forgotten of all Lourdes spectacles, in which on certain summer nights there are as many as 60,000 people winding like a huge fiery serpent into the enveloping darkness and chanting in diverse tongues "Ave, Ave, Ave Maria": To crown it all, the sacrifice of Calvary is renewed at the grotto in unending succession, all the twenty-four hours of the day.

Then there is the efficient volunteer system to help and serve the pilgrims and the sick, free of all cost. To be allowed to serve is all the favour and privilege they ask. Some of them are themselves people who have been cured at Lourdes. The backbone of this system is the organisation of hospitallers popularly known as brancardiers or stretcher-bearers. Comparable to the old Knights Hospitallers of St. John at Jerusalem, they

join service promising to give a certain amount of time and work to the sick every year. Piety, charity and discipline are their rule, and they are ever ready to forego a meal or sleep at an emergency call. There are over 2000 of them in permanent membership. These are ably assisted by the volunteer stretcher-bearers attached to each group of pilgrims. For 1954, their numbers reached 10,393.<sup>6</sup> Many of them toil year-in, year-out in order to save enough to spend a few weeks at Lourdes serving the sick. There is among them a moving little story of two rich Indian bankers who, in the guise of poor men, served as brancardiers for two weeks.<sup>7</sup>

For a study and examination of the alleged cures, there spontaneously sprang up a free medical association which, as the Lourdes Medical Bureau and Commission, now enjoys international reputation with a membership of above 5,000 doctors of all shades of belief — Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists, agnostics etc. Every alleged cure must be accompanied by the certificate of a competent doctor stating the case as it stood just before the patient reached Lourdes. If the Bureau is satisfied with the genuineness of a cure, it sends all the documents, X-rays etc. connected with it, to the International Medical Commission.<sup>8</sup> The latter, after further study by experts, either declares or does not declare its conviction, "We find no natural or scientific explanation of the cure". It is for the Church and the theologians to decide whether it can be proclaimed a miracle. The Medical Bureau and Commission rigorously follow up their cases for years, and the Church is even more severe. Out of more than 1,000 cures found inexplicable by science in these hundred years and more, it has only acknowledged about sixty as genuine miracles.

The Christian understands miracle as the suspension of the effect of a law of nature

<sup>5</sup> The Church of the Rosary, St. Pius X, St. Bernadette.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Miracles of Lourdes*, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51-2.

<sup>8</sup> For the quality and calibre of the men who make up this Commission *ibid.*, p. 62-3.

by God as its Author. The law is not abolished nor is the nature of things altered; but only the effect is not produced on the object, as when the three children were no wise hurt by the blazing furnace.<sup>9</sup> God may work miracles through His saints in order to honour them before men. It is the same for Mary. The miracles of Lourdes are attributed to her prayer. But over and above this honorific motive, the miracles and apparitions of Mary bear an essentially soteriological character. Her own words are proof enough.<sup>10</sup> They are part of the salvation history of our race, and are strikingly reminiscent of Christ's own mission when He went about doing good, healing the sick, forgiving sins.<sup>11</sup> As were the miracles of Jesus, so are the miracles of Lourdes, symbols of the redemptive grace poured out on souls through Mary's prayers. Lourdes then is a continuation of the saving action of Christ.<sup>12</sup> Mary's part in it is to lead men to Christ and the Triune God.

The very location of Lourdes between two peaks atop which stand a cross and an observatory — the symbols of Science and Religion, staring at each other — is a big inter-

rogation: Can they co-exist? To this question, Lourdes itself is the answer: They can, do, and have to co-exist. The observable is not everything; and even on observable phenomena, science is only the first word. The last has to come from religion. Religion, therefore, far being antagonistic to science, is its necessary crown and complement which sees the final unity of all reality in God. As many a sceptic has owned, "If there are miracles, there must be God". For as Carl Jung said, "Whatever acts, must be". And here is something, a superhuman power that acts. Therefore it must be. There are miracles at Lourdes. Therefore there is God. God then is the message of Lourdes — a merciful God, a Saviour-God. As a French bishop put it — and well may we conclude with this — "For those who believe in God, Lourdes needs no explanation. For those who do not believe in God, Lourdes has no explanation."

<sup>9</sup> Daniel, 3: 49-50.

<sup>10</sup> Recall: Sinners, Penance.

<sup>11</sup> Louis Locket's *Apparitions of Our Lady* (Herder, Freiburg, West Germany, 1960).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65-7.

## SAI BABA AND HIS FOLLOWERS

By SAIDAS

To his followers, Sai Baba is God. Of course, God can take other forms as well. He wouldn't be God if He couldn't. He can appear as Rama or Christ or Ramana; but for Sai bhaktas Sai Baba is all-sufficient.

He was a peculiar Master. He did not give his followers a mantra to repeat. He did not give initiation in the ordinary way. "My Guru never taught me any mantras, so how shall I blow any into your ear?" He demanded only whole-hearted concentration on the Guru so that the love of the Guru can unite with your love and raise you up. "Trust in the Guru fully; that is the only sadhana." "Look at me whole-heartedly and I in turn will look at you whole-heartedly. . . . Neither practice nor scripture is necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru." "An aspirant should be immersed

in love for the Guru like a fish in the water which it cannot leave without dying."

He was not an intellectual. He did not write books. He did not even encourage his followers to read books. "People think they will find Brahma (God) in books, but instead they find bhrama (confusion)." He did not teach by lectures but by miracles. All kinds of miracles happened. A rigidly orthodox Brahmin, standing outside the Shirdi mosque and looking in, told his companions that he would never bow down to a guru who lived in a mosque. Suddenly he saw Sai Baba in the form of his own guru and bowed down. Sai Baba did not explain that the Guru is one in whatever form or religion he may appear; he showed it. A woman was preparing a meal for him in her own house and drove away a hungry dog that tried to steal

some of it. When she took it to him later he said: "No, you drove me away when I wanted it, so now I won't eat it." He didn't have to say: "Inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of these you do it also to me;" he showed it.

His miracles did not end with his physical body. That died as far back as 1918, but he continued just the same to appear to devotees, save them from accidents, cure them when ill, comfort them in distress, bring relief in misfortune. Not only to devotees but to many others also who had never before heard of him. As a result of this, his following now is for larger than at his death and is growing constantly.

The tradition of a great Master continues among his followers. Look at Ramana Maharshi: he was an intellectual and see what intellectual articles are written in *The Mountain Path*. Sai Baba's followers are mostly not intellectuals, just as he was not, and very few of them write books and articles; but it is surprising how many of them work miracles. It is a tradition descended from their Master; it just comes to them. It is invidious to mention some without others and I do it with apologies both to those I mention and those I do not. It is hard to live in India, for instance, without hearing of the astounding miracles performed by Sri Satya Sai Baba, who is held by his followers to be an incarnation of Sai Baba. Then there is the quiet, unassuming Basheer Baba who is of a Muslim family and, like Sai Baba himself, bridges the religions. In a less spectacular way he also uses powers. There is Sri Swami Keshaviah whose house in a far-out suburb of Madras is thronged on Thursday evenings by people who come to hear from him whether their plans will mature or their hopes be fulfilled.

There is a simple lady devotee whose gold medallion of Sai Baba rises up in the air in front of her when she intercedes with Sai Baba for supplicants. The common feature in these and other cases is that they are not powers that have been acquired by tapas, as is common with Hindu swamis and sadhus, but that have just come naturally by the Grace of Sai Baba. Something of his tradition of pouring out love and guidance on his followers through miracles has descended on his lieutenants also. And there is the same lack of formality. You do not have to be ordained his lieutenant; the selection is made informally by the outpouring of his Grace on those he chooses.

Some Sai bhaktas hold that efforts should be made to make Sai Baba widely known and revered throughout the world, as he is in India. My own opinion is that that is up to Sai Baba. Even if we write books and articles about him, will it make him widely known? Arthur Osborne's excellent book 'The Incredible Sai Baba' has been published by Rider & Co. in London,<sup>1</sup> but still we hear of no great Sai following in England. Perhaps the people in Western countries have enough roads to God and do not need this one. They have Christianity and Zen. If they do it is up to Sai Baba. He could easily raise up a follower (or followers) in Western countries to perform miracles that would shake the newspapers by the ears and make the scientists scratch their heads. There would be plenty of followers then and of demands for articles. Meanwhile, in India the Sai following is not only strong but growing. It advertises little but what keeps it vigorous is the love and power of Sai Baba flowing through it.

<sup>1</sup> And by Messrs Orient Longmans, Calcutta, India. (Editor)

## OUTSIDE YOURSELF

By CLARE CAMERON

Have you ever known what it feels like to be literally outside yourself? You are, perhaps, reading in bed, and your glance falls on your clothes lying on the chair, and with a shock you realise they don't belong to you but only to something that houses you. Your head turns to survey the books on the bedside table — how dead they seem. Surely they have nothing to teach you? A train goes by in the distance, but you hear it from another dimension.

Outside the moonlight is beautiful and still over the trees in the garden, but how opaque it seems, as if you are looking through hard, thick lenses that fix it in time.

To recover your identity, you recall the humdrum events of the day. How very slowly everything has happened even though at the time you seemed too busy to think. Slow-slow-slow. Yes, everything is slowed down in what is erroneously called life, even as everything is seen as through a glass darkly.

But here, and now, outside yourself, the speed of light! The dazzling clarity of light! The infinity of it! And the unity of it all where all imagined barriers are gone! The sense of weightlessness now, so that one can, and does, walk on air. Walk? No, run, fly, with the speed of light. For you are the Light.

Freedom? Encased in our flesh, weighed down by our illusions, with a heavy darkness between ourselves and our fellow-creatures throughout creation, we have never known it. Wisdom? We have glimpsed it

as men look up through bars above their heads to the sunlight. Love? O, what keeps us back from loving, when, seen in this Light, all men and women, all living things are endearing and lovable and crying out for the recognition and response of Love!

Is it in a room I write? Who writes? I am not here. A hand guides the pen but who or what dictates the words which are so distressingly limited and inflexible, letting through only gleams, invoking but faint echoes. Words are so separate from one another, so slow, mere expediences. In their millions they are like grass-blades, but if you saw them truly you would know they are plucked from the meadows of Heaven. They are like rain-drops, but if you were indeed the drop you would know it was part of the Waters of Life. . .

O press me not back into my body, I who am the universe. Dull not the vision that overflowed the confines of the mind. Break my heart of stone if only I may love.

Is this what it feels like "to die"? To die? This is to be born! I died when I emerged from my mother's womb. How strange it is, to be born when one is still in and with the body, but how easily parted from it! Is the flesh then but gossamer when the Spirit illumines it?

Now I know that death, as we have never known it, is Life, and life as we know it is death.

Ah, THOU! In Whom we move and have our being and know it not. . .

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Public speeches, outer activity and material help are all outweighed by the silence of the Mahatmas. They accomplish more than others.

—BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

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## SRI-LA-SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL\*

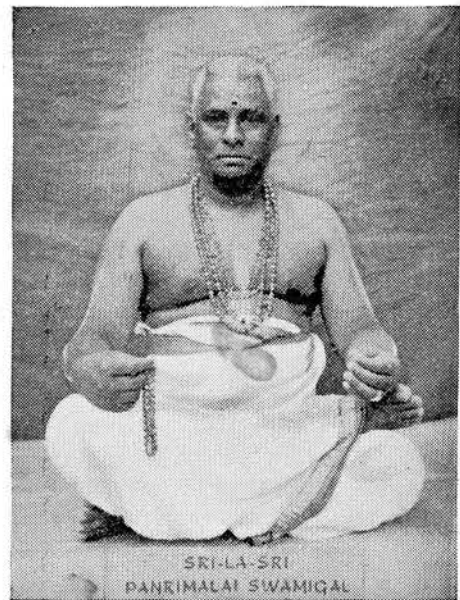
### A SIDDHA PURUSHA OF THE SOUTH

By A. V. RAMACHANDRAN

Panrimalai is the name of a village situated on a hill in the Kodaikanal Range in South India between Madurai and Tiruchirapalli. The literal meaning of the word is 'Pig Hill'. The name is explained in mythology by the story that one Rangavidyadhara, born as a pig in the hills on account of a curse, was killed by the arrow of the Pandian King who came there to hunt. Its mate was also killed by the Raja, whereupon Lord Siva himself took the form of a female pig to suckle the twelve orphaned young ones. The Hill has been the abode of many Rishis and Siddhas who had realized God and attained Liberation. It is said that even now there are Sages in meditation in these hills who are invisible to human eyes but who give darshan to Saints.

It is in this Holy Place of Panrimalai that Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal<sup>1</sup> was born. His father Arumugam Pillai was a great devotee of Lord Shanmuga. The child, who was named Ramaswami by his parents, showed signs of spiritual fervour even at the age of 5. When he was taken to Palani Hills, he could be persuaded to return home only after he was assured of being taken to the sanctum sanctorum as often as he wished.

The boy was left under the care of his grand-parents at Balasamudram for want of facilities for education at Panrimalai. At school he showed great promise. 'Salli Samiyar',<sup>1</sup> an ascetic of a high order who was dwelling in the Aiyampulli Vinayakar Temple, recognised in him a Great Swami. The Lord Himself in the garb of a sadhu wrote something with a 'Vel' on the tongue of the boy in the Ganesha Temple near the village and then disappeared. This was the beginning of his spiritual evolution. Young



Ramaswami suddenly realised that he could perform miracles, without knowing how or why. He would put cobras round his neck and play with them. He could drive away evil spirits. Small pebbles distributed by him to his playmates, turned into sugar-candy in their mouths. While on one of his frequent visits to Palani Temple, he met his Guru 'Chatti Swamiyar',<sup>1</sup> the great Siddha Purusha, who initiated him.

By doing *Sadhana*, young Ramaswami discovered that he could cure many diseases in the name of Lord Muruga. His fame spread far and wide. 'Achandamalai Paradesi', another sage who happened to visit the

\* Articles about Swamis and Gurus are written for us by their disciples. We do not presume to pass judgment on the opinions of the author.

<sup>1</sup> A respectful form of 'Swami' in Tamil.

village, gave further impetus to his spiritual evolution by taking him with him to visit many holy places throughout India. The young Swami became a fully realised soul — a Siddha Purusha.

In deference to the wishes of his parents, Ramaswami married and settled down to domestic life. His spiritual Sadhana was however continued and he attained fulfilment. Soon he came to be known as "Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal".

The lines on Sri Swamigal's palms and feet outline the conch, chakra, shatkonam and banner of Lord Shanmuga, which are indicative of his celestial qualities and greatness. He is also endowed with a spiritual 'eye' between the eyebrows which is generally covered up by sandal paste and kumkum. He exudes fragrance and is a living Sat Purusha of the Highest Order. His childlike simplicity and charm, solicitude for the welfare of people irrespective of caste, creed, status and religion, his intense desire to relieve people of their sufferings and to lead them towards the path of God are well known to all who have come in contact with him.

Of his miracles there are many which could be recorded but for want of space I shall mention only a few. Names have been omitted for obvious reasons.

The Swamiji was securely tied to the iron bars of a window in one of the rooms of a house in New Delhi. Soon after the people present in the room had retired from that room, they were called by Swamiji from another room, 30 feet away from the place where he was first tied where they found him tied up to one of the stands of the wooden rack in exactly the same manner and position as he was left tied in the first room. Not a single knot was disturbed or displaced.

A married lady was suffering for quite some time from pain in the back which disabled her from bending or sitting without support. T.B. of the spine was suspected. An X-ray examination revealed that the 5th lumbar vertebra was eaten away. An immediate operation was advised by doctors and

all arrangements were made for admitting her to hospital. Just then, having learnt that Sri Swamigal was in Bombay and having heard of his miraculous powers, her parents took her to him. With great difficulty she prostrated before Swamiji and narrated her pitiable story with tears trickling down her cheeks. Swamiji gave her turmeric and asked her to rub it in water and apply it all over her body during a bath particularly where she felt pain. She was also given vibhuti (sacred ash). Within a week she was able to sit on the floor to dine with her relatives, much to the delight of her parents and her husband. Another X-ray taken thereafter revealed that the 5th lumbar vertebra showed greater consolidation and the osteolytic area was more definitely outlined. The overall findings indicated satisfactory progress radiologically. The lady was completely cured within twelve days and is now attending to her normal domestic chores. She is a regular visitor to the prayer meetings of Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal Gyana Sat Sabha at Bombay.

A young man, the son of a chief executive in a Textile Mill in Bombay, was suffering from acute intestinal trouble with temperament. He could not retain anything which was eaten and felt excruciating pain in the stomach. He was restless and sleepless. The doctors suggested immediate operation as the only hope, the success of which also they could not vouchsafe. The father, who is an ardent devotee of Swamiji with complete faith in him, dashed to Dindigal for Swamiji's blessings. The Swamiji accompanied him to Bombay and within a few days, by Swamiji's grace, the patient started moving about and taking food. He is now completely cured without any trace of the trouble. The patient himself took Swamiji back to Dindigal, driving the car all the way, without any let or hindrance.

A young boy aged 10 who had lost the sight of both eyes, a couple of years ago, recovered the sight of both the eyes by the grace of Swamiji.

Miracles like materialising kumkum, turmeric, vibhuti, flowers, fruits, sugarcandy,

etc. apparently from nowhere are but child's play to him.

After having a coconut broken into two pieces and the water emptied the two pieces were joined together and the coconut became a whole piece again with water inside it. A wonder of this nature has been repeated by him many times. Some of the cures effected by him, being of a personal and confidential nature, may not be published for a long time to come.

A few of Sri Swamigal's teachings are quoted below :—

"Immortality is the birthright of all. Every Soul is potentially divine. God dwells in the heart of each one of us. To earn God's grace, unalloyed devotion is necessary. With unalloyed devotion comes purity of the Soul and when the soul becomes pure, discretion, non-desire, company of the righteous, service to Saints, singing the Lord's praises and truthfulness follow, resulting in overflowing Bhakti or boundless devotion to God. This boundless devotion to God will in turn lead to siddhi (powers) which in turn will lead to Mukti or Liberation. Man in the Liberated State realises Atman which itself is Knowledge of God, Prakriti and Paramatman. Love will then radiate in all its effulgence. Such a one becomes a God-Man, shedding all human limitations and transcending good and evil. He becomes the instrument of God and sees Him in all and all in Him."

"He who would be wise should subject himself to **certain disciplines**. An undivided devotion to the Guru and uncompromising control of the senses are necessary. These two are the sure means to attain the ultimate objective of life. That is the lesson which our great saints have taught us."

"If you move one step towards God He advances ten steps towards you." "God is sweet sugar candy to those who have faith in Him but a lump of hard stone to those who do not have that faith."

"One can remain in the family and still achieve realisation. Like water drops on a lotus leaf one can remain detached in family life."

"Control the five senses in the body and behold Him within."

"The Holy Panchakshara 'Namassivaya' is in the body itself. Legs represent NA, Stomach MA, Shoulders SI, mouth VA and eyes YA. The esoteric truths of this sacred mantra are to be learnt from a realised guru in the privacy of devout discipleship with due humility and fervour."

"Milk and water mix freely but butter taken from milk does not mix with water. It floats. Similarly the soul which has attained realisation will not be affected by association with illnatured and imperfect beings."

"To realise that eternal, basic and permanent State which is beyond birth and death and therefore deathless and birthless, should be the high, exalted and ultimate goal of human life."

"The difference between animals and man is that animals possess only the five senses whereas man possesses also the sixth sense. With the special quality of discrimination bestowed on us, it is our duty to tread the righteous path shown to us by the great ones and reach the blessed feet of the Lord — there to experience everlasting bliss."

"God's grace belongs to one and all. To think that 'I alone am entitled to this grace' is ignorance. Even the feeling that one is a servant of God would be adequate enough to root out egoism."

"The seeker must have faith in God and abiding devotion to Him. Then the Satguru will himself come in quest of him and give him initiation suited to him."

"A disciple should stick to one guru only for God Realization. If he seeks guidance from different grurus, he cannot achieve anything. By digging shallow in different places one cannot strike water but if one digs deep in one place water will be found."

"When yogis mindfully bestow mercy, the doors of yogic stages are automatically flung open without one's own effort. This is a truth worth knowing. Even if the grace of God and the Guru are available, unless a man yearns for liberation or vision of God, he

cannot achieve any benefit. However much a man may strive, without God's grace he cannot gain anything in this life. Therefore man should strive and work hard in his lifetime to attain Godhead. One should seek and learn what one does not know from others who know."

"Even at present there are amongst us God-men who are capable of converting dreary deserts into lands of plenty. One should search, seek and find out such a realized Guru."

Sri Swamigal performs miracles only to prove that there is a higher spiritual force which guides the destinies of man, and to create faith in God in the minds of atheists. Rightly has Jesus Christ said "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." (St. John IV. 48) Fulfilment of this saying of Christ's has become a matter of daily routine with Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal.

This is his mission in the present context of a sceptical world, and posterity will be highly indebted to him for his contribution to the spiritual evolution of mankind.

For the convenience of earnest seekers an ashram has been built recently at Dindigal in Madras State, where Swamiji is now staying, easily accessible to all. The ashram which is in Balakrishnapuram, is about ten minutes' walk from Dindigal Railway Station. Dindigal is about 430 Kilometres from Madras and can be reached by the Trivandrum, Tirunelveli or Tuticorin Express. Dindigal can also be reached from Palghat, via Olvakkot, Pollachi and Palni. It is also very near Madurai which is famous for its Meenakshi temple.

May the earnest seekers of the Spirit get enlightenment, guidance, solace and succour from Sri Swamigal who is a living Saint and a great Siddha Purusha.

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## DESOLATION

By A. RAO

You bade me lay down my life for your sake, Lord Christ.  
 I have laid it here at your feet.  
 Is it nothing but a soiled rag  
 That you do not deign to accept it,  
 That you do not stoop down and raise it?  
 What now am I to do, despised and rejected of you, Lord Christ?

He who lays down his life for your sake  
 Shall find it, you said.  
 I have not bargained,  
 I have not come as a merchant, Lord Christ,  
 I have not asked to find.  
 Only I have laid down my life.  
 What now am I to do, despised and rejected of you, Lord Christ?

You bade me come as your bride, Lord Christ.  
 I tore my love from others,  
 I came alone through the night,  
 With much toil I am here,  
 And you have let me stand  
 Loveless and unloved before you.  
 What now am I to do, despised and rejected of you, Lord Christ?

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## HAMSA VIDYA

By K. HARIHARA IYER

Hamsa Vidya is Chit Swarupa, that is Pure Consciousness. It is what brought the world into existence. It abides in the heart-cavity. It is self-illuminating, without being illumined from outside. It shines everywhere but is concealed by its own brilliance like a bird in a cage or in its nest.

The Lord of Creation performed tapas (austerity) by which he acquired power and created the world. Tapas brings control of the Prana, which is Hamsa. Physically Prana is the life-breath. One Upanishad says that when Lord Vishnu wanted to create man he meditated upon Pranava (Omkaara), which is a form of Hamsa Vidya or the science of breath.

Every living being from the smallest insect to the Lord of Creation has breath leaving and entering its body incessantly. Breathing is necessary for living beings. All practise it, although without conscious effort or awareness of it. Conscious manipulation of the force which activates our breathing is Hamsa Vidya.

This Vidya has its origin in the Vedas and has been developed into a science by saints and sages. Very great benefit accrues from it. It frees us from illness, senility and fear of death. Most important of all: it brings Liberation.

Our ancient literature refers to a bird called 'hamsa', literally 'swan' as having been in existence long ago. Its special faculty is said to be the ability to purify milk by separating it from water. And it is the traditional vehicle of Brahma. It symbolises a power in our mind, the Brahma Shakti. The mythological Hamsa is represented as abiding in a tank full of lotuses and blissfully sipping their nectar. Similarly in the pure mind the reverberation of the two syllables of the hamsa incantation produce Self-Knowledge.

This knowledge gives perennial happiness which is distributed through the 72,000 nadis or subtle nerve-channels traversing the

human body. The wise revel in it. It is inexhaustible and perennial. A work by Shankara called 'Soundarya Lahiri' speaks of one who adores the two hamsas or twin swans, for Hamsa Vidya leads to the Brahma Tattva region of Self-Knowledge which is the essence of the Vedas and Upanishads. There is a saying that the Hamsa incantation leads to heaven, but it should be added that this is so only when the form of the incantation and permission to use it have been duly transmitted by a Guru.

In the symbolism of the Hamsa one wing represents the Vedas and the other the Agamas. The sun and moon form its head. Its throat and mouth produce Nada, by which is meant pure sound on the subtle plane before it manifests itself in articulate syllables. The two feet of the bird are Siva and Shakti. It is said that its tail is the Unconditioned Brahman, but the real meaning is that Brahman Itself is of the form of the entire bird. Brahman here means that which shines like myriads of suns, removing ignorance and bestowing Divine Knowledge. It refers to a kind of Bhavana Yoga and Dhyana Yoga. He who practises this becomes Brahman Itself. By knowing this we know all. By probing into this mystic lore we acquire Enlightenment.

Just as a musical instrument contains various reeds producing different sounds, so the human body is constantly producing currents and cross-currents by means of the senses which report the activities of the external world but always with twists and distortions, never in their true perspective. The world is really an expansion of the Brahma Chaitanya or Divine Knowledge into forms and names. In fact there is always nada or sound in our body. There is no one without this anahata nada or dhvani. Bhagavan Ramana explained this beautifully when he said that to concentrate on the source from which the sound 'I' emanates

is true tapas. This is a very penetrating explanation.

The human body can produce harmony, like a musical instrument, through the single channel of the Sushumna which is the source and controller of the 72,000 nadis, without wasting energy in cross-currents. But to do

this one has to be initiated into the Hamsa mantra by a qualified Guru. This science was known and enjoyed by the Sages and Yogis of old and has been handed down to us by them. It safeguards against illness, senility and fear of death and brings Divine Bliss, as Adi Shankara has testified.

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## PRAYER AND POWER

By CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

Around Man and unknown to himself lies the great inflowing, interpenetrating ocean of life. Above him it shines in the glory of the stars, around him it gleams in the light of the seas and forests, within him it radiates in the secret fastness of the human heart. Ever-living, ever breathing, eternal, it is a tremendous ocean of Light. This is the Divine Love of the Cosmos, this is the creator of all universes. This is the substance from which all that was made was made, this is the sacred Word. Nearer than touch, closer than his own hand, forever and always, indestructibly there.

Yet in the midst of it all stands Man blinded by the darkness his own ego has projected into this great Light of eternal Life. — Unknowing of the infinite glory of which he has always been and shall always remain a LIVING part.

How many Saints and Seers and Mystics and illumined Souls and world teachers have come to try to bring to Man this revelation. How many sacred books have been written, how many dedicated lives have been lived. But so great has been man's immersion in his separate ego and his body that this revelation could not be passed on. It still remains today the greatest mystery of all.

A Divine discontent seizes some men at a certain period of their lives and they, like the Buddha, go off seeking the answer to eternal questions. They may spend their lives reading the spiritual teachings of all time and all peoples, they may enter a monastic order or seek an ashram or remain in their own

households but the secret they search for is ever the same.

At some point, like the smallest child, they must look up and look beyond themselves. They must **surrender their ego**, their body, their possessions, their ambitions, their desires, their actions and return to the infinite as they came — as a child sustained and nourished and created by Love alone. This recognition of God and surrender to God brings with it humility, reverence, faith, prayer, selflessness, harmlessness, all encompassing love, and is the mother of all virtues. Dazed Man falls on his knees blinded by the infinite vision of a love beyond all magnitude of which he is a conscious breathing part. Not my will but Thine becomes his constant prayer. His temporal Self dies and the eternal Self is revealed. At this moment the words of the Christ sound forth "My peace I bring you, not as the world gives, I give to you." — the peace of God which passeth all understanding. When Man receives this peace he knows that he has Love.

What once began as the path of prayer ends with the receiving of a revelation in which the ultimate power of all is born, the power to share with all participation in the Divine. Even if the illumined Man said not a word, his being pregnant with God's ocean of Life would move beyond time and space to infuse the hearts of Men. Something of his Divinity would pass into them quickening their own hearts to return to the infinite, not by leaving the world but by transmuting every word and act with cosmic consciousness.

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## FIRE-WALKING IN SOUTH INDIA

By PURISAI MURUGESA MUDALIAR

Fire-walking is still a regular event in Tiruvannamalai and other South Indian towns. Usually a trench is filled with burning charcoal and over this the practicans walk, coming to the end unscathed.

The ceremony is usually held under the auspices of a temple. Some of these hold it once a year, while others maintain a regular ritualistic chanting of the *Mahabharata* and celebrate with fire-walking each time the entire work is brought to an end. Those who participate are usually ordinary householders, not sadhus or sannyasins. They are largely composed of non-Brahmins. In some cases they are given a particular mantra to recite for protection, but there are also cases where they are protected simply by faith in the God or Goddess of the temple. Usually they fast for some days beforehand, not in the sense of abstaining completely from food and drink but observing a strictly regulated and very abstemious diet. Always they have to maintain an attitude of purity and devotion.

One interesting thing about these fire-walking ceremonies is how little they are publicised. For instance, scarcely any one from Sri Ramanasramam visits them. Visitors here seldom even know that they occur. This reticence is in a way a guarantee of their genuineness: it shows that they are not staged to impress the audience, as there is practically no audience for them to impress — only the usual local people.

The practice of walking on fire is observed with enthusiasm in the Tamil and Telugu speaking parts of India, especially in temples dedicated to the Goddess Draupadi Amman. Only in the Coimbatore district in the Tamil land it is observed in temples dedicated to the Tamil Mariamman, the equivalent of the North Indian Durga, the spouse of Siva.

There are many pious Tamilians who do not worship these Goddesses; but that does not mean that they have no regard for them or are hostile to them. To say that a person is not one's friend does not mean that he is an enemy; he may simply be a stranger. Similarly, to say that one does not worship a particular deity does not mean that one is hostile. Men of understanding worship the One God; others worship the particular deity or form of God which appeals to them and receive the Grace of this deity.

In all temples where the fire-walking ceremony is practised it is a goddess that is worshipped, whether they are of the Saivite or Vaishnavite cult. In such temples, under the Grace of Parashakti, the Great Goddess,



fire-walking is practised once a year. Chief among these temples is the great temple of Tiruvannamalai. Here the Goddess has the name of Unnamulai. On the large, stone-

paved courtyard in front of the temple of Unnamulai, inside the great temple of Sri Arunachala, on the full moon day of the month of Adi (mid-July to mid-August) a huge fire of burning charcoal and other things is spread out at night and people dance on it.

At all festivals where the Lord is worshipped together with His Shakti in this temple, she is known as Apithakuchambal in Sanskrit and Unnamulai in Tamil ; but when that Shakti alone is worshipped during Navarathri or during this fire-walking ceremony she is seldom called by either of these names but simply Parashakti, the Great Shakti. Such is the tradition of the place. It is at these two festivals, in the months of July-August and September-October, in this temple and under the auspices of Parashakti that fire-walking takes place.

The traditional doctrine is that the Divine Trinity of Ayan, Hari and Hara (or Brahma, Vishnu and Siva) perform the cosmic tasks of creation, preservation and destruction, but through the instrumentality of Parashakti, that is of their executive power under the names respectively of Lakshmi, Sarasvathi and Durga. The relations of Shakti to Siva are regarded as threefold, that is as mother, daughter and consort. First she appears from Siva, as daughter from parent ; then from her Siva takes form as her child ; then the two forms unite to create all the forms of the cosmos. Nevertheless, despite these images, one has to remember that both Siva and Shakti are formless. They are only the twin source of light.

Siva is the sun and Shakti the moon. The former is hot and the latter cool. Out of intense heat the world is born, and that heat is itself called Shakti. The moon cools the intense heat of the sun and makes it of use to people. In whatever form and under whatever name Parashakti is worshipped, under that name and form She bestows grace on her devotees. All such names and forms are only aspects or manifestations of Parashakti. She is the Reality of Pachiamman,

Mariamman and Angalamman. All are the same Parashakti. It is this Parashakti who has been sung by both Thayumanavar and Subramanya Bharati.

The Goddess Draupadi is widely worshipped in the South. She is revered in the Mahabharata as one who always kept her vows, even in the city of Virata, when she was in banishment. In various parts of India the last day of her festival is devoted to fire-walking. Both in the Tamil and Telugu parts there are various stories relating to the origin of these festivals.

In the Telugu country it is usual for the young men to take a vow to walk on fire. At the time of the ceremony they wear female clothes dyed yellow and do their hair like girls, sometimes wearing false hair. They wear black ornaments round their necks and in their ears. Although they are all males, they look like a crowd of girls. Only after such a ceremony the youths are allowed to marry.

However, these customs do not hold in the Tamil land. Here people of all ages and both men and women take part in the ceremony. Each has his own prayer or vow ; though there may be some who take part without any particular prayer or vow. Here the ceremony is not prior to a marriage.

It is possible that this dedication of fire-walking to Draupadi may go back to the Mahabharata. It is said there that after the defeat of Duryodhana and the slaughter of his brothers, the Pandavas made obeisance to Dritharashtra and condoled with him for the loss of his sons. They were blessed by him, after which Yudhistira asked him what was yet to be done. He replied that the bodies of his sons should be offered up in fire and that their wives should join them in the same fire, so that they could be united happily with them in heaven. Bhima undertook to perform this task. The wives too entered the fire, thus attaining undying fame. It may be that the Telugu youths dressed up as women represent this episode.



There is also a Tamil story reflecting the greatness of Draupadi. Between Gingee and Tiruvannamalai, in Singavaram, there is a temple to Sri Ranganadha. Here there was a king named Kandhan who had suffered a defeat. In desperation he performed a ceremony in worship of Draupadi. Pleased with his worship, she appeared before him and promised that whoever should worship her as he had done would obtain whatever he prayed for and that all obstacles would be removed for him. She also promised that whoever walked on fire in full faith would remain unscathed. From that day onwards

this fire-walking festival is observed with great enthusiasm in the Tamil land.

In the border country between the Tamil and Telugu parts many devotees participate in these ceremonies. There are some who have walked on fire a hundred times and have recorded their own surprise that it does not burn them. It is a fairly large area that they walk over, covered with fire and emitting intense heat, and yet they remain unscathed. This is a sign of the Grace of the Mother-Goddess protecting her worshippers. May this festival long endure! May Parashakti bless us! May her devotees prosper!

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## THE NONSENSE OF 'LIFE' AND 'DEATH'

By WEI WU WEI

What difference could there be between 'living' and 'dying'? 'Living' is only the elaboration in sequential duration of what otherwise is known as 'death'.

When What-we-are functions, extending in three apparent spatial dimensions and another interpreting them as duration, together known as 'space-time', there is what we know as 'living'. When that process ceases we are no longer extended in sequential duration, we are no longer elaborated in 'space'; 'space-time' is no more and the apparent universe dis-appears.

Then we say that we are 'dead'.

But as what we are we have never 'lived', and we cannot 'die'.

Where could 'we' live? When could 'we' die? How could there be such things as 'we'? 'Living' is a spatial illusion, 'dying' is a temporal illusion, 'we' are a spatiotemporal illusion based on the serial interpretation of dimensional 'stills' or 'quanta' cognised as movement.

Only the concepts of infinity and intemporality can suggest intellectually a notion of what we are as the source and origin of appearance or manifestation.

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## HEART AND HEAD

*By* ARTHUR OSBORNE

In my heart pure being, pure self of me :  
The world a form it takes — unreal ;  
Happenings a form it takes, people who come and go,  
All things.  
In my head a mind that cannot stand alone :  
Watches and clings but cannot stand alone.  
Two ways it yearns :  
Outwards to the world, seeing it a real thing  
Outside itself, full of regrets and wants,  
Tormenting ;  
Inwards to pure being — then again the world  
Appears unreal, a form, in me, its sting drawn.

How escape the torment  
Of an enslaved mind ?  
Two ways :  
Mind gone, absorbed in self — pure radiance ;  
Mind rearisen — then let it yearn  
Not outwards to the world but to the self —  
Warm surge of love, ecstatic bliss.

Both ways are good — world-torment bad.

World-clinging mind that cannot stand alone —  
The world withdrawn at death : what will it do ?  
Fears. Will not face it,  
Will not face  
The thought of it.  
With dangling tentacles, the world to which it clung  
Gone all away ;  
Ivy without a tree —  
What will it do ?

Mind outward turned that seems to stand alone,  
Ghost stiffened into semblance of a man,  
Forgets pure being, forgets its inner self,  
Forgets, denies,  
Knows death ahead.

Catches some glimmer of the Self behind,  
Sees it as other, sees itself foredoomed,  
Frustrated by the world, then flung away,  
Broken at last, bruised, crushed, devoured  
By that which it thinks other.  
The more it fights is broken more,  
Crunched against the bars,  
Caught in a rat-trap.

Catches some glimmer : then the silent voice  
 Millifluous,  
 Faint perfume hinting of ancestral home :  
 Victory in defeat, total defeat,  
 Total surrender, brings it home again.  
 Will it rest now —  
 Female at last —  
 Rest and no longer rove,  
 Rest in the clasp of love,  
 Will it rest now ?

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## SPIRITUAL PRAYER

By I. G. SCHULTZ

The path up the mountain is the most difficult enterprise in life. Few there are who seek it ; fewer still who really try to follow it. It is necessary to leave behind all the wishes of the individual self, and here most people fail. Remembering the word of Christ that he who asks will receive, they apply it to worldly wishes and are often disappointed. Think of times of war or of catastrophes and epidemics — how many prayers have been sent up to heaven ! Is it not unscrupulous to pray for the victory of one's own country in war, thereby praying defeat upon the enemy ?

But the Bible also tells us that we should pray for the Holy Spirit. In modern times the American teacher Joel Goldsmith emphasizes again and again that true prayer is not asking for material things or giving hints to the Omniscient God what to do but only prayer for conscious union with God in the sanctuary of our heart. Such prayer will always eventually find fulfilment.

It may be hard for a sick person not to pray for recovery or a person in financial

need not to ask for help, but all such personal wishes have to be given up. We must come by meditation into that real communion with God of which Goldsmith says : " Sometimes it transcends all words and thoughts, and eventually the personal sense of self completely disappears and nothing is left but God." <sup>1</sup>

In the Realized Presence of God everything is possible and the supply of all we need will be added of itself ; and this Presence is the fulfilment. We only need to become still and receptive, sufficiently at peace to say " Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth." Then we shall understand, as Goldsmith says, that " Thy grace is my sufficiency in all things." <sup>2</sup> We have ascended far towards the summit of the mountain when we desire but one thing : to know God aright " Whom to know aright is life eternal".

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<sup>1</sup> *St. Luke*, XI, 13.

<sup>2</sup> *From Spiritual Resources* by Joel Goldsmith, Allen & Unwin.

## SELF - ENQUIRY

.....QUIS SEPARABIT

The devotees of Sri Bhagavan are spread all over the world.—It is impossible to contact them individually. I am writing this piece through *The Mountain Path*, but it is really written in a personal way — as if to each one separately.

The Sage says: in all possible difficulties or problems—personal, domestic, even political or religious—enquire for whom the problem exists. By this honest (serious) enquiry we go deep inside and come to a point which is really (in the beginning) a conceptual Self, a Self of mentation and not the *real* Self.

The real Self—or simply the Self—cannot be “reached” or experienced in the sense in which we experience “something”, because it is beyond the trifold phenomenon of experiencer, experience and experienced or seer, sight and seen.

The Sage simply says “Enquire”.....

And here lies the crux of the matter.

Though we say (as we have read and heard) that Self is the source, we ourselves have not actually found it so, because our preconceived ideas come between. Our ideas of the Self are certainly not the Self. We suppose that it is the Self that we are coming to, but it is certainly not that Self: though later we may reach that state.

I will try to explain.

Our grief, our yearning for something, in short our problem, brings us to this conceptual Self, to our theory of a Self; but eventually the Real (call it Self) comes into being, or rather that ever-existent comes into our “experiencing”. (But this is not experiencing of the trifold experience-being.)

Many of us get stuck in the conceptual Self and never reach this nature referred to above, of knower-knowledge-known; it is direct experience, thus get nowhere.

Devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi should see with an open mind—devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi who are really sincere and want to tread the path propounded by Him.

If I can offer a helping hand—a friend’s hand—If any find it of no use they can leave it; if any find it useful it may serve for dotting the “i”s and crossing the “t”s of the original teaching.

It is a thing to be understood in oneself, privately—each one for himself.

It is not a matter for discussion.





# The Bhagavad Gita

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

## CHAPTER FOUR

1

Sri Bhagavan said :

I proclaimed this imperishable yoga to Vivasvan, he to Manu and Manu to Ikshvaku.

This is the tradition of the Gita teaching. Vivasvan is the Sun-God. His son, Manu, is the founder of the human race. Manu's son, Ikshvaku, was a famous king of the solar dynasty.

2

Thus handed down by tradition, the royal sages knew it, O Scourge of the Foe, until it was lost through long lapse of time.

Two important points arise from this verse: one is that the transmission is through royal or

Kshatriya, not Brahmin, sages. And in this connection it is to be remembered that Rama and Krishna were both of royal descent, as, outside Hinduism, were Buddha and Christ also.

The second point is the affirmation, continued in vv. 3, 7 and 8, that religion, far from progressing, declines and needs periodical renewal.

3

Today this same ancient yoga, this supreme secret, have I expounded to you, because you are my worshipper and friend.

4

Arjuna said :

Later was your birth, earlier that of Vivasvan ; how then am I to understand that you originally proclaimed this to him ?

5

Sri Bhagavan said :

Many births of mine have gone by, and of yours too, Arjuna ; I know them all, while you do not, O Scourge of the Foe.

6

Unborn and eternal Self though I am, Lord of all beings though I am, yet, resorting to my Nature (Prakriti) I take birth through my own Power. (Maya)

Prakriti is 'Nature' in the sense of Universal Substance, undifferentiated, primordial, virgin and the Mother of all. Maya is illusion but also the power that creates illusion.

Here and in the next two verses is enunciated the doctrine of Avatars. An Avatar is not an ordinary mortal making karma or struggling to get free from karma but a Divine Incarnation assuming the appearance of human limitation for the welfare of mankind.

7

Whenever dharma decays and adharma prevails, O Bharata, I manifest Myself.

8

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil and for the establishment of dharma I take birth from age to age.

9

He who thus rightly knows My divine birth and activity is not reborn on leaving the body, Arjuna, but comes to Me.

This is an enunciation of Jnana-marga, the path of Knowledge. It is obvious that Liberation cannot come from mere knowledge of or belief in a historical fact. A deeper meaning must be sought. He who realizes the immersion of the uncontaminable Spirit in the apparent contamination of individual life and action cannot be encased again in the ignorant state of individual being but unites with the Spirit.

10

Many have there been who, free from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, have been purified by the austerity (tapas) of wisdom and have attained My state.

The term translated here and in the following verses as 'wisdom' is 'jnana', meaning 'knowledge' in the sense of Divine Certitude, not mere mental understanding.

11

In whatever way men approach Me, in that way do I come to them. All paths that men follow are paths to me, O Son of Pritha.

12

Those who seek success in their actions here sacrifice to the gods, for action yields fruit speedily in this world.

13

The fourfold order of society I created on the basis of men's qualities and actions ; yet, though I am its author, know Me to be inactive and immutable.

The chaturvarnya is the fourfold division of society into Brahmins or priests, Kshatriyas or warriors, Vaishyas or merchants and agriculturists, and Shudras or labourers. Natural propensities are said to have decided a man's caste at the beginning ; later they became hereditary.

14

Activity does not contaminate Me, nor have I any craving for its fruit. He who knows this of Me is not bound by activity.

Here again the deeper meaning of 'Me' must be grasped. It is not knowing or believing the historical Krishna to have been such and such that can liberate a man but realizing his own true Self to be such.

15

(Safe) in this knowledge, the Ancients who sought Liberation engaged in activity. Do you also, therefore, engage in activity, as the Ancients did of old.

16

What is activity and what inactivity ? About this even the wise are confused. I will explain to you what activity is, knowing which you will be freed from evil.

17

Activity has to be understood, also wrong activity, also inactivity. The nature of activity is hard to understand.

18

He alone is wise, he is a yogi, he has accomplished all activity, who sees inactivity in activity and activity in inactivity.

That is to say who sees detached activity to be inactivity and mere abstention from action to be activity. It is to be noted how this tallies with the Taoist teaching of *wei-wu-wei*, inactive activity.

19

One whose undertakings are all free from desire and whose activity has been purified in the flame of wisdom is termed a Sage by those who know.

20

Indifferent to the fruits of action, ever content and utterly independent, he is inactive even while engaged in activity.

21

One who engages in activity with his body only, without desire, controlled in heart and mind, having renounced possessions, incurs no sin.

22

Satisfied with what comes to him by chance, beyond the pairs of opposites, free from envy, equal in success and failure, he is not bound by his actions.

23

The activity of one who is detached and set free, whose mind is stabilized in wisdom, whose action is sacrifice, is entirely dissolved.

24

The act of offering is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman, the fire in which it is offered is Brahman, the offerer himself is Brahman. By acting with his mind fixed ever on Brahman a man becomes Brahman.

25

Some yogis offer sacrifice to the gods; others sacrifice self itself in the fire of Brahman.

This is interpreted by Shankaracharya to mean that some perform sacrificial rites in order to gain

their desired ends, while others sacrifice the self to the Self.

26

Some yogis offer hearing and the other senses in the fire of restraint; others offer sound and other sense objects in the fire of the senses.

The first half of this verse is clear: that some discipline their senses by constant control; the second half is usually taken to mean that some renounce the objects that might excite the senses.

27

Others again offer the activity of the senses and that of the vital force in the fire of sense-control kindled by wisdom.

28

Others there are who, under strict vows, sacrifice by means of their possessions, their austerities, their yoga, their learning and their knowledge.

That is to say that some sacrifice by renouncing their possessions, some by performing austerities, some by yogic disciplines, some by concentration on scriptural texts, and some by fixing the mind in a state of knowledge.

29

Some offer the exhalation into the inhalation or the inhalation into the exhalation or restrain both inhalation and exhalation, concentrating on breath-control.

This refers to three techniques of breath-control.

30

Some, regulating their diet, offer the life-breath into the life-breath. All these understand the meaning of sacrifice and expiate their sins by it.

31

Those who eat the sacred remnants after sacrifice attain to the Eternal Brahman. (Success in) this world is not for those who make no sacrifice, how much less in another world, O Best of the Kurus.

In this verse the term 'sacrifice' must have had the meaning 'ritualistic burnt offering' at the time when the Gita was proclaimed, but it also had then and still has the meaning of restraint and giving up. The 'sacred remnants after sacrifice' can be taken not only literally but also symbolically as the legitimate activity that remains when practising self-control. The reference to success in this world has the two-fold meaning that only dedicated activity succeeds and that only he who can subordinate lesser to greater purposes succeeds.

32

Thus many forms of sacrifice are expounded in the Scriptures. Know that all of them derive from activity. Knowing this you shall attain Liberation.

33

Greater than all material sacrifice is the sacrifice through wisdom, O Scourge of the Foe. All activity without exception, O Son of Pritha, culminates in wisdom.

34

Gain this knowledge by bowing down (to your Guru), by questioning him and by serving him. The wise who have realized the Truth will teach you knowledge.

35

Know this and you will never fall thus into confusion, O Son of Pandu; through this (Knowledge) you will see all beings in the Self and also in Me.

This indicates a two-fold mode of comprehension, nontheistic and theistic: to see all beings in the Self and in God.

36

Even were you the greatest of sinners, yet should you cross over all evil on this raft of knowledge.

37

As a well lit fire consumes its fuel, Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all activity to ashes.

38

There is nothing in the world so purifying as knowledge. One who is well grounded in yoga discovers this in course of time, in himself for himself.

39

One who has faith and concentration and has subdued his senses attains knowledge. Having gained knowledge he speedily attains Supreme Peace.

40

But one who is in a state of ignorance, lacking faith and doubting, perishes. Neither this world nor that beyond falls to the doubter; nor does happiness.

'Ignorance' here does not mean mere lack of information. It is ajnana, the negation of jnana (for which see the note to v. 10). By faith and concentration certitude can be attained, as stated in the previous verse; but one who lacks both certitude and faith is left with no boat to cross the flood, swept hither and thither by doubts and sense attractions.

41

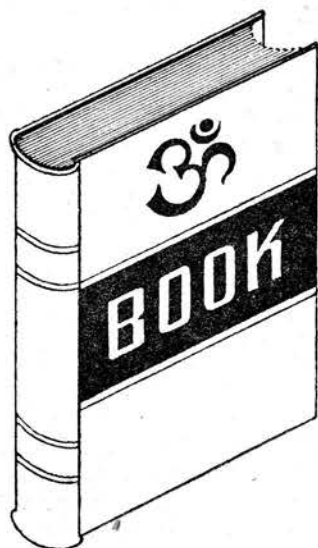
He who has surrendered activity through yoga, who has destroyed doubts by certitude and who is self-possessed, O Wealth-Winner, is not bound by (the) actions (he performs).

42

Therefore with the sword of knowledge cut down this doubt born of ignorance that dwells in your heart, stand firm in yoga and rise up, O Bharata.

Here ends the Fourth Chapter entitled  
The Yoga of Knowledge





## REVIEWS

**TEACHINGS OF JNANADEVA:** By S. R. Sharma. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, pp. 47, price Re. 1.)

Jnanadeva (or Jnaneshwar, as he was also called) was the first of the great galaxy of Mediaeval Marathi poet-saints. He is best known for his *Jnaneshwari*, a massive and profound commentary on the Gita, but in the present book the author is concerned more with his shorter work *Anubhavamrita*, "The Elixir of Experience". In this he proclaims from experience the doctrine of Supreme Identity.

Born in 1275, Jnanadeva died in 1296, when only just over twenty. Young as he was, he felt his work on earth to be finished. He therefore ceremonially entered into samadhi, giving instructions beforehand that his body was to be bricked up, as he had no more need of it.

He declares in his Elixir:

*The distinction between liberated, aspirant and bound subsists only so long as this Elixir of Experience is unknown to one.*

*The enjoyer and the enjoyed, the seer and the seen, are merged in the non-dual, which is indivisible.*

*The devotee has become God, the Goal has become the path; this indeed is solitude in the universe.*

**BHAJA GOVINDA:** By C. Rajagopalachari. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, pp. 62, price Re. 1.)

In this profoundly moving poem the great Shankara not only proclaims the truth of Advaita but prescribes how to realize it. "In you, in me, elsewhere, there is but one Vishnu. Unable to

bear with me, you get angry with me in vain. See your Self in all things. Give up this false sense of difference from other beings everywhere." He insists repeatedly that it is attachments of various kinds that prevents one from waking up from the dream of separative being, and therefore these must be surrendered. Significantly enough, the very first attachment which he decries is attachment to learning. The commentary is lucid but unnecessary.

**RAMAYANA FOR THE MODERN WORLD:** By S. L. N. Simha. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, pp. 118, price Rs. 2.50.)

The Ramayana is perhaps unique among world scriptures in that it does not present doctrinal theory but a pattern for living. Perhaps that is why it has always been so loved in India and so neglected abroad. S. L. N. Simha, a noted economist who has represented India on a number of international bodies, here expounds with admirable lucidity its relevance even in the world of today. In particular he shows how Rama, although the model of dharma, was no mere abstract pattern of perfection but a real man capable of impatience, anger and despondency — capable also of mastering them.

The second half of his book contains a brief synopsis of the great epic.

**LIGHT ON THE ANCIENT WORLDS:** By Frithjof Schuon. (Perennial Books, pp. 144, price 25s.)

In his latest book of essays F. Schuon hammers once again at his lifelong theme that traditional civilizations reposed on spiritual principles

and were therefore intrinsically superior to our modern world, which does not. This is no romantic nostalgia for the "good old days". The shortcomings of traditional civilizations are freely admitted, but it is pointed out that these resulted from incomplete fidelity to the religion on which the civilization reposed, whereas that of today reposes on none at all.

It is undoubtedly good that in a world so infatuated with itself and so sure of its superiority this viewpoint should be put. Nevertheless mere theoretical acceptance of a revised scale of social and intellectual values affords no practical help to the reader who aspires to establish true values in his own personal life and thereby raise it to a higher plane. The picture of the modern world that is held up before his eyes may even encourage hopelessness. It is to be remembered that the Puranas, while decrying the Kali Yuga as a social phenomenon, also declare that, for the individual who reacts against it, sadhana will be easier and more rapid than in the earlier and more spiritual ages. It would add to the worth of such a book to keep this also in mind.

**IN THE COMPANY OF SAINTS:** By K. Ramachandra. (Atma-Jyothi Nilayam, Nawalapitiya, Ceylon, pp. 184, price Rs. 4.)

The first part of Mr. Ramachandra's book is composed of anecdotes about saints, the second part of brief reflections or meditations. It shows very wide reading and catholic appreciation, ranging over saints of all religions, both ancient and modern. The opening one is of some one asking for the Maharshi's signature and being told: "Here there is no name; how then can there be a signature?" Not a book to read steadily through, but many may find it delightful to dip into.

**KRISHNAVATARA, Vol. III. THE FIVE BROTHERS:** By K. M. Munshi. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, pp. 476, price Rs. 16.50.)

The first two volumes of K. M. Munshi's *Life of Krishna* were reviewed in our issue of Jan. 1965. This third volume carries the story up to Draupadi's swayamvara and her marriage to the Five Brothers. The author shows great skill in filling in the social background, bringing the various characters to life and making a fascinating story of it. Though he shows a certain nostalgia for the ancient times, he is not blind to their vices but depicts villains and ambitious schemers as well as upholders of dharma. Indeed, the main theme running through the book is the struggle

between dharma and adharma, and one feels the author's keen personal preoccupation with this. Krishna himself is represented as a brilliant and indomitable upholder of dharma, but on a purely human level; the supernatural element in him is not recognized. For those who know little of the ancient Hindu legends and traditions, these three volumes (and presumably those that are to follow) will provide as good an introduction as any, always remembering that the supernatural element is discounted far more than some interpreters would agree to.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

**THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE — A Manual** based upon the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* — by Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner and Richard Alpert. (University Books, Hyde Park, New York, pp. 159. Price \$5.)

For those familiar with the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* this is a most interesting commentary even though they may not themselves intend to experiment with mescaline, LSD, psilocybin, DMT or similar drugs with a view to finding the egoless state of liberation. The authors point out that *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* is intended as advice, not to the physically dying or dead, but to the living who through meditation or austerities are able to find the ecstasy of egolessness and gradually return from it to mundane life. The authors contend that the same experience can now be attained through taking these drugs. They inform us that the session can last up to ten hours and that provided there is a good guide to assist, the maximum of liberation and joy can be obtained.

It is particularly interesting to note that at each stage it is the meddling intellect that drags the voyager back to earth. Aspirants to liberation without the use of drugs must have found over and over again that the busy intellect destroys the Clear Light of the Void quicker than any outside distraction.

The authors are very sincere in their experiments and continued to carry on even when official support was withdrawn on account of the danger of psychosis. Also, the book is clearly and simply written and contains specific directions, a modernized version of those in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, to enable the good guide to pilot the voyager through the egoless state and return to earthly life unharmed.

Furthermore, in Huxley's *Island* we see the practical possibilities of the use of these drugs to make people more satisfactory citizens. In this story Huxley paints a fascinating picture of the

use of these drugs to prevent the development of an innate dictatorship propensity in certain boys and girls. After they had used up their superfluous energy by rock climbing, they were taken into the realms of egoless eternity by a mild dose of a drug coupled with a religious ceremony conducted by a charming Mahayana Buddhist priest in a beautiful mountain temple.

The book is excellent. But what about these drugs; are they equally excellent? Even if they can achieve something more than an ersatz liberation there still remains the matter of the 'good guide'. The trouble is that the guides must themselves be conditioned by other 'good guides' and who is to start the good conditioning? While in Burma and Japan I came across two very good instructors concerning the path to liberation, but neither was infallible, and so it must always be. (We need not discuss a guide like Maharshi or Ramakrishna, not only because we should be most unlikely to find such, but because he would not be interested in drugs). The potential dictator boys and girls of Huxley's *Island* might very well be conditioned into docility by repeated doses of rock climbing cum drug cum religious ceremony, but in the hands of the wrong guide the same medicine might equally well condition them to commit the most atrocious cruelties.

Drugs (like nuclear energy) are merely another power to be used for good or evil according to who uses it, and we are still up against the insoluble problem of how we are to produce the 'good' men and women to whom it is safe to entrust power. The answer must always be that they can be found only in the ranks of those who have given up all desire for power, and these cannot be conditioned except by themselves. The Inner Light is the only guide, Light which is very hard to perceive clearly except after many years of trial and error. We can read the words of the great Spiritual Leaders, test them against each other and try them out in our own experience. We can train ourselves to be ceaselessly aware, ceaselessly mindful both of the states of our own mind and the effect we have on others. This awareness is only lessened by the use of drugs which according to all accounts give only a greater awareness that has nothing to do with life here and now. After the voyager's experience of the egoless state there is no reason to suppose he would be better able to retain his equanimity if someone destroyed the notes for his Ph.D. thesis, or be any more compassionate towards the friend who let him down. It is how we improve our ability to solve little problems

like these that must decide whether the voyager is really on the path to liberation. Temporary ecstasies are of no value in themselves. Indeed they may well be a hindrance.

There are eight steps on the Buddha's practical Eightfold Path and meditation with its possible ecstasies springing from experience of the egoless state is only one of them. The Buddha himself sat at the feet of two gurus who taught him all there was to find about egoless states, but he found that these alone provided no way to liberation from suffering.

We cannot get something for nothing, and there would seem to be no short cuts to liberation. Even the sudden satori of Zen does not do away with the need for perhaps twenty years of training.

MARIE B. BYLES.

ON THE PRAYER OF JESUS: By I. BRIANCHANINOV. Translated by Father Lazarus. (J. M. Watkins) pp. 114, price 21s.

This is a book which should be of particular interest to readers of *The Mountain Path*. The translator, Father Lazarus, is an Orthodox monk, living in India, who is already known to them, and the book itself describes a Christian method of prayer, which comes nearer to that of certain forms of Yoga than any other. The tradition of Eastern Orthodox spirituality is little known in India and deserves to be better known, as it undoubtedly has a closer affinity with Indian tradition than that of Western Christianity.

The Prayer of Jesus might be described as a form of Japa Yoga. It consists in the repetition of the words, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner'. This formula, or mantra, as one might call it, is believed to have an extraordinary power in itself and to be able when constantly repeated to effect a complete spiritual purification. The method consists in first repeating the words aloud, so as to set up a rhythm and accustom the body to it. The second stage is to repeat the words in a whisper, concentrating the mind more and more on their inner meaning. The third stage is reached when the prayer descends to the 'heart' and the words repeat themselves continually, even during sleep, and the soul becomes totally absorbed in the prayer without the distraction of images or thoughts.

It is of interest to note that various material aids to this prayer are recommended, among which may be mentioned, sitting on a low stool (not kneeling or standing, which is more common among Christians), keeping the eyes closed or half-closed, and fixing the gaze on one point.

In this tradition it is the navel or breast which is chosen, as the seat of the prayer. It is even more interesting to find that regulation of the breathing is recommended, and even suspension of the breath. Apart from these mechanical aids, great attention is paid to the dispositions of the soul, above all humility, a deep sense of sin (which is fundamental in the Christian tradition) keeping the commandments, above all the law of charity, and constant aspiration to union with God.

This tradition of prayer goes back to a very early date. It is claimed that it goes back to Apostolic times, but it certainly began to develop from the beginning of the monastic movement in the fourth century, and culminated in the monasteries of Mount Athos in the fourteenth century, from where it spread all over the Orthodox world. It became especially famous in Russia, and one of the most moving accounts of this prayer is to be found in the *Story of a Russian Pilgrim*, translated into English by R. M. French, which tells the story of a simple Russian peasant, who wandered all over Russia in the last century, constantly repeating this prayer and attaining to extraordinary holiness through it.

DOM BEDE GRIFFITHS.

**GANDHI ON NON-VIOLENCE**, a Selection, edited and with an Introduction by Thomas Merton (New Directions, New York, pp. 82, \$1.75).\*

The texts, carefully chosen and edited, are arranged in sections, each with a brief but clear prefatory note, so as to bring out the principles, the true and false varieties, the spiritual dimensions and the political applications of non-violence. The original and hence the most valuable part of the work is Father Merton's long introductory essay on "Gandhi and the One-Eyed Giant", a profound study in truly religious terms of the Indian leader's real success and apparent failure and of his signal service to the revival of the spirit of religion among mankind.

Valuing the spiritual traditions of the West far more highly than its material progress, Gandhi discovered through them his Indian heritage, the essential and universal element in all religions and his own "right mind". Then through his public activity in South Africa and in India he exercised and enjoyed his identity with his own people; he shared and tried to expand their spiritual consciousness. Satyagraha was the fruit of inner unity already achieved rather than a means of achieving unity. He failed, in so far as he did fail, because his followers had not reached

the inner unity he had realized in himself. Viewed only as a useful technique for attaining a practical end, satyagraha is meaningless.

The modern West is wrong in supposing that the spiritual or interior life is an exclusively private affair. Gandhi felt and proved in action that in participating in the people's struggle for justice one "liberates the truth in oneself". He would have endorsed Plato's dictum, to philosophize and concern oneself with politics is one and the same thing. Gandhi's career was active rather than contemplative. His political activity was the public practice of his religion. By the courage and reasonableness that he showed in the course of it, he established the truth that non-violence is the dharma, the very nature, of political life. Politics and the public realm were for him not secular but sacred. His work for the Harijans and for the country's freedom was his way of bearing witness to the central doctrine of Hinduism that "all life (not only of human beings but of all sentient beings) is one".

Gandhi did not evade evil, but faced it. In facing it, however, he saw its reversibility. Sin being already a punishment, what the sinner needs is compassion, not further punishment. This compassion restores "right mind to all", *sabko sanmati*, the only way to peace on earth.

In the London *Vegetarian* of May 18, 1895 there appeared an article by Gandhi describing "the lasting holy impression" produced on his mind by a visit to a Trappist monastery at Pinetown in South Africa. This article concluded with the ringing declaration, "If this is Roman Catholicism, then everything said against it is a lie". And now, seventy years later, Thomas Merton, master of contemplation and author of "Ascent to Truth", returns the compliment and in this study of karma-yoga seems to say: "If this is Hinduism, then everything said against it is a lie."

K. SWAMINATHAN

**THE PHILOSOPHICAL POTENTIAL OF INDIAN ESOTERICISM:** By Agehananda Bharati. Pub: Indian Renaissance Institute, 6, Fair Field Road No. 4, Churchgate, Bombay-1. Pp. 34. Price: Rs. 2.00.

This is more an introductory than an exhaustive treatise on the interpretation of certain esoteric ideologies of Indian philosophy, notably of the Tantras. Indian philosophy, whether Vedantic, Tantric or Buddhist, is traditionally

\* \$1.75 in the publisher's note, \$1.50 on the book-jacket.



spiritual-oriented ; its aim is to seek God, to seek *moksha* or *nirvana*. So deep-rooted is this aim that it pervades not only the theological discussions but practically every category of Indian thought, intellectual, aesthetic, artistic, philosophical, mathematical or any other.

In this monograph the author has attempted to divest philosophy of its theological or religious association in order to study Indian esoterics exclusively by methods of modern linguistic analysis — a system which is intellectual, language-oriented and value-free.\* Now a value-free philosophy may have its own value to its protagonists and there cannot be any quarrel about it. But this must be said that the Indian tradition has generally held in high esteem the esoterism of its teachings and practices. Dayanand's attempt to find 72,000 ducts in a corpse (P. 25) or his disgust with image worship are rather an exception than a rule. True, the tradition withholds its expositions from the laity which goes to show the importance it attaches to the occult or esoteric significance of its symbols, language or thought.

The author's explanations of the concepts involved in *rati sadhana*, *urddhvaretas* etc. are open to question in places; his attitude to other possible approaches leaves much to be desired.

M. P. PANDIT.

SHRIMAD BHAGAVATA (condensed) : By S. S. Cohen (Chinmaya Publication Trust, Bombay. Pp. XV and 360. Price not stated.)

In a span of about 360 pages Mr. Cohen has tried to summarise the vast contents of Shrimad Bhagavata, the most popular and important Purana, originally composed in Sanskrit. It is the creation of Vyasa or Badarayana and contains the dialogue between Parikshit (sure to die within a week as the result of a curse by a Sage's son) and Suka, the great Yogi and son of Vyasa. Suka's instructions prepared the king for death as he realized his identity with the immortal Brahman. It contains stories within stories and is hence complicated. To condense such a mighty work is certainly a difficult task, but the author, working with devotion, has done it admirably, considering even his own limitations.

In the introduction he has pointed out the greatness of the original Purana, its distinguishing features and its superiority in certain respects to other scriptures. While condensing he has attempted (as he says), 'to bring out all the stories and the instructions given in the original,

curtailing nothing but the least significant anecdotes, long lists of names which mean nothing to us to-day, constant iterations of ideas, hymns and accounts of the creation, and details which are likely to cause a flagging interest in the modern reader'. The work certainly bears testimony to all this.

The Bhagavata is a mine of parables and the author has, in this condensation, thoroughly maintained the interest of these stories along with the main current of the theme, without losing sight of the philosophy contained in them. Particularly noteworthy is the life of Sri Krishna (Book Tenth) which is the chief attraction of the main work. He has faithfully preserved the charm of the original. The style is lucid, the descriptions graphic and the details finely worked out.

One cannot, however, ignore the fact that the poetic beauties of the original, the musical cadence and its verse cannot be translated or condensed. Hence some portion has become rather dull in spite of the author's vigilant care. Also his English, though lively and vigorous, is often ungrammatical.

In spite of this, Mr. Cohen has done a great service to modern readers who are interested in this great scripture and who have neither the leisure nor the capacity to go through the original tome. The book deserves to be read and re-read. It is dedicated to "The ever-effluent Shri Ramana" !

ATMA-BODHA OF SRI SANKARACHARYA, Edited by Vaidyaratna P. N. Menon. Published by The Educational Supplies Depot, Palghat-1. Second edition. Price Rs. 4.50.

Here is a very useful edition of Atma-Bodha, one of the important monographs of Sri Sankara. In this edition the editor has given an exhaustive Introduction running to about eighty pages, dealing with Sankara's life, works, philosophy, the nature and contents of Atma-Bodha. He has discussed the difficult problem of Sankara's date and his works and has given his own conclusions which appeal to reason and traditional belief. While dealing with his philosophy, he has analysed it in its chief aspects of theology, cosmology, psychology and eschatology and has shown its distinctive features. He has also discussed in brief the merits and demerits of Sankara's system

\* By "Value-free" is meant a study of the subject for its own sake and not any result or *purushartha*.

and has finally dwelt on the supreme value of a work like this in modern times of spiritual decadence. All this shows a close critical study by the editor and his missionary zeal.

The text is accompanied by a rare Sanskrit commentary 'Pradeep' by Srimat Krishnanandasami Swami (himself a religious head with some following), English word-meaning, translation and explanation in English based on the commentary. The index of all the verses arranged alphabetically is given at the end.

Thus this edition serves a useful purpose both for those who are knowers of Sanskrit, and those who are not, in fact for all who are interested in the Vedantic philosophy of Sankara.

Unfortunately there are a few misprints. The editor should have given an 'Errata' at the beginning of the work. Nevertheless, Sri Menon deserves hearty congratulations for bringing out a nice second edition of this excellent Prakarana-grantha of Sankara.

**ADVAITA RASAMANJARI OF SADASHIV BRAHMENDRA:** By Vidyaratna P. N. Menon, published by The Educational Supplies Depot, Palghat-1, First Edition 1965, Price Rs. 2.50.

Like the Atmabodha, Advaita Rasamanjari of Sadashiv Brahmendra, is the poetic outpouring of a realized soul. Jnana or understanding as the sole means of realization is the common standpoint of both. Advaita Rasamanjari is virtually and in all senses the blossoming of non-duality. The book contains only forty-four verses and every verse is a thing of beauty, giving not only joy but instruction to the seeker. The poetic images that the seer-poet has given are fresh and original, couched in fresh and lucid words. To quote a few:

"The ascetic who has attained the state of seeing all as Brahma resorts yet to samadhi enjoyed by him earlier merely for whiling away time. *Indeed an emperor who has enough of all prosperity resorts yet to the game of dice for passing time*". (page 96).

"The power of worldly objects, though extremely wonderful, does not delight the steadfast who has known their real nature. *A man dressed in the garb of a woman is indeed unable with his amorous graces to infatuate even a youth who knows his true nature*". (page 116).

A distinctive feature of this edition is the rare Sanskrit commentary of Sri Krishnanandasami on this work. At once simple and delightful, it is clear, expository and scholarly. Sri Menon's English Translation of the verses and the notes

based on the Sanskrit commentary are equally authentic and useful for a layman. Readers will remain grateful to him for his zeal and ability shown in preparing this edition of a delightful work. Only they would wish that he had exercised more control over the printing.

PROF. G. V. KULKARNI.

**VEDANTA IN TEN VERSES (DASASLOKI) OF SRI SANKARACARYA:** By T. M. P. Mahadevan and N. Veezhinathan. (Sankara Vihar, 25 Trust Square, Madavakkam Tank Road, Madras-12).

The work under review is a short manual by Adi Sankara dealing with the nature of the Atman. It is always of considerable difficulty to comprehend what the Atman really is. The true Self which is the same as Brahman can only be described negatively as not this, not this and so on. What is later left unsublated is the Self. This is the central theme of this work. When Sankara as a boy went to his Guru, Govinda Bhagavatpada, he was asked, "Who are you"? This composition comprising ten Slokas was the reply to that question. This work by Sankara called *Dasasloki* has been selected by the learned Editors for publication and this is also aptly the tenth number in the Jayanti series. The Notes appended to the Slokas are clear and sufficiently comprehensive for the correct understanding of the text. The Acharya of Kamakoti Pitham has blessed this work with his Srimukham. The book will be found extremely useful for aspirants who seek for knowledge of the Atman.

**CONCEPT OF VIVEKA IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA:** By G. V. Kulkarni, Re. 1.

This book is an article and in the words of the author "devoted to observe how and where the concept of Viveka occurs in the Geeta". It also attempts, as he tells us, to examine the relation between Viveka and the philosophy of work. It is a bit puzzling to be told that "the philosophy of work is considered Vedantic."

The author points out that the word Viveka (discrimination) never occurs in the Gita, but that its import occurs in various forms in the Gita. He classifies the significance of this word as occurring in the Gita as follows: (1) Discrimination between that which exists and that which does not exist, (2) Discrimination between that which is eternal and that which is not, (3) Discrimination between the field and the knower of the field, (4) Discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti, (5) Discrimination between the

mutable and the immutable Purusha. Under each of these headings, the author gives specific references from the Gita. In the last part of the essay, the difference between the Sankhya doctrine of the Purusha and the Gita doctrine is discussed. He finally notes the sense in which two terms *Sankhya* and *Yoga* are used in the Gita.

The essay is a learned one and the author has taken considerable pains in analytically studying and compiling his material. But one wishes that he had followed the standardised principles in writing Sanskrit words in the English script. The statement made by the writer in the beginning that he would examine the relation between *viveka* and *karma* has not been done well. Also the distinction between Sankhya and Yoga as systems of philosophy and the sense in which these two terms are used in the Gita as contrasted with their usage in the Mahabharata could have been more specific.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

**AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:** By H.H.

The Dalai Lama, (Tibet House, 16 Jor Bagh, New Delhi, pp. 31, price not stated.)

A thirty page introduction to Buddhism is necessarily elementary. Nevertheless, so essentially is Buddhism regarded by Tibetans as a discipline of life that even this brief statement may seem too technical to some who have learnt it only as theory from books. While elucidating the basic doctrine, it is more concerned with practice. Indeed, the author sets the tone on the very first page by declaring that "no other pleasure can be compared with that derived from spiritual practice."

The attempt to prove *anatta* in a single page is unfortunate and overlooks the fact that whether there is no 'I' or a universal and eternal 'I' may be a question of semantics. On the whole, however, this is a brilliant condensation of Buddhist doctrine and Tibetan Buddhist training.

**BUDDHISM IN THAILAND, ITS PAST AND**

**PRESENT:** By Karuna Kusalasaya, (Wheel Publication No. 85/86, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon, pp. 30, price not stated.)

This little book gives a workmanlike account of Buddhism in Thailand. On archaeological evidence, it traces the existence of Theravada Buddhism in the country back to the 3rd century B.C.

There is a pleasing description of the organization of the Sangha and the role it plays in the life of the country. Particularly the custom of temporary monkhood acquaints a very large proportion of the men with the tenets of Buddhism and the practices of monasticism. It also establishes a link between many, perhaps most, families and the Sangha.

The author refers on the one hand to the prevailing wind of modern materialism and on the other to the attempts now being made to reinvigorate Buddhist life and teaching.

BODHICHITTA.

PERIODICALS

A new quarterly entitled SAIVA SIDDHANTA, edited by N. Murugesu Mudaliar, contains learned articles by outstanding academic authorities. It is the organ of "The Saiva Siddhanta Mahasamajam" of Madras which has for many years been publishing a Tamil periodical.

HERMES is a new French bi-annual edited by Jaques Masui and dedicated "to the inner life in connection with mystical experience and creative intuition and to methods of spiritual Realization and traditional disciplines of Yoga, Zen, Sufism, etc." With an Advisory Board including such names as Giuseppe Tucci, Alan Watts, Edward Conze and Charles Luk, one can expect great things of it.

We have received the inaugural NEWSLETTER of the R. M. Bucke Memorial Society for the study of religious experience, edited by Graham B. Taylor from Montreal. It is concerned with the important modern tendency to collaboration between psychology and religion in the study of mysticism. It is supported by eminent scholars and maintains a high standard in its discussions and reviews.

ADHYATMA SAROJ, the new monthly organ of the Institute of Psychic and Spiritual Research, has competent articles and an impressive editorial board, though the size of the magazine is a good deal less than one would have expected. Having each issue devoted to a separate theme—yoga, astrology, tantra and so on—it is due to run into the same difficulty as ourselves when it finds the broad general themes already used up.

NEW RACE is a new quarterly edited by V. Madhusudan Reddy from Hyderabad. It mainly expounds the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

to it. Copies are available from Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal Sath Sangham, 38, Venkatesapuram Colony, Ayanavaram, Madras-23. The annual subscription is Rs. 2, single copies being priced at 50 paise. The quarterly has been given the appropriate name of BHAGYA BHARANI.

With P. K. Sundaram as editor, a bilingual quarterly (English and Tamil) has just been launched by the followers of Sri-la-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal, about whom there is an article in this issue of *The Mountain Path*. While mainly devoted to Hindu traditions, it intends to range over wider fields also. We see from the inaugural issue that writers of repute are contributing

*It is an extraordinary sign of the swelling tide of spiritual investigation in the world today that in one single issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH we should have to take notice of six new ventures in this direction. We welcome all such manifestations of opposition to the materialism and superficiality of the modern world.*

#### NOTICE

Sometimes we receive complaints of non-receipt of the journal rather late. Copies are posted to subscribers in the first week of January, April, July and October every year and should reach our subscribers in India by the second week at the latest.

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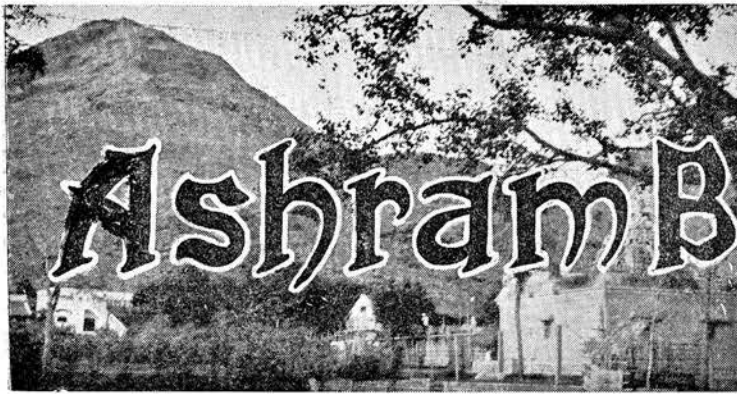
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Subscribers whose subscriptions end with the current issue for April are requested to renew for the next year to end with the issue for October 1967 at proportional rates, as this would greatly facilitate our accounting and also help bring the subscriptions in line with the year of the journal.

April 1, 1966.

V. GANESAN,  
Managing Editor.





# Ashram Bulletin

## DEEPAM

Deepam, the festival when a beacon is lit on the summit of Arunachala at sunset, fell on 7th December this time, too late for inclusion in our January Bulletin. For two weeks the north-east monsoon had been raging, with low clouds covering the hill and with driving rain. That afternoon the sky cleared and the peak stood out for all below to see the beacon light. Next morning the sky was again overcast and the hill veiled in cloud.

## JAYANTI

Bhagavan's birth anniversary according to the Tamil calendar was late this year, falling on Jan. 7th. Owing to an electric power cut in Madras, the printing of *The Mountain Path* was also late and the copies reached here only just in time for Jayanti. The ritual was mainly the same as last year. Again the Lt. Governor of Pondicherry came for the occasion.

After Om Sadhu's rendering of Sri Ramana Gitam there was a music recital by Sri T. P. Subramaniam of Madras and his party. In the evening Brahmarsi Jagadisa Iyer and his party gave a bhajan.

Among the distinguished guests and foreign visitors were Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Prof. K. Subrahmanyam, Prof. Rafael Carmona Lozada, Mrs. Jean Butler, Mr. and Mrs. de Mello, Mrs. Vera Hedenlo from Sweden, Miss Sarah Ferrand of London, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, Sri Framji Dorabji, Mr. and Mrs. Satya Narayan Tandon, Soori Nagamma, A. R. Narayana Rao and family, J. V. Somayajulu and family, Mrs. Khosla, Yogiswara Sri Lakshmana of Chillakur.

## BOMBAY

A big thing was made of the Jayanti celebrations in Bombay this year. With N. D. Sahukar as the distinguished chairman, a Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee was formed and three public meetings organized. Mr. and Mrs. Osborne went specially from Tiruvannamalai to address them. The first, on 19th February, was held at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan with its venerable founder-president, Kulapati Dr. K. M. Munshi, presiding. Mrs. Mani Sahukar and Mrs. Osborne also spoke. The second was held next day at the Ramakrishna Ashram under the presidency of its head, Swami Sambuddhananda. The Swami also spoke and told of a darshan that he once had with Sri Ramana Maharshi. The third meeting was held the following day at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall with the Hon. T. S. Bharde, Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly, presiding. Here again Mrs. Sahukar and Mrs. Osborne spoke.

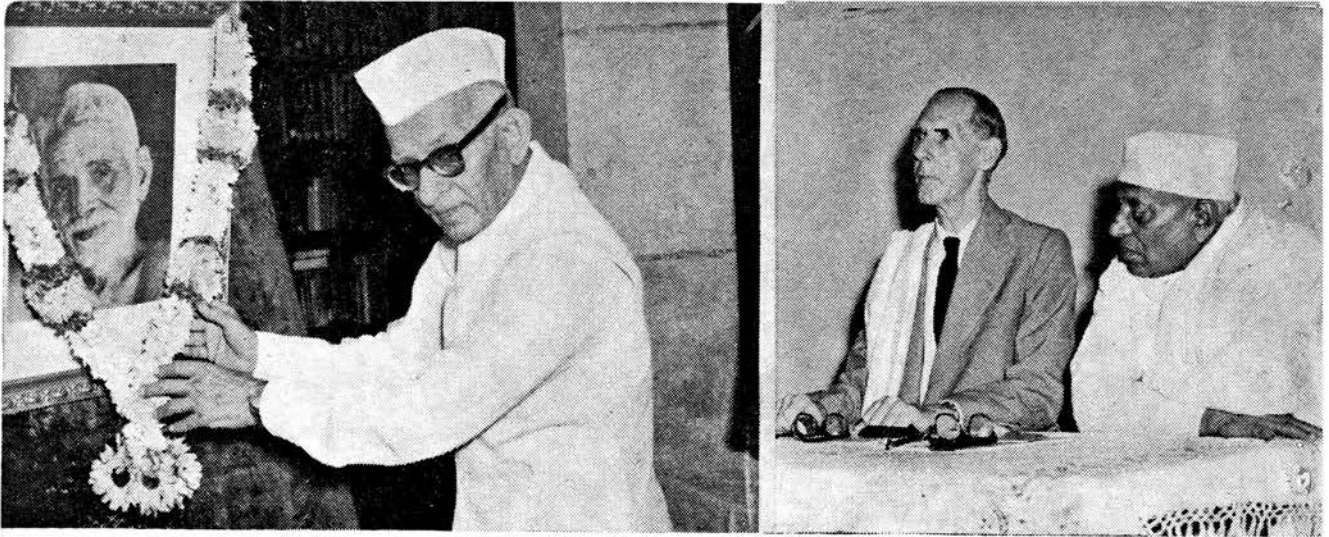
All three meetings drew large and appreciative audiences. In fact the halls were packed to capacity.

The press gave favourable reports both of the meetings and the speakers.

Apart from these public meetings, Mr. Osborne also addressed the Yoga Institute at Santa Cruz, a private gathering at the house of Mrs. Handoo and a group of Tamil devotees out at Chembur.

There were so many requests for private interviews and social meetings that scarcely any free time remained.

Arrangements were made with the New Book Co., of Hornby Road and the Popular Book Depot, Bombay-7 to stock *The Mountain Path* and with the International Book Co., of Ash Lane, Bombay, to display a copy and book subscriptions.



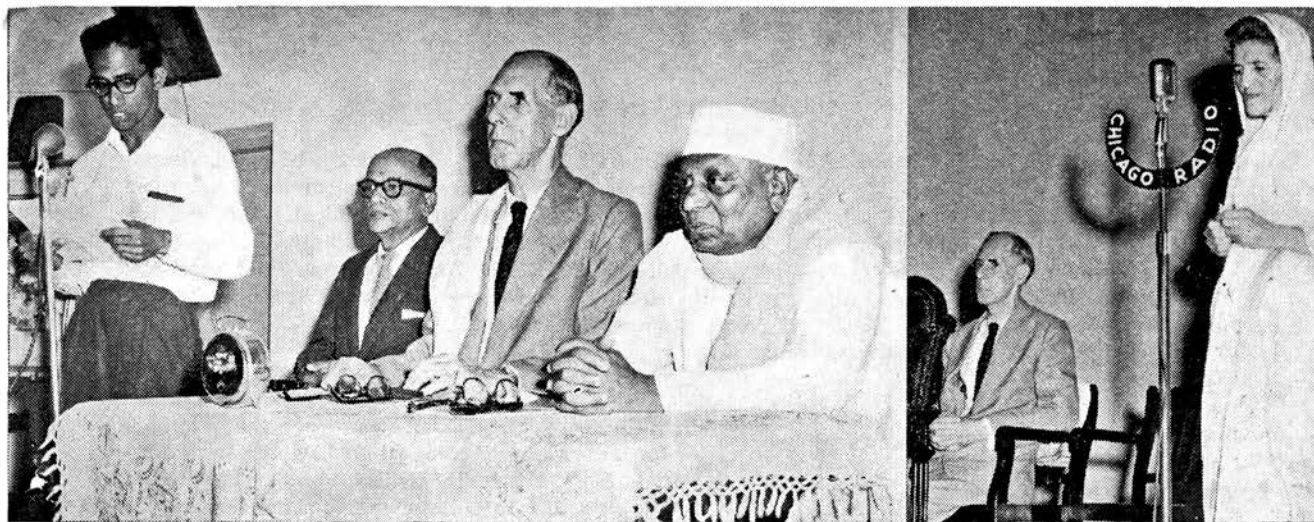
*Top:* Dr. K. M. Munshi garlands the portrait of Sri Maharshi before inaugurating the Ramana Jayanti Celebrations meeting. Mr. Osborne and Sri Swami Sambuddhananda.  
*Middle:* Mr. Osborne enunciating the teachings of Sri Maharshi. Also seen are: Mrs. Osborne (talking), Mr. N. D. Sahukar, Dr. K. M. Munshi and Smt. Leelavathi Munshi.



*Bottom:* Hon. T. S. Bharade, Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly addressing the gathering Mr. Osborne in a jovial mood.







Top: Sri P. V. Somasundaram reading the messages; Mr. K. K. Nambiar, Mr. Osborne and Sri Swami Sambuddhananda are also seen. Mrs. Osborne's speech was well received.

P. V. Somasundaram, the Secretary of the Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee, was a dynamo of energy and an enthusiastic and loyal worker and was largely responsible for the great success of the campaign.

This is the first time that *The Mountain Path* has carried out any such enterprise and it succeeded beyond all expectations. It took place, very appropriately, in Bombay, which has always been the most appreciative and enthusiastic town in its support of Bhagavan and his Ashram. Now that a beginning has been made we hope that further such activities will follow in other towns and countries.

On leaving Bombay, Mr. and Mrs. Osborne broke their return journey at Poona, where they called at the Hari Krishna Mandir to visit Dilip Kumar Roy (Dadaji) and Indira Devi (Didiji). Their reception was not only cordial but affectionate. They attended a bhajan in which they found that Dadaji's voice, at 70, still retained its

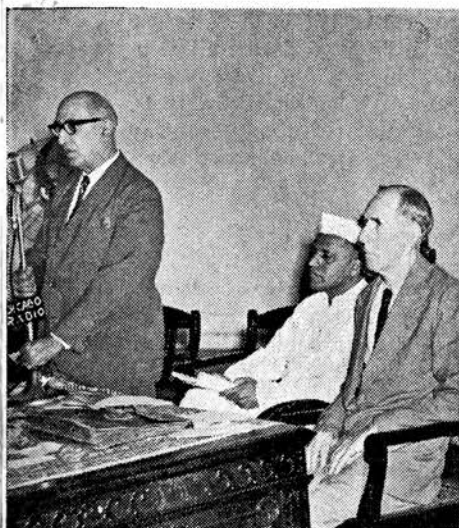
power and beauty and wide range. After the singing, both Mr. and Mrs. Osborne spoke about Bhagavan. They discovered later that their speeches had been tape-recorded. The prayer hall and an adjacent room were packed, and the audience was not only large but appreciative. After the speeches, Dadaji warmly recommended the listeners to subscribe to *The Mountain Path*.

The Mandir, both house and garden, is a perfect gem, designed by Didiji. In one of her exquisite rock-gardens is a statuette of Sai Baba in a specially constructed grotto. It was presented by a devotee and Didiji put it away in a cupboard. A few days later some one knocked at the door after dark and, on opening, who should Didiji see standing there but Sai Baba himself, Sai Baba who died in 1918!

"Why do you put the faqir in a cupboard?" he demanded.

She quickly took it out and next day established it in its grotto. A typical Sai Baba story.

Bottom: Sri N. D. Sahukar, Chairman of the Jayanthi Committee speaking. A portion of the appreciative audience.



## RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The 86th Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated in the Sri Vinayaka Mandir Hall on January 9, 1966.

After pooja, Veda parayana and Upadesa Undiyar, a five-minute silence was observed. Songs by Bhagavan and by Muruganar and Sadhu Om were sung.

Sri C. R. Pattabhiraman, Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting, recounted some incidents at Ramanasramam during his visits there with his distinguished father Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer. He commended silent meditation.

Sri K. K. Nambiar and Dr. K. Arumugham, Reader in Tamil, Delhi University, also spoke.

A film showing Bhagavan in the Asramam was shown by Sri K. K. Nambiar.

People interested in contacting the Ramana Kendra at Delhi should write to: The Secretary, Ramana Kendra, 120 Kaka Nagar, New Delhi-11.

## LONDON

## SRI RAMANA DEVOTION CENTRE

About fifty devotees met at the residence of Dr. C. H. Sharma (101 Seymour Place, London, W.1) on January 8th to pay homage to Sri Bhagavan on the occasion of his Jayanti. We chose the 8th, a Saturday, as the 7th was a working day. The meeting unanimously decided to found an organization known as "Sri Ramana Devotion Centre" and elected the following executive committee:

Dr. C. H. Sharma —	<i>Chairman</i>
N. Vasudevan —	<i>Joint Chairman</i>
T. R. Nicoll	} <i>Secretaries</i>
W. H. Williams	
Miss Lawes —	<i>Treasurer</i>
Mrs. Robinson —	<i>Member</i>
Miss M. A. Ayers —	<i>Member</i>

After a welcoming address there was half an hour's silent meditation. Dr. Sharma then spoke about Sri Bhagavan and his Ashram. Sqn. Ldr. Vasudevan gave one or two instances of Bhagavan's sense of humour. Two other devotees told how Bhagavan had come into their lives.

## HYDERABAD

The New Era Institute of Hyderabad celebrated Ramana Jayanti at Tagore's Home, Secunderabad, on 6th January. On the 9th the Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandal held a public celebration at the

Gujerati High School, Rashtrapathi Road, Secunderabad. His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Trivikrama Ramananda Bharati Swamigal Siddheswara Peedadhipati, Kourtalam, kindly consented to preside. Sri K. N. Anantharaman, Chief Secretary of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, was among the speakers.

## CALICUT

The 86th birth anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana was celebrated at the Sri Sai Baba Mission Bhajan Mandir, Calicut, on the evening of 7th Jan. before a large gathering of Bhagavan's devotees. Namajapa, parayana of Bhagavan's Upadesa Sara, recitation of Ramana stuti, Gurupuja were the chief items of the programme. Dr. M. Anandan, Secretary of the Sai Baba Mandir, who organized the celebrations, introduced the speaker of the evening, Sri Kuttikrishna Marar, a learned Sanskrit Pandit of the place. Leaflets containing six verses selected by Bhagavan from the Yoga Vasishtha were distributed at the end, together with prasadam.

## KOPPAM

Sri Ramana Jayanti was celebrated here for four days. There were pujas and Archanas in the morning and Gita Parayan, Bhajan and discourses in the evening. On the 7th January Sri P. Achuthan, gave a very good talk on Bhagavan's unique position as a Jivanmukta. On the 8th there was a brilliant talk on Upadesa Saram by Sri M. M. Menon, retired Professor. On the 9th Sri Easwara Iyer, gave us a lucid account of the main incidents of Bhagavan's life with some interesting anecdotes. On the last day there was an instructive and illuminating discourse on 'Sad Darsana' by Sri G. Balakrishnan Nair.

## T. T. NAGAR

Ramana Jayanti was celebrated in T. T. Nagar under the auspices of Sri Chambal Bharati with Sri N. P. Bhoosan presiding. Before the speeches there was chanting of the Upanishads, Sri S. P. Tiwari and Sri Dattatraya Gurge spoke. The date according to the Western calendar was taken for the celebration.

## KOLHAPUR

The Dharma-Tatvajnana-Mandal here celebrated the 86th Jayanti of Maharshi Ramana on January 7th, with bhajan, meditation and prayers. Pandit Khuperkar Sastri and Prof. G. V. Kulkarni



spoke. The Presence and Grace of Bhagavan was felt.

#### TIRUCHUZH

The house, in which Sri Bhagavan was born, Sri Sundara Mandiram, was a place of inspiration, joy and festivities on the 7th January. The 86th Birthday was befittingly celebrated, with special poojas, in the midst of a large gathering of devotees and visitors.

#### MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

Readers will have noticed that the editorials of our first nine issues, that is up to January 1966, form a connected series on the general theme of quest and guidance. From the present issue onwards they will be on separate subjects, not in any sequence.

Our next issue will be mainly on the theme of *REINCARNATION*, that of October on *SYMBOLISM*.

We have decided from now on to quote our ever-growing list of life subscribers only once a year, that is in the January issue.

#### PICTURES OF BHAGAVAN

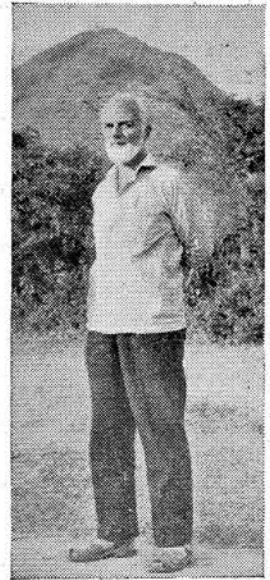
There are many beautiful and expressive photographs of Bhagavan that are not in the Ashram archives. Any persons who have photos that have not appeared in *The Mountain Path* are requested either to make copies and send to the Ashram or to send the originals so that copies can be made here. The originals will be kept only a few days and then returned safely.

#### VISITORS

We have had a wider range of visitors than usual this time. It included Dr. T. Margul, a student and teacher of philosophy from Communist Poland, who, on arrival here, was better versed in Hindu theory than we had expected, and on leaving had decided to try practice also. It included also Dr. Alfonso Caycedo L., a psychiatrist from Colombia in South America, with his charming wife. Dr. McCullough, who teaches philosophy at San Jose College, California, was already a subscriber to *The Mountain Path* before coming here.

Douglas Harding has twice written fascinating articles for *The Mountain Path*, so he was no stranger to us. His understanding and charm of manner made him a much loved visitor. We were disappointed that Helen could not come too. However, what we found most interesting was his report that three more persons in his small group of friends in England have now also had an awakening similar to Helen's. The most reassuring sign is his appreciation that such an awakening is not the end but the beginning of the journey.

Mr. Douglas Harding



The spiritual vitality of Jean Butler is sufficiently evident from the article she has contributed to this issue. We are very glad to have her with us here. At the very last minute an attempt was made to keep her away but, having arrived and felt the potency of Bhagavan's Presence here, she intends to make a long stay.

Mrs. Jean Butler



Mr. Smith, a retired businessman from the south coast of England, is now on his second visit here. He writes: "When a friend in England lent me a book containing a radiant portrait with that unique timeless quality the impact and reaction was spontaneous. Later there followed a period of stress which led to my visiting the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi without due preparation. I stayed for a month in December-January 1964-65 and did the customary things — walking round Arunachala, climbing to the top of it, visiting Virupaksha and Skandashram caves and so on. The novel surroundings with the Maharshi's samadhi, the temple, the meditation hall and the lives and aspirations of the working devotees

made a powerful impression on me and I returned to England considerably refreshed.

"I return this year more at my ease, having friends to greet me. Much painting and white-washing has been done and the premises look bright and clean. And I enjoy looking up at Arunachala from my door and window. My needs and comforts have all been attended to and a circuit of the Hill, avoiding the heat of the day, had already been arranged.

"I find the Maharshi's samadhi in an interesting phase of construction, with palm tree trunks being used as uprights to hoist the heavy granite pillars into position. The carving of the gray stone pillars intrigues me and the polished black finish of some of them is beautiful. I find the atmosphere of devotion uplifting and trust that the influence of Arunachala will sink deep within for my return.

"Sri Ramana Ashram bestows its own special blessing — of which it can only be said that he whose samskaras lead him there will partake of the kindness and fraternal affection which is the overflowing of the spirit of Shri Ramana, manifest in the good people there who devote their lives to the service of the devotees, the upkeep and management of the Ashram."

\* \* \*

Mr. Maskew was here previously at the same time as Mr. Smith and after being away for a year has returned at the same time. Him also we welcome cordially.

"He who wishes to make a spiritual retreat will find no better place than the slopes of Arunachala, and within the Ashram he will find, if he chooses the silence and solitude he seeks. Those who run the Ashram have the spiritual finesse of respecting the liberty of the visitor, the understanding of his needs, and the giving of every help," says Mr. Maskew.

\* \* \*

#### AU REVOIR

Dr. Hugo Maier (for whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of July, 1964 issue), who is a permanent resident of our Ashram, has left for his home in Germany, only to come back to the Ashram after a few months. We bid him *au revoir*. We will miss him and his unreserved help and assistance. It is the wish of all that he returns soon.

#### SRI VIDYA HAVAN

Sri Vidya Homam took place on the 18th March this year and was performed with all the pujas and ceremonies, so much so that the actual Sri Chakra Puja had to be held over to the following day. There was an atmosphere of great devotion, and traditional rituals were performed



with much beauty. A constant and increasing number of devotees are availing themselves of the Sri Chakra Puja inaugurated on March 17th, 1949 by Bhagavan and perpetuated by the good offices of (late) Major A. W. Chadwick. This anniversary has now become one of the great days of the Ashram.

#### OBITUARY

##### SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Although by no means dedicated to a spiritual life, the late Somerset Maugham was one of those who helped to make the Maharshi widely known. He came here for a brief visit in 1939, after which he wrote the novel *'The Razor's Edge'* presenting a highly fictionalised picture of Bhagavan. Towards the end of his life in *'Points of View'* he gave an account of the principle influences on his life, and one chapter of the book, entitled *'The Saint'* was about Bhagavan.

Since various stories of his visit here have been put abroad, we quote here that given by

Major Chadwick from his own firsthand observation in his book '*A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi*'. "In March 1939 Somerset Maugham came to the Ashram. Many accounts have been given of his visit and all of them different. As I was the principal person concerned in looking after him, I have decided to give my own version. He was brought to the Ashram by a friend of mine, Mrs. Austin, wife of the Collector of Madras. The party had first gone to the dak bungalow to have their lunch, but finding it full had come on to the Ashram. They asked me whether I could find somewhere for them where they could have the meal they had brought with them. I arranged for one of the small rooms near my own. As I had already had my meal, at their request I sat and talked with them while they ate. Somerset Maugham asked innumerable questions about my life and the Ashram, apologizing for his inquisitiveness.

"At the end of the meal, which they had taken on the verandah, with Somerset Maugham sitting more or less in the sun, he fainted. Many absurd stories were circulated to account for this; that he had seen Bhagavan and this was a state of samadhi brought on by the meeting and such like. Actually he had not seen Bhagavan at all. It was probably a slight sun-stroke, though he himself said that he had been liable to such black-outs occasionally since birth.

"We carried him to my room and laid him on my bed. I then went to Bhagavan and told him what had happened and asked him, when he went out for his stroll at about 2 o'clock, to come to my room and see Somerset Maugham who was now unfit to come to the Hall, and Bhagavan agreed.

"I met Bhagavan on the way and as we approached my room Somerset Maugham was just coming out; he said that he now felt better and was on his way to the hall. I told him to go back into the room and sit down, as Bhagavan had come to him there instead. Bhagavan and Somerset Maugham sat opposite to each other for about half an hour without uttering a word. At the end of which Somerset Maugham looked nervously across in my direction and said, 'Is there any need to say anything?' 'No,' replied Bhagavan, 'Silence is best. Silence is itself conversation.' After some further period Bhagavan turned to me and in his child-like way said: 'I think I had better be going, they will be looking for me.' As no one in the Ashram knew where he had gone except the attendant who always accompanied him, this was correct. The interview

lasted about forty-five minutes. After Bhagavan had returned to the Hall the rest of the party remained in my room for tea. After tea Somerset Maugham, who was wearing a large pair of boots, wanted to go to the Hall and see where Bhagavan usually lived. I took him to the western window through which he looked for some time with interest making mental notes. He says in his indifferent and quite uninspired article '*The Saint*', published in a series of essays twenty years after the event, that he sat in the Hall in Bhagavan's presence, but this is untrue, because he could not enter with his boots; he only gazed into the hall from outside. He also tacked a certain amount of philosophy on to Bhagavan which Bhagavan could never have uttered in his life. But such is the habit of famous authors, to put their own opinions into the mouths of others.

"In this recent article Somerset Maugham says that because of his fainting fit, which some Indians regarded as a high state of samadhi, which he denies, he has been sent a mass of literature concerning the Maharshi. This may be true, but it is certainly true that he wrote to the Ashram and told them that he was going to write about Bhagavan and asked for as much material as they could send." (pp. 45-47)

#### ALAMELU AMMAL

Smt. Alamelu Ammal was a familiar figure at the Ashram, where she could be seen working in the temple, morning and evening. She passed away on 15th January at the age of 75. She had been working in the temple till evening, making kolam patterns for the festival of Pongal. Later in the evening she called her sister and some neighbours to chant the names of Ramana and Arunachala with her, and at about 11 o'clock at night she quite suddenly passed away.

Born in Vaikom, she was married at the age of ten, as was usual in those days and almost immediately lost her husband, becoming a widow. She learnt several languages and worked for some time as a teacher at Bangalore. She came to Bhagavan quite early, when he was still living at Skandashram, before the present ashram was built. Twenty-five years ago she bought a small house in Ramana Nagar, just near the Ashram and settled down there, doing various kinds of service for the Ashram. She has left the house to the Ashram.

May Sri Bhagavan bless her and gather her to his feet.

## SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

In our previous issue we had to note the passing of the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In this issue we have to record that he has been closely followed by the Vice-President, Swami Yatiswarananda.

Born in Bengal in 1889, the Swami became a disciple of Swami Brahmananda Maharaj, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He became widely known as a writer and editor, an administrator and a spiritual guide. Not only did he hold high positions in the Order in India, but he represented it in various foreign countries including England and the U.S.A. He has been its Vice-President since 1962. From 1950 up to the time of his death he was the President of its Bangalore branch.

## SADHU VASWANI

Sadhu Vaswani, who passed away on January 16th at the age of 87, was a widely known and much loved figure. Most of his life had been devoted to spiritual and cultural teaching. For many years past he had been publishing his reflections in the form of a periodical. He had a wide circle of followers, with whom we sympathise.

## FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

Bhagavan's 16th Mahanirvana Day falls for celebration on the 18th of April this year and Maha Puja — the anniversary of Mother's Samadhi — on the 12th of June.

## Analysis of the Horoscope of Maharshi Ramana

By L. K. BANERJI

This delineation of the character of Sri Ramana is in response to the invitation in the Jayanti number of *The Mountain Path* to send comments on his horoscope. A full discussion of all the planets and of all the twelve houses of the natal chart may be boring to the majority of readers. I shall, therefore, touch upon the salient features only of his life and personality.

The first house or the rising sign (Lagna) is, as it were, the window through which the soul looks out on the world. Let us therefore consider the rising sign of Maharshi Ramana first. It is Libra (Tula), the sign of the balance. The main characteristic of Libra persons is Equilibrium. Libra also confers upon its subjects a sweet and gentle nature. The Lagna is untenanted but it is in its own Navamsa (ninth-part) Libra and consequently carries with it the good effect of a Vargottam Navamsa. (the best ninth-part) of a Lagna. The renowned astrologer Varahamihir says — "*Subham Vargottame Janma*". The expression means that, birth in a Vargottam Navamsa is auspicious. Whether he refers to the Lagna or to the Moon by the word "Janma", the dictum covers the case of Maharshi as his Moon is also in Vargottam Navamsa being in the sign Gemini (Mithuna) both in Rasi and in Navamsa. The ascendant Libra receives the trine aspect of the philosophical planet Jupiter from the fifth house, the house of deep devotion to deities (Deva Bhakti). Venus, the lord of the

rising sign, is in the second house along with Mercury, the planet of intellect. The latter planet is the lord of the ninth and twelfth houses, i.e., the houses of righteousness and of renunciation. If in a horoscope, the lords of the first and ninth houses are found in the same sign without being joined with or aspected by any other planet, this position alone makes the native a good-natured and a God-fearing person. In the case before us, these two planets receive the aspect of Mars, the lord of the house where they are situated. The aspect of Mars is usually considered to be evil but as the sign aspected is his own, he, like a human being, does not do any injury either to the house or to the occupants thereof. On the other hand, he becomes friendly with them and enhances their good effects.

The Sun and the shadowy planet Rahu are in the third house — the house of fortitude. We all know how the Maharshi endured the excruciating pains of cancer with stoic calmness. According to the Western astrologers, this house has a definite influence over the mind. The Sun here makes the mind lofty and magnanimous and his protege firm and self-reliant in all mental pursuits. The sage-astrologer Jaimini thinks that it is the Sun which makes one proficient in Vedanta. The said planet being further situated in Sagittarius (Dhanus), a sign of the all-wise Jupiter, has made Maharshi a Vedanta incarnate. It must have been the joint influence of these two planets



which gave him "a passion for hunting something deeply implanted in the human breast" from his very boyhood. The Rahu in the third house makes a person long-lived and does not do any mischief in the intellectual sphere.

The fourth house is the *Sansar Kshetra*, i.e., the house of worldly concerns and family life. It is vacant. Its lord Saturn is in the sixth house of "Ripu" in the sign Pisces (Meena) of Jupiter. The word "Ripu" literally means enemy but it refers as well to the appetites and passions of man, six in number. Saturn, the celestial school-master, is a great killer of passions and we, therefore, do not find any trace of carnal desire in the sage of Arunachala. Like a Buddha, he had put away anger too and had renounced pride and vanity. The sixth house is virtually a psychic house, though this fact is often overlooked. Jupiter, the lord of the third and sixth houses, is in the fifth, the house of intellect and deep devotion. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had also Jupiter in the 5th house of his horoscope. This planet, who is said to be the preceptor of gods, gifted both of them with *tattwa-jnana* (Knowledge of truth and reality). Both of these august personages had erased their Ego. In the horoscope of Sri Ramana, there has further been an exchange of the respective houses of the two philosophical planets, Jupiter and Saturn, with the result that we find in him an ascetic and a philosopher of a very high order. Be it noted that Jupiter has gained special strength on account of being in his own Navamsa Meena (Pisces).

The seventh house is the house of marriage partner. Neptune and Mars (the latter in his own sign) are situated there. In the two charts published in *The Mountain Path* the positions of Neptune and Uranus have not been given. The followers of the Eastern method generally ignore these two planets but in many cases they are found to be indispensable for correct predictions. Neptune in the seventh house is always inimical to a married life. If one does marry with such a position of Mars and Neptune, the marital life is bound to be full of unpleasantness. Mars and Neptune have, however, kept him unmarried, not out of their inherent goodness but in view of the influence exerted by the other planets. The mutual square positions of Venus and Jupiter (though not within the recognised degrees of aspects) have contributed to his life of celibacy. The said two benefic planets stand in similar positions (fourth and tenth from each other) in the horoscopes of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and

Swami Vivekananda. It is well-known that both of them lived a life of celibacy.

In judging the health of the subject of a nativity, one has to consider *inter alia* whether there is any affliction to the first, sixth and eighth houses. The seventh house has no direct connection with health but malefic planets setting (i.e., in the seventh house) affect, by opposition, the health, sometimes to an extreme degree. The reason for this is that the bodies on or near the



culmination of a house seem more often to affect the opposed house than the one in which they are. The opposition of Mars and Neptune to the first house (of health) seems to be responsible for that dreadful disease cancer from which Maharsi suffered during the last days of his life. Whenever there is an obscure and incurable disease, one must look for Neptune or Uranus at

the bottom of it. It was Neptune who seems to have caused the ailment, though he was aided by Mars and also by Saturn—the latter being posited in the sixth house, the notorious house of illness. In this particular matter, this “fell serjeant” Saturn acted as fomenter of the trouble and not as the killer of disease in view of his inherently mischievous nature to inflict death on mortal beings. It is to be borne in mind that Mars, the other helper of Neptune, is the lord of the second and seventh houses both of which are considered as *maraka* (death-inflicting) by the noted astrologer Parasara. To crown all, the eighth house, the house of death and longevity, besides being aspected by Saturn, is hemmed in between Mars and Ketu, an incendiary planet. Mars is proceeding towards Taurus, the sign of the eighth house and Ketu, moving in a backward direction, is also proceeding towards the same sign Taurus. The result is that the house of death is being cut, as it were, with a pair of scissors. Hence the poignancy of the disease leading to Maharshi's demise.

I now come to the ninth house, the house of religion, intuition, fortune, and all auspicious things. There are two planets in this house — Ketu and Moon. More often than not, Ketu mars worldly prosperity if he occupies the house of fortune. But in a horoscope of a superior type, this very planet prepares the ground for mental elevation and if he receives the beneficial aspect of Jupiter as he does in this case, he is capable of doing tremendous good in the spiritual sphere. “*Ketau Kaivalyam*” says Maharshi Jaimini. This

means that Ketu is the giver of emancipation of the soul from bondage. Ketu is conjoined with Moon, the planet of mind and personality. The exceptional strength of a benefic Moon gave Sri Ramana a magnetic personality. The Moon in his horoscope is in the asterism Punarvasu of Jupiter and is further aspected by the same planet. The Moon is also in Vargottam Navamsa as pointed out before and happens to be the Atmakaraka planet of Sri Ramana. According to the view of Jaimini, the planet which is most advanced in degrees and minutes in a particular sign is the Atmakaraka. The Moon is in the last Navamsa of Gemini and as such, the number of degrees passed over by this planet is highest. Jaimini is quite explicit that the Atmakaraka is not only the causer of bondage and liberation according to its weakness and strength but is always the predominating planet in the horoscope. He further opines that if Ketu be in the twelfth house from the Navamsa of the Atmakaraka and is conjoined with or aspected by a benefic planet, he leads to the salvation of the individual. If we look to the Navamsa chart published in the magazine, we find Ketu in the twelfth house from the Moon. In the Rasi chart, Ketu is joined with the benefic Moon (being nearly a Full Moon) and both of them are aspected by the benefic planet Jupiter and also by the Vedantist Solar king. Like the light of a full moon, Maharshi's influence was always soothing. A more powerful Atmakaraka could not be imagined. Such an Atmakaraka planet could not but bring into the world a soul that was bound to be liberated from bondage.

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## Astrological Note

By V. T. SESHADRI

Maharshi Ramana's Jupiter is in his sixth bhava, which indicates that orthodoxy will not be strictly observed. Not only that, but he is in his dignity and therefore the ruler of the sixth, showing the splendour and success with which orthodox rules were modified. And in fact we see that Bhagavan did not take sannyas or observe the letter of the sastric law, although he embodied the spirit of it. Mars is in the 8th bhava and controls the 1st,

5th and 9th. For a single planet to control these three is a rare thing. Kuja is Lord Subramanyam, the Commander-in-Chief of the Gods, the Devasenapathi, so no wonder that some of Bhagavan's disciples worshipped him as an Avatar of Lord Subramanyam. It is said in the scriptures that Subramanyam emerged from Agni, Fire; similarly Sri Bhagavan is a fire for the purification of his followers.

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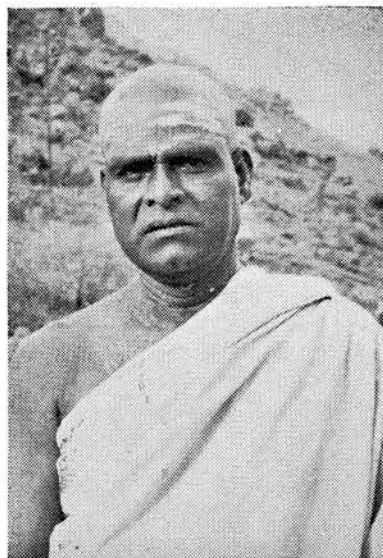
## INTRODUCING...

One of the very early devotees who is still with us at the Ashram is Sri Kunju Swami. He came as early as 1919, at the age of 18, when Bhagavan was still living at Skandashram. Born at Kodumbur near Palghat in Kerala, he came of a family that were not vegetarians, but such was his aversion for meat-eating that his whole family became vegetarian under his influence. An astrologer foretold that he would follow a spiritual course of life. In youth he was already strongly drawn to japa and worship, and his parents, far from objecting, introduced him to a sannyasin from the Tamil land. This guru gave him a "little" (kunju) Release (Kaivalya), a text on Advaita Vedanta. He also taught him breath control and other yogic practices, but the youth, not satisfied with this, asked him if there was not any Great One who had actual experience of Advaita. The sannyasin showed him a photo of Sri Bhagavan and said that he lived at Arunachala. Kunju Swami determined to seek him out.

He reached the neighbouring station of Katpadi with only Rs. 5 in hand. This would have been enough for a ticket to Tiruvannamalai, but none were being issued, as there was plague there. He managed to reach Tiruvannamalai but found it deserted. He spent the night in one of the mantapams on the route round the Hill. In the morning he climbed the hill to the hut where the Mudaliar Patti and her husband lived and used to cook food for Bhagavan; and they showed him the path to Skandashram. He did not know how to greet the Sage, but seeing three others prostrating before him, he did too. It so happened that one of them, who came from Kerala, knew Kunju Swami and introduced him as a good youth and a spiritual aspirant. Bhagavan said nothing but nodded, as if in approval.

Kunju Swami sat for a long while in Bhagavan's presence. Bhagavan's mother and younger brother, Niranjanananda Swami, were also there, but Niranjanananda Swami was not yet the Sarvadhikari. Perumal Swami was then running the Ashram.

When the others had dispersed, Kunju Swami saw Bhagavan cooking something over a small charcoal stove. He imagined it must be some magic brew which would give him Moksha if he



*Sri Kunju Swami*

could partake of it. Before long, however, Bhagavan went out and brought back four pups to which he gave it. Unable to hold them all at once, he said to Kunju: "Hold them and let them go one by one." These were the first words Bhagavan ever spoke to Kunju, who accordingly took them as upadesa. In the evening, seeing Bhagavan clean up the place after the pups, he offered to do the work and was allowed to.

Kunju Swami approached Bhagavan when alone and asked him for upadesa. Bhagavan's reply was that everything is upadesa and everything is grace. Kunju Swami told Bhagavan that he was doing japa of panchakshara and asked for further guidance. Bhagavan told him to continue the japa as a form of dhyana. He did so for a few days and felt an extraordinary peace of mind. This led him to suppose that he could continue the dhyana as well in his native place, so he returned home. However, the peace of mind evaporated, so he came back and decided this time to remain permanently with Bhagavan.

In those days it was necessary to have permission from Perumal Swami to stay in the Ashram, and he gave Kunju Swami permission for one week only. By Bhagavan's Grace, however, Perumal Swami had to go away unexpectedly and entrusted Kunju Swami with the task, which he himself usually performed, of massag-



ing Bhagavan's feet in the evening with oil and warm water. Making this task his own, Kunju Swami thus became a permanent resident.

When Bhagavan's mother was on her death-

bed, Kunju Swami and Niranjanananda Swami were in constant attendance on her. Since Niranjanananda Swami had other work to do, the duty fell more on Kunju Swami. During her last days, Bhagavan did not come to her but only made enquiries about her health. On her last day, however, he sat with her the whole time, as has been related in the lives of him that have been written.

The mother's body was buried at the foot of the hill, where the Ashram now stands. So that the pujas could be performed there, the residents of Skandashram now split into two groups: the larger group staying with Bhagavan at Skandashram and the smaller remaining near the mother's samadhi. One morning Kunju Swami was cleaning the vessels in a small stream near the mother's samadhi when he heard a voice behind him: "I am a pilgrim, where can I obtain food?" He turned round to see who it was, and who should he see but Bhagavan himself! Kunju Swami and others requested Bhagavan to remain there, and so it came about.

On the famous occasion when thieves broke into the Ashram, Kunju Swami was one of those in the hall with Bhagavan. Unable to put up with the rudeness and violence of the thieves and Bhagavan's extraordinary patience, he ran into town to get help and inform the police.

Many other anecdotes and stories about Bhagavan can be gathered from this old devotee.

I ask you to observe where the 'I' arises in your body, but it is not really quite correct to say that the 'I' arises from and merges in the chest at the right side. The Heart is another name for the Reality and this is neither inside nor outside the body. There can be no in or out for it, since it alone is. I do not mean by 'heart' any physiological organ or any plexus or nerves or anything like that; but so long as a man identifies himself with the body or thinks he is in the body, he is advised to see where in the body the 'I' thought arises and merges again. It must be the heart at the right side of the chest since every man of whatever race and religion and in whatever language he may be speaking, points to the right side of the chest to indicate himself when he says 'I'. This is so all over the world, so that must be the place. And by keenly watching the emergence of the 'I' thought on waking and its subsidence on going to sleep, one can see that it is in the heart on the right side.

When a room is dark you need a lamp to light it, but when the sun rises there is no need for a lamp; objects are seen without one. And to see the sun itself no lamp is needed because it is self-luminous. Similarly with the mind. The reflected light of the mind is necessary to perceive objects, but to see the heart it is enough for the mind to be turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI





# Letters TO THE EDITOR

I have seldom seen so many good articles sandwiched between a magazine's covers. I am particularly impressed with the wide range of your articles which reach from Hinduism, through a somewhat natural extension into Hinduism's child Buddhism, and right on to Christianity. The general tone is excellent and I enjoyed reading most of the contributions. It cheers me to see a publication with such a wide and tolerant attitude and such a high grade of writer contributing.

REV. JACK AUSTIN,  
Editor of 'Western Buddhist',  
Banstead, Surrey.

\* \* \*

May I congratulate you and your co-workers on the wonderful January Number of *The Mountain Path*. It is the best journal of all those which I receive from the various Ashrams and spiritual groups. ....

I find that the Maharshi has the last word in removing by the quickest and easiest means our ignorance or Maya. Since my visit to your Ashram last year I can sit for a length of time in pure consciousness filled with boundless love for Ramana. Having formed here ten years ago a branch of the Divine Life Society, I decided, as their General Secretary, to call in our next monthly meeting on all those interested in Ramana and devote the whole meeting to him. His large photo, which I bought years ago, will be garlanded and we will form a Ramana group inside our Divine Life Society to avoid further splitting.

DR. R. T. WERTHER,  
Nedlands, West Australia.

\* \* \*

Your journal and every book pertaining to the life and teachings of Maharshi have profoundly interested me, as if these teachings were the very thing I had been looking for all my life.

My information about your address and the name of your journal came in a most miraculous way. A stranger with whom I spoke only about five minutes told me immediately to get in touch with you. He took my name and address and promised to write me your address as soon as he returned home, which he did immediately. I had been following Paul Brunton's works and Krishnamurti and was a member of the Theosophical Society but somehow he seemed to know that there was still a search for higher goals. He was most articulate and had a wonderful command of the English language, wasting no moment in his enthusiastic report about Maharshi's teachings. I have the deepest admiration and reverence for the teachings, which have amazed me more than anything I ever read.

Perhaps you may want to know the name of this great salesman of Maharshi and his teachings. He jotted it down for me. It is Marion E. Jasperson of Indianapolis, Indiana. He was only a casual stranger but in those few precious minutes a whole new world of truth was opened up to me through his insistence that I inform myself about Maharshi and subscribe to *The Mountain Path*.

MRS. ELSIE B. HENSHALL,  
Elmhurst, Illinois.

Well done, Mr. Jasperson!

EDITOR.

\* \* \*

It is now a year since I came to Ramana Maharshi, and I often wonder how I managed to live through the preceding 37 years.

This autumn I held an exhibition of my paintings, and Ramana Maharshi helped in many practical and spiritual ways to get me through the arduous months of preparation.

MARIAN HUBBARD,  
Colchester, Essex.

\* \* \*

Kindly give us all help, advice and information pertaining to tantric scriptures, manuscripts, articles, methods and practices, prominent tantric siddhas and pandits, tantric sampradayas and literature, etc. Please join us in our earnest attempt to revive the ancient wisdom.

S. B. SWAROOP,  
Institute of Psychic and  
Spiritual Research, New Delhi.

*Our April 1965 issue was largely devoted to Tantra and we are prepared to devote occasional articles to tantric themes, but on the whole we are dedicated rather to the less technical, less intricate and more simple and universal path of Advaita taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramana.*

EDITOR.

\* \* \*

We so eagerly look forward to each issue of *The Mountain Path* and, along with other subscribers, enthusiastically devour its inspiring messages. May your success with it continue to grow and expand throughout the globe. Thank you for bringing it to us

JOHN C. BEASLEY,  
Editor, *The Circus Compendium*,  
Carmel, California.

\* \* \*

Your careful planning of the subject matter of each issue is, I think, partly the reason why each single issue achieves such an impact. It is a lesson from a teacher on one aspect of wisdom. Only an editor very certain of his gradually developing theme could lead these issues from point to point until the end result might well be termed a study of spiritual life or a teaching by mail. I cannot think of any other publication so motivated. My thanks to you.

CORNELIA BAGAROTTI,  
New York.

\* \* \*

Two instances of the Maharshi's Grace have occurred to me, one on the physical plane and the other on the spiritual.

1. In 1961, at an official party, among fun and laughter, a small wire hook like a fish-hook got into my throat and was sliding down farther. All my attempts to cough it up only hastened its descent, so I lost all hope of getting it out. I remembered an article in the *Reader's Digest* about an intricate surgical operation for getting a foreign object out by drilling a hole in the chest after correctly anticipating the position of the object with the aid of a fluoroscope; but realizing that such treatment was not available, I gave myself up for lost. I put my face down on my hands and cried inwardly: "Oh Maharshi! I have no refuge but you." I do not know how but at that very instant the metal hook was on the tip of my tongue.

2. In my quest of God-Realization I was using a mantra, repeating it all the time, so that after a while it was going on of itself, like a dynamo, with its own rhythm, without conscious effort on my part. I was also a lover of the Gita, which I knew by heart; and, alternately with the mantra, its verses were also going on within myself. I had various experiences, often culminating in an "experience without experienter". Sometimes I had the experience of having come near to a goal but being separated from it by an impassable chasm. At such times I had a vision of the gigantic, luminous figure of the Maharshi striding along and telling me that there was no gulf between me and the Goal. Then I had the experience of the Maharshi, myself and the Path merging into a unitary experience of pure Consciousness.

V. B. IYER,  
Bombay.

\* \* \*

I am always delighted to receive this excellent publication. I greatly appreciated the latest (October) issue, specially your editorial, Father Thomas Merton's contribution and other remarkable articles. It shows fine promise for the future.

PROF. ANDRIEU,  
Lyons, France.

\* \* \*

I found the article "Al-Khizr" by Abdullah Qutbuddin in October 1965 most interesting. For some reason I have been interested in the story of Moses and Melchisedec especially. So little has been written about him. It has been said that Melchisedec was a mysterious solitary figure in the dim past — "Without father, without mother,

without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." Is it not as though he were saying "I am the Self"? I would like to learn more about him.

ELEANOR PAULINE NOYE,  
Hollywood.

*The Self or an initiatic body representing the Self. Unfortunately little more is known about him.*

EDITOR.

I have recently started to try to practise Self-enquiry and have also become a vegetarian. Can you please tell me whether the Maharshi considered eggs to be sattvic food?

I read your journal avidly and am especially interested in stories about Bhagavan by those that knew him, and news of devotees, as I feel when reading them an intimacy with members of Bhagavan's family and encouragement on the path.

STEPHEN BROIDE,  
Wembly.

*In that case you will be enjoying the January issue, which is entirely about Bhagavan.*

*As to vegetarianism, one does imbibe the subtle qualities of the food one eats and pure or sattvic food is more conducive to the quest. There was an article on this subject in our issue of April 1964. Eggs are not sattvic and are not used at the Ashram and were not in Bhagavan's lifetime. There is no great harm in eating them occasionally or in cakes and so on.*

EDITOR.

The new January *Mountain Path* came yesterday. What a sumptuous number. And how well the colour work has been done! It will last me the next three months, till April comes. *The Mountain Path* has more than justified its existence in two short years, even if no other number ever appeared. Thank you. I keep two of your poems ("Others" and "Be Still") always at hand

EBBANA G. BLANCHARD.

(To the Managing Editor) Congratulations on the January 1966 issue of *The Mountain Path*! It is positively superb, a treasure-house full of excellent articles, and the numerous photographs of Bhagavan bring joy to the heart. I know you

must have put in many months of hard work to create this amazing issue. You and Mr. Osborne are doing a fine work with this publication, and what is so marvellous is that it seems to get better and better with each successive issue.

MRS. STAFFORD,  
Paris.

I am reading the special Jayanti Number of *The Mountain Path* page by page and line by line with the care and attention that it deserves. Bhagavan's Grace is abounding on every page. It makes very exhilarating reading.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER,  
Kulittalai.

Let me congratulate you on the excellent Jayanti Number that you have brought out. Everything is superb! One would love to treasure it in one's heart. I was deeply impressed by the editorial; it was so practical and penetrating.

PROF. KULKARNI,  
Kolhapur.

I have just read in the January *Mountain Path* the magnificent editorial "Ramana Sat-Guru" which led me deep within, very close to the ground of Being. Bhagavan's Grace is indeed great! In the same issue there is an article by a Frenchman, Henri Hartung, "Meditation and Action", in which he says: "Just as members of a family or citizens of a nation draw together in face of a threat or a misfortune, so should those who in our times are still guided by spiritual motives draw together," and *The Mountain Path* is indeed a powerful magnet.

MARY KANNY,  
Bombay.

The Editorial 'Ramana Sat-Guru' is splendid. After reading it my doubts connected with Self-Enquiry vanished. *The Mountain Path* is a valuable asset, especially to those unfortunates like myself who did not have the privilege of seeing Sri Bhagavan during his body's lifetime. *The Mountain Path* speaks with Sri Bhagavan's voice which echoes silently in the reader's heart.

H. A. SHANKARANARAYANA,  
Nullacathu,  
Coimbatore Dist.

In your January 1966 editorial it is stated on page 2, column two, that "Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, who died in 1895, so simplified Kriya Yoga as to make it accessible to householders also and even to non-Hindus." I have been wanting to know for quite some time what exactly is Kriya Yoga and I shall be grateful if you will please tell me where I can find the details of this yoga as simplified by Sri Lahiri Mahasaya.

C. P. DOCTOR,  
Bombay.

The best account of Kriya Yoga can be obtained from the book "Yogiraj Shri Shri Lahiri Mahasaya" reviewed in our issue of October 1965. This system was also developed for the West by Yogi Mahasaya's spiritual grandson Swami Yogananda in his "Self-Realization Fellowship". You could contact one of Swami Mahasaya's followers in Bengal or some branch of the "Self-Realization Fellowship".

EDITOR.

We are highly gratified to see Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji's obituary in the January 1966 Number of *The Mountain Path*. That bespeaks your liberal-mindedness and sense of appreciation of greatness wherever it may be.

It appears that you are not aware of the fact that the saintly Swamiji visited Sri Ramana in 1940, when he was the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. I wonder if there is any record of this with any one connected with Sri Ramanasramam? Even otherwise I feel that mention of his meeting the great Ramana should

have found a place in the said obituary, for the Swamiji himself told me that he had gone to Ramanasramam in 1940. I am sorry I do not know in what month. Will you please put a note to this effect in the next issue of *The Mountain Path*. Maybe some old disciple or devotee of the Asramam jotted down a few particulars of their contact and your note might bring them out for the benefit of all spiritual aspirants.

SWAMI EKATMANANDA,  
Assistant Secretary,  
Ramakrishna Mission,  
Sevashrama, Vrindaban,  
Mathura, U.P.

I am grateful for this information. I shall also be grateful if any one who witnessed the meeting or has a record of it will send me further information about it.

EDITOR.

I was much moved by the article entitled "The Ever-Present" by the late Duncan Greenlees in the January *Mountain Path*. The millions who believe in the Maharshi will echo his words when he says: "His Light shines with the everlasting clarity of God's own Light."

The Spirit of God which, in human form, occupied the physical body of Sri Ramana broods in bountiful love over his Ashram, radiating solace and inspiration to all his devotees. Though I have never seen him, I have felt the impact of his message and the moving spirit of his Presence.

B. KRISHNAMMA,  
Secunderabad.

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## CORRESPONDENCE NETWORK

William Gillespie invites letters from other *Mountain Path* readers to:

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